



CYCLETALK

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"The nights are fair drawing in"

For Edinburgh people the end of the Edinburgh Festival marks the end of summer, possibly even autumn. Very suddenly we seem to move from evening rides to coming home from work in the dark. The only good thing is that, whether due to climate change or not, the winters seem to be much less severe than they used to be, and provided there's daylight our weekend rides are often not much different from the ones in the summer. With fewer people being away on holiday, we actually find that more people turn out for club rides.

During the summer a lot of CTC activity is geared to beginner cyclists - inexperienced at going any distance, hills, riding with a group - and encouraging them to use cycles more. In the winter, we can still do promotional work - this time with those who are confident and competent cyclists but who are not CTC members. We can invite them out on runs, invite them to clubroom activities. What is important is that we are welcoming and supportive.

DA health

How healthy is your DA? What will happen at the AGM in October/November? Do you actually have the date in your diary? (If not, the copy of Cycle which this is with should have the list of DA AGMs in it. Look it up). Every CTC member is a member of a DA. We know that, especially in Scotland, some DA geographical areas are pretty big and that it's impracticable for a lot to be actively involved with the group's rides and social evenings, but you should still be getting news of what the DA is doing, and you still have a vote at a DA AGM.

Whether the AGM is on your doorstep or across a mountain range you are still invited to attend, to participate and even to volunteer. CTC still depends on its volunteers a lot to run the club at all levels - national (UK), national/regional (home country or English region) and local. For a healthy DA we do need a stream of new faces and new ideas.

At your DA AGM you will probably have the opportunity to elect representatives to attend the CTC Scotland Committee. The CTC Scotland AGM is on 22 January 2005 in Dundee. Any CTC member is welcome to attend, though only the delegates can vote.

CTC Scotland

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Try Cycling

Clare Little reports

It is now six months since the *Cycle for a Healthy Heart* project started life and much has happened in that time. Initially the project staff spent time establishing the office, making links with and learning from, other relevant organisations and generating ideas that would enable the project's aims to be translated into practice. During the summer the project organised a number of events including a series of cycle taster sessions and a couple of rides during Bike Week. Some events proved to be more successful than others and lessons have been learnt, principally concerning the need for more, better, and targeted publicity. I would like to add here my thanks to our volunteers who gallantly turned up to assist at our events despite the sometimes un-seasonal weather! Your help is very much appreciated.

In the next few months the project will be involved in a number of exciting new developments. At the last steering group meeting it was agreed to change the projects name to 'Try Cycling' Tayside - a snappier name and one that is less of a mouthful when answering the telephone! We are in the process of designing new publicity materials and are planning a major publicity drive during the autumn including a presence at the Angus Health Fair in October.

The project has also been invited by Angus Council to participate in a cycling roadshow at a local secondary school. This will be an opportunity for us to promote cycling as a form of regular exercise that can help to maintain good general health to a younger audience.

A further exciting development for the project will be the provision of training for our volunteers by Cycling Scotland. The 4 day course will enable our volunteers to qualify as cycle leaders and will greatly enhance the work the project is able to achieve. 'Try Cycling' Tayside is always keen to recruit new volunteers so any member reading this who is interested please get in touch with the office. (see advert on page 3)

I hope this update has given people a flavour of the work currently being achieved by the project but if anybody wishes to know more please don't hesitate to contact us at:

97 East High Street, Forfar, DD8 2EQ, telephone: 01307 469880, or email: cycling@onetel.com

Web Sites

CTC Scotland: www.ctcscotland.org.uk
Cycling Scotland: www.cyclingscotland.org

Bikes and Trains

You may have read quite a bit recently about train operating companies which are more or less banning cycles on trains. In the south the removal of the traditional guard's van sections (which we have not seen in Scotland for some time) means that the chance for commuters to carry their cycles is reduced, and some companies have banned cycles at peak times and/or between certain stations. One company is saying they cannot be carried if a train official says they can't - i.e. no guarantee that you would be able to take your bike on the whole of your journey even after you had completed a part of it.

