

COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS - VESTING DAY STILL ELUSIVE

John Taylor

At time of writing, Vesting Day, the day on which our brilliant new law comes into force, is still unannounced. The delay is due to consultation on an amendment which was considered necessary by ministers to make plain that only forest nurseries and very young trees are out of bounds, not forests.

For myself, I have been considering actively how to compose what we glibly talk about as Core Path Networks. I have entered onto 50k maps of Dumfries and Galloway every candidate route, existing or new, that I can summon up. I came to the conclusion that ALL non-busy roads are candidates, since it is impossible to envisage anywhere near complete networks (even for walking!) without using a fair number of them (or parts of them).

I find severe impediments to the setting up of networks which will need intense attention. These include chronic deterioration of many routes, tractor rutting, cattle rutting and filth, and - hardest nut of all to crack - severance by railways, water courses, and, most intractably, busy roads. If the last are not to cut up Networks into unlinked compartments, how is the vast expense of a large number of bridges and underpasses to be avoided?

And remember, Councils are given up to three years just to get to the draft stage of their networks. My Council reckons that it will take all of that time (it includes negotiating with land-owners the lines of the paths). So, although the default right to be almost anywhere with a bike will be immediate, don't expect too many signposts to appear for a few years!

By next issue of CT, you will already know when Vesting Day is, and it may even have come and gone by then! Thereafter, in March, there will be a celebratory week by way of a large scale launch.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed!

CTCS AGM

AGM's have been coming thick and fast recently. CTC Scotland is no different - it has its AGM in the middle of the winter when either the weather is foul and no-one wants to go out, or it's the one really good day in the month when we could all be out cycling. However, we would like to see a lot of members attending the meeting.

Remember that if you live in Scotland then as well as being a member of a local DA you are also a member of CTC Scotland. All members are welcome to attend this AGM, but, unlike the AGM of CTC itself, you do not all have a vote. Each DA has a number of reps (each with one vote) depending on the number of members living in its area (basically one rep for every 300 hundred members with an upper limit of 3 reps per DA), also affiliated clubs have one rep (with a maximum of 5 reps for all affiliated clubs).

The Constitution of CTC Scotland says that one of the objects is "To hold at least one meeting open to all cyclists each year. This meeting will include a subject of interest to cyclists and invite comments on the work of the CTC and CTC Scotland." This year the AGM day will include a presentation on the work done in the Tayside *Try Cycling* project, and give members an opportunity to make their comments.

Details of the programme and the agenda are on page 4



Glasgow's Museum of Transport had a Cycle Day in August, when they invited people to bring along vintage cycles. There was a good display (with lots of Flying Scots) and a parade around Kelvingrove Park



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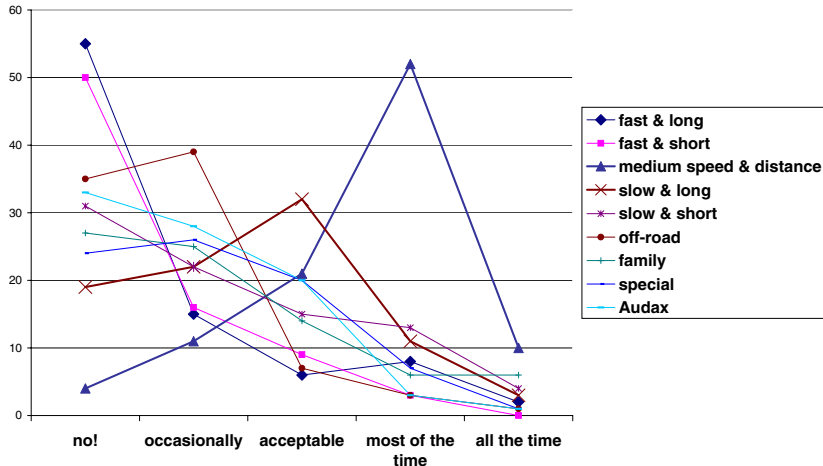
Web Sites

CTC Scotland:
Cycling Scotland :

www.ctcscotland.org.uk
www.cyclingscotland.org

Birthday Rides 2006

A few months ago we asked for ideas for a Scottish venue for the Birthday Rides. Originally the idea had been to hold them here in 2005, but we reckoned that it would take at least a year to plan the event, so we are looking at 2006 (so far the 2005 venue has not been fixed). Dumfriesshire is the favoured place, and a pilot group has done a couple of site inspections. No venue has everything, and the results of the questionnaires completed at this year's rides show that as long as toilets, showers and catering are good, most people will tolerate other facilities being slightly less than perfect. Every event is different, and each has had its strong and weak points. Because the majority of customers would have to travel further than usual to get to even southern Scotland, we have to make sure that they think it's worth it when they get here. John Taylor has got a few new recruits locally who are willing to help, and if it goes ahead, we will be looking for assistance from members from all over Scotland. The event is too big for one DA to do everything. We are now waiting for HQ to come and have a look and make arrangements about the finances of the event. So there's been some progress.



