



CYCLETALK

Produced by CTC Scotland

a part of the UK's national
cyclists' organisation

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Chair: Peter Hawkins
Councillor: Peter Hayman; Councillor@CTCScotland.org.uk
+44 (0)141 552 4336

Sec: Mike Harrison ; Secretary@CTCScotland.org.uk
65 the Loan, LOANHEAD, Midlothian, EH20 9AG; +44 131 448 0930

Deadline for copy for CycleTalk is the 1st of Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sept, Nov.
Contributions from individual members as well as Rtr and Local Groups
reps is welcomed [by email of words and/or pictures].

CTC Scotland – AGM 2010 & 1st Committee A stronger CTC-S and progress being made

The Response was terrific to the call for Scottish members to come to CTC Scotland AGM and an open committee meeting on 16 January in Edinburgh and join in the business and topics.

It was the best attended and liveliest session we have had for a very long time, with 20 members from all over Scotland and ten apologies from active members who couldn't make it.

As promised the AGM business was dispatched promptly by Peter Hawkins in the chair. The usual excellent accounts with commentary from George Di Ponio (see below) were agreed and Peter Martin re-appointed as auditor. Our constitution stands while the Club/Trust issue is in flux. Peter Hawkins, who has written so many of our CTC-S responses and co-ordinates Scottish Right-to-Ride was elected to the chair for his first full term. We are lucky to have the experience of Bruce Logan joining as Vice-chair and Mike Harrison continues to do his sterling work as secretary. Because of time bar, George Di Ponio hands over the Treasurer post to Mike Gray, secretary of Dumfries & Galloway. George continues to be Spokes representative.

What made the AGM overrun a bit was setting the timing for next year. This proved to be one of the good outcomes of the day, as it was decided to combine it with the strong call for an 'annual' Gathering of Scottish membership. 20 November 2010 was set for G III in Stirling if we can get the Council chamber again, with an AGM fitted in before the start or during the lunch break.

Home-made mince pies and fruit punch - then, as also promised, an Open Discussion style committee meeting. In the time we had probably neither function was done full justice but a wide variety of issues were covered. This gave the good turn-out, including some new faces, a flavour of what CTC-S tries to do. It also showed what could be done with more members becoming involved and some funding. Here are summaries of just a few of the items covered:

- David Robinson, chair of CTC National Council, was our guest and outlined the progress in turning the CTC club into a charity so that it can be merged with the CTC Trust and become one again. (see Cycle for more details and arrangements for Proxy voting at CTC AGM on 15 May)
- George Di Ponio showed how CTC-S could only afford to continue for a year or so, using up its reserves. While National Office have supported CTC-S activities it was agreed that we apply for re-instating the annual grant of £3k, to cover the special needs of running CTC in Scotland. This has now been put to management committee for their 18 March meeting. George is also working with N/O on introducing digital accounting for the local member group end of year submissions.
- Bill Coppock raised (by email) the inadequacy of the 18pence/member allocation to groups. There is now a Motion to CTC AGM saying the same, which is supported by National Council. It will be an item on the agenda for the N/C meeting on 24 April, so there could be a proposal for a significant increase plus a grant system for group development already in place by the AGM.
- A lack of engagement between CTC-S and Cycling Scotland was highlighted. Brian Curtis, who is a Director of CS, agreed to set up a meeting with the new Chief Executive of CS, Ian Aitken. A very useful meeting, including the chair and councillor, has taken place. There was a 'phone link with Rob Fuller and Sarah Troke about Bike Club progress and further co-operation is in hand.
- www.bikeeventsscotland.com which is hosted at CS hasn't really lived up to the original concept. It was envisaged that local groups could use it for their rides lists but that it should also link to all other similar rides or indeed all other cycling events around Scotland. Darren Mirfield, who contributed to early scoping meetings will look with CS at ways to make it more user friendly.
- Neil Robertson reported on Pedal for Scotland, which continues to show that there is a great cycling public out there, if given half a chance. This year PFS expects 8,000 riders to cross the country with a new 100 mile Sportive, on a southerly loop, plus a Family ride at Glasgow Green.
- George Pennel will run this year's Tri-Vets, which will take a new route out of Stirling on 20 June and will be in conjunction with the charity Action Medical Aid.

- John Foster spoke of a new multi-agency Cycling Day event CTC Glasgow are initiating, also on 20 June, based at Chatelherault Park near Motherwell. A full day of cycling action for all.
- Peter Valente outlined plans (see article) for a CTC Lothians & Borders off-road programme.
- Grampian Rally, 28 May - 02 June, at Maryculter by Aberdeen will be the big Scottish CTC event.
- Liz Pirrie didn't have much good news about the Cycling and Schools Group. Sustrans staff changes led to the planned series of seminars being postponed. This means the 'presently confusing situation' (quote from C&SG leaflet) continues. It is hoped that the new Bike Club officers may be able to bring some order, to the CTC contribution at least. There will be new opportunities for members to get involved in worthwhile Bike Club and School cycle training.
- Bruce Logan will go to Paths for All Cycling Interest Group meetings, which is the nearest we have to a National Cycle Forum. John Mackay is doing good work representing cycling on the National Access Forum, while Mike Harrison continues as a board member of Transform Scotland.

