

# CYCLE NEWS

CTC'S ROUND UP OF CYCLING NEWS, VIEWS AND EVENTS

Funding will support quality purpose-built trails and online information on where to ride across the region. Stunning scenery awaits

## South West trails strike gold

£7.5 million to be invested in England's South West to make it a world-class off-road cycling destination



First Wales, then Scotland – now the South West of England is set to become an off-road cycling hotspot thanks to an investment of £7.5 million. Over half the funds to boost biking in this tourism-dependent region are from the Rural Development Programme for England. CTC is one of the lead partners.

'Put simply: without CTC the project would not have started or got to where we are,' said Paul Hawkins, the project manager for the initiative, called ISW. The Forestry Commission spear-headed the funding application, but unusually is only one of the many delivery bodies in this ground-breaking partnership that CTC has pushed from the start.

ISW will develop trails, sites and information across a region stretching from Cornwall to Gloucestershire. The project will encompass purpose-built technical cycling trails, bike hire facilities,

cafes, areas to develop bike handling skills and information on how and where to ride.

'It will be a huge boost for the region's cycling provision,' said Paul Hawkins. 'ISW will offer a more technical riding experience to enable progression from routes like the highly successful Camel and Tarka trails. We can't wait to get both tourists and residents out enjoying off-road cycling with their friends and families.'

'The region's tourism economy stands to benefit greatly with opportunities for businesses ranging from increased out-of-season accommodation demand to providing specialist services such as guided rides. Off-road cycling in woodlands is a fun alternative to beach based activities, particularly outside of the summer months.'

Funding comes from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which is partly funded by the

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the European Union. The funding is provided as part of a wider project under the Sustainable Rural Tourism Theme, managed by the South West regional development agency (RDA).

Mike Johns of the South West RDA said: 'RDPE funding devoted to sustainable rural tourism is designed to have a lasting impact on the tourism industry in rural areas through investing in improved access to, and understanding of, the key features and rural heritage of the South West.'

The National Trust, South West Lakes Trust, the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and Bristol City Council are all key delivery partners in this project, which offers the opportunity to attract many 'non-traditional' visitors to the region.

To find out more, visit [www.lsw.org.uk](http://www.lsw.org.uk).



Main photo: Ian Warby. Inset: Forestry Commission



## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE KEVIN MAYNE



Having joined CTC's staff on 1st February, this is always my Happy New Year. 2010 already feels special because I

am addressing record numbers of CTC members. I've also just heard that we have achieved the next level of the prestigious Equality Standard for Sport – more proof that we can help everyone through cycling. People who start cycling with CTC swell the ranks of safe cyclists on our roads. Safety in Numbers starts here!

I also want to welcome those of you who have recently come to CTC through our charity activities. This year another 200 new cycling groups will affiliate to CTC or our new youth strand, Bike Club, and begin their journey in the CTC family. I wonder where it will take them? The Rochdale girls who started last year hardly able to cycle completed a cycling expedition, an experience I know will stay with them for life: my first independent cycle camping trip (aged 14) did.

But the year is not without its challenges. With an election looming (see right), we need to ensure all political parties know what cycling can do for the country in tough financial times in terms of health, transport, congestion busting, carbon saving, fun and tourism. With cycling, any future government can 'buy one, get five free'. And our dedicated volunteer campaigners are working to get cycling embedded in the Local Transport Plans that will shape local transport policy for years to come. It will be a battle.

Thanks for helping make this possible. Happy cycling in 2010.

This is the MPs bike ride from 2008. How many cyclists will be in the next parliament?



## CTC says 'Vote Bike!'

**With a general election looming, CTC will soon be launching an online campaign to press future parliamentary candidates to support cycling. Many MPs are set to stand down or likely to lose their seats, and CTC wants to find new champions for cycling in the forthcoming parliament.**

**CTC's 'Vote Bike' campaign will push for a strategy for cycling promotion to be made a priority measure from the new government. The National Cycle Plan promised last year is overdue at the time of writing but is unlikely to set a long-term strategy to promote cycling. The CTC member survey last year showed what your concerns were – a hostile road environment, inadequate cycle facilities, bad driving, and schools and workplaces that obstruct rather than support cyclists.**

**CTC wants prospective MPs to support**

**a new strategy for cycling and commit to a target to double cycling within ten years. To clarify which MPs could be key allies in future, CTC also wants to find out parliamentary candidates' views on a range of issues such as:**

- Better cycling conditions with higher quality cycle facilities.
- Tackling bad driving and lowering speed limits.
- All children able to ride to school with cycle storage and training at all schools.
- Better access to the stations and trains.
- Opening up green spaces to cyclists.