CTC Councillor for Scotland

Pat Harrow has now been Councillor for 4 years. During that time she has travelled south regularly for Council meetings and Committee Meetings - usually arriving back in Dundee station about midnight, and still having to get to Kirriemuir. She has attended the CTC Scotland Committee Meetings, and many of the AGMs and some Committee Meetings of the Scottish DAs. In addition to this she did almost all of the work in setting up the "Cycling for a Healthy Heart" (now "Try Cycling") scheme in Forfar. And there were a few Forfar Rallies along the way as well. Thanks, Pat.

From January 1st Mike Harrison takes on this role (at least he will get home from the south a bit earlier!), but realises that this will be a hard act to follow.



Looking at the graph it would be easy to conclude that: PEOPLE DON'T WANT RIDES AT ALL!

Certainly not fast, long, easy, slow, Audax, just moderate speed and moderate distance. That should make it easy for organisers then.

The graph above is from the survey taken at the 2004 Birthday Rides. There was an exceptionally high response rate, and questions were asked about the site facilities which were important to them, and the kind of rides they wanted. Many said that family rides were important, and that they wanted time to look at the sights. There is a myth that routes must be devised for the hard riders - but the results show that most people say "Not on your life" to the idea of long, hard rides. A small core will find these whether they are organised or not. What did work well this year was the interchangeability of the routes. None of the rides are led, but all the rides on any one day go in the same direction, so you can start off on one route, put in an extra loop from another route, or cut out a loop, or swap to a route with some off-road stuff, and still keep meeting up with other riders. A few like to have an Audax available in a new part of the country.

Money for cycling

Have you heard the news (published in the press on 2 consecutive days) of a plan in Edinburgh to encourage people to cycle to work by providing loans for bikes (and for computers). This is for council employees, and because of tax benefits the goods will cost them considerably less than normal and they will be paid for over 3 years. In the Aberdeen area, NESTRANS is allocating money to businesses in conjunction with their travel plans which will enable them to do a variety of things which may include enclosed cycle parking, changing and storage and shower facilities etc.



Sherrifhall Roundabout

The article in the last issue about the Sherrifhall Roundabout produced a solution presented by Andy Preece (Go-Bike) which has been used on the NCN74 near Strathclyde Park. This gets pedestrians and cyclists on to and off the centre of the signalised roundabout in two stages. Thus any traverse, however many junctions there are, takes 4 moves. He claims that this does not reduce the traffic throughput (very critical on some roundabouts), and provided that the lights do not have very slow sequences hardly slows down cyclists.

Cycle lanes on roundabouts

Do you have any views on this? It's been a subject of debate in the Right-to-Ride (UK) discussion group recently, and when Edinburgh Council did some roundabout resurfacing recently the city's cycling officer had at least one letter saying "I hope that the cycle lanes will not be repainted as they are dangerous" and another saying "When are the lanes going to be put back as the roundabout is dangerous without them?". So how do you make roundabouts friendly for cycle-users and at the same time not frustrating for cyclists?

Is this the narrowest car lane in the country? I think it's saying "There is a problem here with the bends, the visibility and the width of the road" rather than "You must keep within your lane".



Cycling is meant to be FUN as well as useful.

This was certainly the theme of the 'races' held at Cyclefest in Lancaster (above).

These kids had been on a day's ride in this trailer, and what if it did have an electric motor, and who cared whether the motor was used or not in the hill-climbing competition?

And have you tried racing on a machine with two eccentric front wheels?

Mountain Biking

The Cross-Party Group on Cycling of the Scottish Parliament recently had a joint meeting with the Cross-Party Group on Sport on the subject of Mountain Biking Events. The World Cup events at Fort William have brought in competitors from all over the world, and this year's event had over 7000 spectators on one of its days. This is the only location in the UK where three different disciplines can all be held in the one place - and at the same time too. The money which it brings in to the local economy is significant. There are similar events planned for the next 2 years, but in 2007 it has been selected for the World Championships - the biggest and most prestigious event so far.