Thameslink states:

We cannot carry bicycles on trains travelling towards London that arrive in London stations between 0700 and 1000 Monday to Friday

We cannot carry bicycles on trains travelling away from London between 1600 and 1900 Monday to Friday.

We are happy to carry bicycles free of charge between Bedford and Luton Airport Parkway at any time

Between Brighton and Gatwick Airport, this area will now carry the same restrictions as any bicycle on a peak train.

We cannot carry bicycles on replacement buses during engineering work or any train where a member of our staff asks you to remove your bicycle.

One Right-to-Ride rep writes to Thameslink (copied in the RtR newsgroup):

This policy effectively means that no cyclist can guarantee to be able to take his bike on any Thameslink train, which hardly seems to be an expression of commitment to sustainable transport policy, to which you claim to subscribe. As far as I can tell, this means that there will be no possibility of carriage to or from the capital at any times sensible for, say, a day out for someone coming up from a distance outside London, no possibility of getting to Gatwick at all using Thameslink services on the Brighton line, and even should I manage to find a service on which I can take my cycle, I cannot be sure that I and my bike will make it to the other end as any member of Thameslink staff may ask me to remove my cycle at any point.

I was also distressed to read the widely-reported comment by a Thameslink spokesman to the effect: 'Cyclists tend to be fairly vociferous about their right to take bikes on trains. I have always found it strange that people would take one mode of transport and put it on another.'

I take it that Thameslink has never heard of the Eurostar, then? Or the ferries that take cars from the UK to the continent? It seems that everywhere else in the world understands the principle of the large vehicle with limited destinations carrying the smaller vehicle that allows flexibility upon reaching one's destination.

This last point was made by several other people in the Times on August 24th when there was a whole page in the 'debate' section on bikes on trains.

ScotRail franchise

First Group take over the ScotRail franchise in mid-October. While at the time of writing this, they have not given any details, they have said that they are not intending to diminish any of the services currently provided under National Express's franchise, but that they will be improving and enhancing services as well as providing some extra ones. We know the problems in Scotland for cyclists wanting to use trains - mainly the limit of 2 cycles on most trains (hopeless for a family, or on the tourist routes), the difficulties of booking (usually needs a visit to a station now that there is no facility on the web to book cycles), access problems at some stations, etc. We need all members affected by poor facilities and service to make their views known and to lobby for better conditions. Don't just leave it to the few. First Group may make things better, but it's important that better for some people doesn't mean worse for others.

Mind the gap

Or rather - make sure there's a platform there. It used to be only at Beaulieu that one had to make sure one was getting out of the right door. Now that GNER have added an extra coach to their trains there are several stations in Scotland where the luggage van (on the refurbished trains now with 6 bike racks) will not be at a platform. Here are their instructions:

Bicycles

Bicycles are carried in the Guard's Van - please arrive early at the station and seek advice from a member of staff.

Shorter platforms at certain stations

At some of our smaller stations in Yorkshire and Scotland, some of our trains are longer than the platform. This means that bicycles cannot be placed in the Guard's Van in the usual way. Please follow these guidelines if you are travelling to or from the stations listed below:

- Approach a member of station or train staff for help
- Use Coach G if the Guard's Van is not on the platform
- Transfer your bicycle to the Guards Van at the next full-length platform. Please seek the advice of the Train Guard as to where you can do this
- Confirm with the Train Guard where you are getting off the train

Edinburgh to Inverness	Edinburgh to Aberdeen
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Newtonmore (southbound)	Stonehaven
Blair Atholl (southbound)	Montrose
Pitlochry (southbound)	Arbroath
Gleneagles	Leuchars
Dunblane (southbound)	Kirkcaldy
Falkirk Grahamston	Inverkeithing
Haymarket	Haymarket

If you want to get off at a station with short platforms, it's even more fun, because obviously you have to get it out of the luggage van at the nearest station before which has a full platform and get it into Coach G. Sounds like first-class entertainment.