Time ran out for giving due consideration to **Gathering II** feedback and discussion of strategies. The consultation report by Marion Gourlay and Darren Mirfield [Cycling Development Activities in Scotland], which was the basis for G II, is now on the www.ctcscotland.org.uk web site. There is also a summary of some relevant parts from it with workshop notes and considerations for CTC-S written by Chris Williamson, one of the N/O mentors at G II.

The work done for and at G II highlights the ever-growing range of possibilities for CTC-S playing its part in cycling issues. This matches the increasing place of cycling in individual, community and much official thinking, as we look to the bike to offer a brighter healthier future.

CTC in Scotland will use a 100+ years' experience to act as a senior body representing cyclists in a fast changing landscape, as best as it can. From getting the pleasure and benefits of cycling with a local group to addressing the Scottish Parliament on Active Travel to combat climate change, it all depends on members contributing.

Many thanks to all those, named here and unnamed, who came to the AGM and discussions, as well as all the many others who work quietly and in their own way for cycling and our club.

Our next CTC-S committee meeting will be on 10 April, venue will be posted on the web site. We hope more local group reps will come, there are other places available and as always any CTC member is very welcome - and hopefully see a bit less chaos and more order than last time.

Peter Hayman - CTC councillor, Scotland

SUMMER AHEAD

Dave Holladay suggests ways of transporting bikes

A different way to the West

Cycle tours of the Argyll Peninsula often have to face the down-side that you have to cycle both down to Campbeltown and then back with a very limited choice of routes - either a fast and busy main road or the climbs and twists of the 'other side' where it is available. So it was pure serendipity to bump into the Environmental Health Officer for the Council on a train one day and learn about the Kintyre Express. Based in Troon the company operates an 11 metre 'rib' with an enclosed cabin to carry 12 passengers, with space for bikes. Their main business is for business trips to Campbeltown or taking golf parties to courses in Argyll or on Arran, but the fast boat offers a Troon-Campbeltown trip of just over an hour. If this ever gets to be a regular public ferry service it could revolutionise the way people get out to this part of Scotland. Meantime this route and a second rib-operated service to Jura are offering some interesting opportunities for cycle touring.

Remember too that you can put your bike on a Citylink/West Coast Motors coach service if it can be packed flat and wrapped up, and West Coast Motors bus service, linking the ferry piers at Cloanaig, Kennacraig & Tarbert, also carries bikes, saving you a stiff climb if you've come over via Arran.

PATH MAINTENANCE

extracts from some recent right-to-ride correspondence

Ron Stewart wrote about Trunk Road paths:

I have been concerned about the lack of maintenance on a joint user path, part of the NCN, alongside a trunk road and wonder if others have come across similar problems.

The path in question has overhanging vegetation, rasps, brambles, whins etc. also there is surface weed encroachment reducing the width of tarred surface area by almost 50% in places. There are surface drainage problems and poor surfaces at certain locations. There is a safety concern where the path runs in the door zone of cars parked in a much used trunk road layby.

I have been in correspondence with the trunk road authority, their contractor, and the group who supposedly monitor the performance of the contractor, but am getting nowhere.

Over the years I have had defects cleared following a report of the problem, but I cannot understand why a programme of routine maintenance and inspection cannot be drawn up instead of action being dependent on a report from a member of the public. The contractor assures me his is fulfilling his contractual obligations and suggested he might deal with some of my complaints in his own timescale. The contract is known as the 3G (Third generation), and is published on the internet but I can find no reference to maintenance of paths adjacent to the trunk roads. The contract document is very big(!), and I would be pleased to be referred to the relevant section but no one in authority seems to want to speak about it.

My next step could be a letter to an MSP, but it would be interesting to know if this is a nationwide problem, or an isolated case. I have used similar paths when on holiday and have often noticed the grass only gets cut on the road side of the path, leaving grass on the field side untrimmed.

Peter Hawkins replies:

This is clearly a problem, which you have taken suitable steps to deal with as far as you are able, and the responsible authorities have failed to address the issue. I think you're entitled to contact your MSP, as it's a failure on the part of public authorities.

We do have similar problems here with local roads and paths, and we complain to the Council(s) and sometimes they take action and sometimes not. In that case we get a few volunteers together and take loppers and secateurs and pruning saws and do the job ourselves - it's often easier than complaining. But a trunk road might be different. If the path is right beside the road, like a pavement, I wouldn't touch it - too dangerous. If it's set back, it might be OK.

Mark Hagger asked about Fillthathole follow-up:

I filled in the CTC pothole system with regard to the A9 path Pitlochry to Inverness, where there was a stretch where a washout had been poorly infilled with rubble; and another where railway contractors had completely blocked the path with chukkie. In the latter case, the pile had been cleared back on my next visit some months later, and the path was viable without dismounting.

However no feedback via the e-system - is there supposed to be, I wonder?

Roger Geffen replied:

We have provided a simple-to-use facility for local authorities to simply click on a link when they want to report that a defect has been fixed. That report then goes to the cyclist (without the cyclists' email address needing to go to the local authority) as well as updating the "flag" on the FtH map, turning it from a red flag (reported to the local authority) or an orange flag (acknowledged by the local authority) to a green flag (fixed).