**You can help by contacting your parliamentary candidates. We will announce the launch of the campaign via our weekly email bulletin – or keep an eye out for it at [www.ctc.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.ctc.org.uk/campaigns).**

## Have your say at AGM

**Motions for the CTC AGM must be received by the Company Secretary (Chief Executive Kevin Mayne) at CTC National Office no later than 20th February 2010. Motions must be in writing and accompanied by the name and signature of a proposer and seconder, who must be CTC members. For help or advice on motions contact your national councillor (p80) or Kevin Mayne.**

Copies of standing orders for the AGM and the CTC Articles of Association are available on request. The later than usual deadline of 20th February will give members time to view on the website the draft new Charitable CTC Memorandum and Articles of Association that will be proposed by the CTC Council at the AGM. Council will then consider members' amendments or suggestions

at a special meeting on 27th February before agreeing its final recommendation to the AGM.

It won't be possible to amend the Council's proposals at the AGM itself as they will be in the form of a 'Special Resolution' which under company law has to be seen by all members before consideration.

To find out more about what's being proposed, visit [www.ctc.org.uk/charity](http://www.ctc.org.uk/charity). See also p36-37.

## Cycle-rail: movement at last!

 The Secretary of State for Transport Lord Adonis is different from most transport ministers. A month into his job he cycled round the London mainline stations to inspect their cycle parking. The outcome was a £14 million package of funding for thousands more spaces and a repair/hire 'cycle hub' at ten stations. He also toured the UK rail network, the motorway network and is to undertake a cycle tour to see for himself the conditions for cycling in Britain.

In addition, Adonis commissioned a report that has recommended minimum standards for railway

stations. Included in these standards is the suggestion that all stations should have cycle parking for 5% of the daily passengers, while the 91 biggest stations should have secure storage and a 'cycle hub'.

These are welcome standards but sadly many stations fall far below them. CTC will aim to hold all new franchises and station redesigns to these exacting standards, whilst ensuring that the problem of taking cycles on trains is improved too. Cycle carriage varies greatly between operators (see *Cycle*, Aug/Sep 09).

By contrast, Northern



Left: Brighton station, by Becky Reynolds & Tony Green

Ireland Railways operates as an integral part of Translink, alongside their bus and coach services. Barry Flood, CTC Councillor for Ireland, has championed the needs of local members in discussions with NIR, and their General Manager Mal McGreevy has now decided that new trains now being ordered for 2011 will have four cycle spaces at each end. This doubling of capacity will make it easier, faster and more reliable for cyclists to access cycle carriage facilities.

For more on cycle-rail, visit [www.ctc.org.uk/cyclerrail](http://www.ctc.org.uk/cyclerrail).

## FROM THE TOURING DEPT MARK WATERS



I had always thought of touring as an on-road activity, but my foray into the world of multi-day off-road riding (see

the Ridgeway article in the Oct-Nov 09 issue) showed me that there's no reason you can't tour without tarmac.

Riding a bike with luggage is easier on road, of course, because the bike is easier to control. But so long as you pack relatively light – or go credit card touring – there's lots of off-road and mixed on/off-road routes to do out there.

The first issue to resolve is the degree of difficulty you'll encounter. Can it be done on a touring bike or do you need an MTB? If the latter, how will you carry your luggage? Backpack? Saddlebag? Trailer?

As for route info, you can bet someone will have done it and written about it on the internet – or call CTC for advice.

In the UK, NCN routes are great. I can particularly recommend the Pennine Cycleway. Another great information source is [www.epic-mountain-bike.com](http://www.epic-mountain-bike.com). My pipe dream is to do the Great Divide in North America. Google it.

On an unrelated note, there's a slight change to The British Cycle Quest, CTC's long-term cycle-touring 'treasure hunt' in which participants visit locations across Britain and answer questions to prove they've been there. Participants will now get blank county cards instead of cards for specific counties. A booklet with details of the 402 questions and their locations is obtainable from Mark Waters at CTC National Office or from [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk) > Activities and Events > CTC Competitions.

## New CTC groups

 Several CTC member groups are gathering in early 2010 for inaugural meetings or to restructure existing groups.

On 15th March at Castle Bikes in Caerphilly, a CTC group is starting with the aims of keeping open and developing the Van Road dirt jump site open, and encouraging and developing youth dirt jumping and BMX riding. Contact Steve Aicheler, tel: 02921 328 131, email [steve@castlebikes.co.uk](mailto:steve@castlebikes.co.uk).

Following the dissolution of the CTC South Staffs member group, two new groups will be forming in the area: CTC Dudley and CTC

Wombourne. The meetings are on 19th March at, respectively, Kingswinford Community Centre (contact [philip.speed1@btinternet.com](mailto:philip.speed1@btinternet.com)) and The Wombourne Church Institute (contact Brian Batt, tel: 01902 757348).