Sorry about the small typeface, but there always seems to be more to say than the space available!

National Access Forum

John Taylor reports to Rtr Reps

Next comprehensive meeting of the Forum is Sep 15, when we shall make the final consolidation, except for the appointment of a chairman, and propose aspects for actions. However, prior to that, an extra meeting has been called for Aug 18, solely to debate the "Short Code", as the timing of that's process is tight. In fact, we haven't even got it yet to study, unless it has just appeared on SNH website, which is the only way we shall see it. Diane, my deputy, is attending that meeting.

As you know, CTC is the full member representing cycling, but any other cycling org is entitled to be a "corresponding member". The orgs who have opted for that are SCU, RSF (Roughstuff), IMBA (mountain biking), Trail Cyclists, Sustrans and Cycling Scotland. The last two are not membership bodies, but were admitted as "other relevant bodies", and have joined the cycling group.

I have arranged a meeting of this Cycling group for Sep 2 in Edinburgh. This is to "get to know you", to have a presentation from SNH, to confirm our own organisation, and to air aspirations and set a program of action.

There are practical aspects of providing for cycling which neither the legislation nor the Code, nor even the Guidance for LAs, address. I come across them in my wanderings off-road. Indeed, I am constantly reminding people that cycling networks are impossible, at least in the short to medium term, without employing quiet roads, and will require much treatment to cross busy roads and join up paths and quiet roads that about them.

Diane and I would be very pleased to have your input to a) our aspirations for the implementation of the law, and b) how satisfactory, or otherwise, the proposed "short code" looks. There is expected to be another set of Codes for various sections of users and providers. We will take a lead in forming the cycling one. We look forward to your response.



*"tired of waiting"
(Dublin, May 2004) – may still be there for VeloCity in May 2005*

'Try Cycling' Tayside is currently recruiting volunteers who can help the organisation provide cycling activities throughout the areas of Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross. Volunteers will be offered training in cycle leadership skills, expenses and regular support from the office in return for a commitment to work with the project for at least six months.

For further details and an application form please contact the office on 01307 469880 or email cycling@onetel.com

Birthday Rides



Mike Harrison reports on progress

We have made some progress (but no decisions yet) on the idea of the 2006 Birthday Rides being held in Scotland, and are looking for a suitable site in the Dumfries area. This year there were about 700 on the site (quite a drop from the 1500 for the 125th Birthday Rides), but still enough to give us some headaches and problems with the sites we have looked at so far.

After our first meeting, I drafted a questionnaire to put out at this year's birthday rides to try to find out what people think is important. Asking at HQ I found that they had usually used a feed-back form which did not specifically ask about people's expectations. HQ said they were quite happy to put out my form (and I think even happier when I offered to analyse them afterwards!). Unfortunately my draft was printed without giving any instructions as to what people should do with completed forms, but on 30th August I received 101 completed forms. As there were about 700 at the rides, and we only asked for one form per family or group, this is statistically a good response, and a quick glance shows that while the tick-boxes give the core answers, many have supplemented with additional comments and additional points that we hadn't thought of.



Kevin Mayne starting off the 'Phil & Friends' 55km ride from Thornbridge

All possible effort is made to ensure that facts in this newsletter are accurate. Please tell the editor of any inaccuracies – it's too late to correct what's in print, but most information is repeated on the web and can be corrected there.

Opinions are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the policies of CTC and CTC Scotland.

Round the Forth

Sustrans have now published the map with the provisional Round the Forth route on it (free from Sustrans). Also the Forth Estuary Forum has unveiled its plans for a £5m 76-mile route from Dunbar to Stirling. This will include boardwalk paths along the Edinburgh waterfront. Putting these two projects together with the fact that the Fife Coastal path already largely exists (though often suitable only for walkers) should help to bring the whole project a step towards fruition.