Despite this facility, we still only get reports of about 32% of defects being fixed. We are pretty sure that this isn't because the local authorities aren't fixing the potholes - it's simply because they still aren't telling us they have done so. Anecdotally we receive plenty of positive feedback from cyclists telling us (often to their amazement) that they reported a pothole and, lo and behold it actually got fixed! By contrast, very few cyclists complain to us that FtH "doesn't work". Given that people are generally much more inclined to complain when things don't work than to praise when they do, we're pretty sure that actually the potholes are being fixed on the whole, it's just that the local authorities aren't reporting this to us. And it's not for lack of effort on our part to make it as easy as possible for them to do this!

Based on these assumptions, the picture seems to be that local authorities are very poor at sending out highway inspectors to find the potholes. But if we report the potholes, they do get fixed. That may well be because they face potential liabilities if a pothole doesn't get fixed once it has

been reported (and there is a record of this). But for individual cyclists, the key point is that it's well worth reporting potholes and other defects on Fillthathole!

David Lindsey (CTC RTR Rep Aberdeen City) comments further:

I'd endorse what Roger has said. This winter, being what it has been, has meant a lot of craters have arisen in Aberdeen. In my experience, every one that I have reported has been patched within a few days and I've encouraged my local CTC colleagues to do likewise. Am I right in thinking that, once reported, if the work to rectify it is not done in a reasonable time, the LA becomes liable for any damage/injury that ensues as a result? It's a false economy not to make reparation quickly: with the preponderance of heavy 4X4's and high-powered vehicles in this area, holes soon worsen into something that takes more time and materials to make the repair. The cynic in me says that they are saving up the tarmac for the dual carriageways that are planned for within and around the city.

NEWS FROM LOCAL GROUPS

Livingston & West Lothian CTC Sunday 11th April 2010

Livingston & West Lothian CTC are proud to introduce West Lothian's newest cycling club. Our group is a social group, offering easy to moderate bike rides around West Lothian, taking advantage of long social lunches in pubs in winter, picnic lunches in summer, cycling on cycle paths/country roads, through our endless countryside, sometimes visiting historical monuments, nature reserves, gardens, or just having a social chuckle amongst ourselves.

This is not a competitive group, and this will reflect our pace, attracting all age groups and abilities. So don't worry if your bike is a sit-up and beg variety or a high tech mountain bike, all bikes and their owners will be made welcome, as long as your bike is road worthy.

The Club runs will depart from Xcite Gym Car Park, ([EH54 6QT](#)) just outside Almondell Shopping Centre, Livingston. There are a café and toilets at the departure point. Please be at the start point promptly at 10 a.m. for a 10.15 a.m. departure.

If you can't manage this run, but are interested in future ones contact David Fitzcharles 07747 465743 (DavidFitzcharles@ctclothians.org.uk) or look on www.ctclothians.org.uk.

Glasgow

The new runs list is available on the CTC Glasgow website. The usual monthly club run and Lanarkshire run will continue on 3rd and 4th Sundays of the month. This year there will be a 200km Audax in June.

There are plans for a large cycling event for the summer but this is not yet confirmed. Many more runs will be added to the list so keep checking the website.

We would like to do some shorter "discovery" rides of 10-15 miles but require members to become run leaders for these rides. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact us through the website or on a ride. We would anticipate a commitment of 2-3 runs per year.

Grampian

5th GRAMPIAN RALLY - TEMPLARS, MARYCULTER, ABERDEEN

FRIDAY 28 MAY - WEDNESDAY 2 JUNE 2010

Scout camp site and Caravan & Camp site available.

Grampian is an area with such wide and diverse cycling, from a flat coastal plain, undulating farming and forestry and remote and hilly terrain. Situated around the rivers Dee and Don - so there are plenty of glens and hills.

There will be 20, 40, and 60 mile cycle rides on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Route sheets will be provided and leaders will accompany the rides. Additionally on the Saturday there will be a 200km AUDAX and social events are planned for each evening.

Download details and booking form from www.ctcgrampian.org.uk if possible or contact [with SAE] Heather Reid, 196F Victoria Road, Torry, ABERDEEN, AB11 9NP.

Lothians and Borders MG

L&B will be organising some runs out for mountainbikes this year. A variety of levels are proposed as below.

Some will be fairly easy, but we also intend to cover XC or all mountain, however these may be defined (there seem to be so many niches in the world of mountain biking) for want of better expressions. This to try and attract different people from the usual in addition to the wheel kent faces. We don't want anyone to feel excluded but a sense of adventure may be needed for some runs.

There is a hope that this may appeal to some of the 1,000 plus in L&B rather more than what we have been doing traditionally, as well as perhaps bringing members along from other Groups.

Trail centres offer useful facilities and will be used as well as open country or indeed any terrain/routes suggested by members. As a guide, the group that is the genesis of this usually do the red or black at Glentress depending on available time. They are not the fastest but not the slowest either.

Please contact vtt@ctclothians.org.uk for more info