CTC South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire is disbanding and Sheffield CTC committee will set up a new group – name to be decided. Doncaster CTC and Rotherham CTC will become informal groups. The meeting is on 18th March at The Fat Cat in Sheffield. Contact Theresa Miall on 01709 368500.

A new member group is forming in Peterborough, with a meeting on 28th February at Longthorpe Village Hall. Contact Jonathan Thompson, tel: 07540 772879, email [jt@ctcpeterborough.org.uk](mailto:jt@ctcpeterborough.org.uk).

Finally, there will be a meeting to form CTC Swale at Phoenix House in Sittingbourne on 17th March. Contact Barry Jordan, tel: 0175 429061, email [hjb536@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:hjb536@blueyonder.co.uk).

For more information about CTC member groups in your area, visit the website [www.ctc.org.uk/groupsandclubs](http://www.ctc.org.uk/groupsandclubs) or phone 0844 736 8450 for a printed copy.



Photo: BMX rider from CTC Champions work in Rochdale

## Don't put a lid on cycling

Two new reports on cycle safety have drawn the wrong conclusion on safety, says Roger Geffen

🌀 Late last year the first two reports from a major study on cycle safety were published by TRL (formerly the Transport Research Laboratory) on behalf of the Department for Transport. One of was on the effectiveness of cycle helmets, the other on the risk factors for cyclists.

The risk factors report contains plenty of useful information. It notes that in 2005-7 the police allocated blame entirely to the driver in over 60% of adult cyclists' serious collision injuries. In another 10% of cases they believed the driver and the cyclist are both at fault, while less than a third were solely the cyclist's responsibility.

The helmet study is far more problematic though, and its failure to address key questions will do nothing resolve what remains a highly contentious issue. CTC believes that both Government policy and the decisions of individual cyclists about whether or not to wear them should be based on reliable information about how helmets work, what the limits of their protection might be, and the extent to which helmet use may affect overall cycling levels. We are opposed to helmet laws and are sceptical of helmet promotional campaigns which seek either to exaggerate the 'dangers' of cycling or the protection helmets may provide – the evidence suggests this is at best limited.

CTC's stance is based on evidence of the serious reductions in cycle use following the introduction of helmet laws in places like New Zealand and Australia, particularly for those day-to-day journeys with the greatest health, environmental and congestion benefits. Moreover, reduced cycling is likely to increase the risks faced by those who remain, as they lose the benefits of 'safety in numbers' (highlighted in CTC's recent campaign of that name).

Regrettably, many of these points are not addressed in the TRL study. CTC's main concerns are as follows.

- It fails to assess the risks of cycling in

comparison with other transport and non-transport activities, or consider if helmets are appropriate to those risks. The association of cycling with helmets leads to an exaggerated public perception of cycling as a particularly 'dangerous' activity. In fact the risks of cycling are comparable to, and in some cases lower than, day-to-day activities such as walking, many sports and even gardening. Any fair consideration of the helmet issue needs to place the issue in perspective.

- It lacks clear evidence that helmets have a safety benefit, either for cycling in general or for particular types of cyclist or injury. The authors rightly note that much of the literature analysing hospital records is flawed (these records tend to suggest helmets are effective), but then put forward some speculative biomechanical evidence of their own, to suggest that they 'should' provide benefits! Yet in reaching this conclusion, they do not consider the ways in which helmet-wearing may increase the risks of cyclists' hitting their heads in the first place. For instance, some people (notably teenagers) are known to cycle less cautiously when wearing helmets, and one study has found that drivers leave less space overtaking cyclists with helmets than those without.

- There's no assessment of the costs and benefits of helmet laws – contrary to the original study brief. Based on the average reductions in cycle use seen in other countries and using the World Health Organisation's model of the effect of cycling on public health, CTC estimates that mandatory helmet use in Britain



Armouring cyclists isn't the answer to cycle safety

Cycling is perceived as riskier than other everyday activities. It isn't

would hasten the deaths of 265 people annually due to decreased physical activity. By contrast, even using the study's own questionable assumptions of helmet benefits, we estimate only about 12 deaths would be prevented – in both human and economic terms, a far greater loss of life.

CTC believes that to improve cyclists' safety it is necessary first to reduce the risks of crashing, not try and force people to do something that may reduce the severity of the injury after crashing. That's why CTC policy on road safety concentrates on tackling the factors that cause harm and deter people from cycling: bad driving, poor road design, large vehicles and poor road maintenance. Tackling these deterrents would increase cycle use with all its health, environmental and 'safety in numbers' benefits, whereas the blinkered focus on helmets risks doing the opposite.

For a full explanation of CTC's policy on helmets, visit [www.ctc.org.uk/helmets](http://www.ctc.org.uk/helmets).