Have you cycled round Loch Katrine?

Many appreciate the fact that the only motorised traffic on the road on the north side is that from farms as all other vehicles are banned. There is now talk of Scottish Water selling off land and property as well as the steamer which would open up the road to general traffic. A campaign group - not led by cyclists but by fishermen - is petitioning the First Minister not to allow this. Their main concern is the preservation of brown trout fishing and the introduction of rainbow trout (they say introduction of the latter would be like the effect of the introduction of grey squirrels among red squirrels), but in their letter to the Minister they do mention the fact that the road is currently used only by walkers and cyclists and speak of the value of this semi-wilderness area.

Apologies to John Taylor

John supplied at least two articles for the last issue of Cycle Talk and for some reason did not get a by-line. Sorry, John. Editor.

Are you ready for Olympic spin-off?

Now that GBR has got a medal or two in the cycling will CTC have a flurry of young hopefuls wanting to take up the sport? More likely that they will seek out a racing club, but, seriously, many organisations do find a surge of new interest after success in a major sporting event. Be ready to encourage.

Events for 2005

Next summer seems a long way off, but it's time for organisers to be putting the 2005 events calendar together. CTC is trying to get it published earlier than it used to be, and organisers should have it completed by the end of September.

CTC – does anyone love it?

A comprehensive organisation like CTC will never satisfy everyone. Recently heard was a comment that "CTC is too biased towards mountain bikes". Now my experience is that if there *is* any bias, mountain biking is not the direction it is in, so people's perceptions of what CTC is doing are very varied. I know others think it spends too much time on campaigning (Right-to-Ride), too much on Open Access, too much on touring, too much on racing. In fact, too much on anything which is not what that particular speaker is interested in. Probably CTC's greatest strength is that it does manage to comprise such a wide range of cycling interests.

Sherriffhall Roundabout – £1m bridge?

This has been a cause of concern to cyclists and pedestrians for some time. We have held fire because it was promised that a bridge would be built for non-motorised users.

The situation is that there are 6 roads at a roundabout. The bulk of the traffic is entering and leaving on the two which form part of the Edinburgh by-pass. The reason this junction didn't have a flyover like all the other major intersections of the by-pass is due to mining subsidence. A second pair of roads is the A7 and the other two are more used by local traffic. Initially it was a simple roundabout, dropped kerbs were provided some distance back from each junction, but with the flow of traffic, especially on the by-pass, it was very difficult for pedestrians to find a time-slot to cross over. Cyclists who tried to use the road were in great jeopardy. Eventually traffic lights were installed. This made it much safer for cyclists who used the road as on the routes that cyclists use (they are prohibited from the by-pass) the sequencing of the lights makes getting through simple. Unfortunately it has made things more difficult for pedestrians and any cyclists who try to use the cycle paths which



run round the roundabout. This is because the dropped kerbs are several metres back from the traffic stop lines, so there's a good chance that the one bit where one can get across the road will have a long lorry halted across it by the lights; and as there is no pedestrian phase, there is never a time when the exits from the roundabout can be guaranteed to have no traffic moving on them. The authorities are not prepared to move the stop lines further back as that would mean increasing the all-stop times and thus reducing the traffic flow (there are commonly tail-backs of up to 1km as it is).

We had heard that there was no longer funding for the bridge. It was announced at the end of July that it *is* available. A Midlothian Council spokeswoman said: "The council are currently in contact with the Scottish Executive regarding the proposed pedestrian and cyclist link at Sheriffhall roundabout, and other projects funded under the Transport Challenge Fund, to secure the best way forward for Midlothian." There would be further discussion and a report before any proposal was finalised, she added.

A Scottish Executive spokeswoman said: "The Executive awarded £802,000 to Midlothian Council in October 1999 from the Public Transport Fund for provision of a pedestrian and cyclist link at Sheriffhall roundabout. It is a matter for Midlothian Council as to how they take this project forward."