The meeting also looked at the growth of facilities provided largely through Forest Enterprise, particularly the 7 Stanes project. This too is proving a phenomenal success for our own people. Two caveats were noted - providing more facilities is intended to get more new people using them, not just to give more variety of location for the existing customers, and the environmental problem of more cyclists loading their bikes on to the back of cars to drive to a cycling venue.

The purpose of the Cross-Party groups is to enable MSPs from any party to meet to discuss particular issues. Members of other organisations involved with the subject often attend, and there is usually a speaker. The purpose of the presence of the non-MSPs and the speaker is to be a source of information for the Parliamentarians.



we should get together some time

CTC Scotland Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 2005-01-22 at 11:00
in Friends Meeting House, Whitehall Cresc.,
Dundee**

All CTC members are welcome to attend all the sessions. Only those nominated as representatives may vote at the meetings.

The programme is

- 11:00 AGM**
- 12:00 Lunch (bring piece, but Pat has volunteered to make sandwiches)**
- 12:40 Presentation by Clare Little on the Tayside "Try Cycling" project. Followed by questions and discussion**
- 13:20 (approx) 1st Committee Meeting.**
- 16:00 (at the latest) Conclude**

AGM Agenda

- 1 Attendance:
- 2 Chairman's Remarks
- 3 Declaration of nominated and/or elected representatives
- 4 Minutes of meeting of 2004-01-17 (Stirling) (circulated)
- 5 Matters arising from minutes of 2004-01-17
- 6 Minutes of Special General Meeting of 2004-09-17
- 7 Reports
 - 7.1 Chair
 - 7.2 Secretary
 - 7.3 Treasurer
 - 7.3.1 Financial Statement
 - 7.3.2 Budget
 - 7.3.3 Appointment of Auditor
- 8 Election of Office-bearers
- 9 Motions (notified in advance)
- 10 AOCB
- 11 Arrangements for next meeting

Choices....

At the end of May the KM Rally will be held as usual in the Dumfries area (rides on Fri 27th May to Monday 30th May inclusive).

At the same time Velo-City will be in Dublin 30th May to 3rd June

Do cyclists talk?

Some talk all the time! You know that a hill is really really steep when some of them stop talking.

But do cyclists share problems or solutions? The Scottish Right-to-Ride reps make occasional use of a Yahoo group to discuss issues about road construction, countryside access, cycle safety, specific Scottish issues and the like, and there is also a CTC one for matters which affect the whole of the UK.

But what of the ordinary member? There has been a forum on the CTC Scotland website for some time now, but it's really not being used. One of the few posting recently said "It's awfully quiet in here". If this doesn't change, I think it might be better to remove it. One reason for the low uptake is that the user has to make to effort to go to the site to see if there is anything new to read. One other forum which I manage uses software where the user can receive a summary of any new posting - either for each item or a daily summary. This often triggers a follow-up.

There are now forums on the CTC site and on the Cycling Scotland one which should meet the needs of the cycling public.

Flying the flag for Scotland

In an idle moment (yes I do occasionally have these) I keyed the two words "Scotland" and "Cycling" into my favourite web search engine (Copernic), and came up with the wonderful plug for cycling in Scotland. Torodd Fuglesteg (a Norwegian living in Dublin) records 32 rides he has done in Scotland, and include complete route descriptions. In the general introduction he says:

Scotland is the closest a cyclist can come to heaven on earth. This part of Europe offers a variety of cycling. Everything from easy cycling along lakes, the coast and in valleys to quite hard cycling on steep mountain roads. But the cycling is never extreme hard as cycling in Norway, the Pyrennees and in the Alps. The landscape in Scotland is normally breath taking. The road traffic is normally moderate outside the central belt (from Glasgow to Edinburgh). Scotland is not recommended for families with small children. But for everyone else; Scotland is the paradise for cyclists.

The weather in Scotland can be quite bad. The roads in Scotland are terrible. But the most terrible roads offer the best cycling. But be very careful. An added danger to the cycling in Scotland is the midges. This pest is a gruesome, bloodletting reality and not a joke.

Have a look at:

www.toroddfuglesteg.com/cyclingfront.html