



working for cycling

## Getting people out on bikes

Earlier in the year Diane Adams ran a series of rides based on Dundee which attracted a number of people out. John Taylor later in the year has been running a series of "Discovery Rides". In connection with two of the "Doors Open Days" (Midlothian and East Lothian) Peter Hawkins led DA rides with a programme to visit several of the places within one day. Following on from the Lothians Summer Evening Rides a new group seems to have evolved for Sunday rides with a difference – they are planned and promoted using email. Read more details about some of these on the web site [www.ctcscotland.org.uk](http://www.ctcscotland.org.uk) – not enough space here.

Some of the features common to most of these are:

- they have a specific destination (or series of destinations)
- they are not 'hard' rides
- they do not take up the whole day from dawn to dusk
- they have a leader
- they generally have a 'purpose' or target

Now how does this compare with our ordinary club rides? Most of them will match some of these criteria but often only two or three (a few will match none!). How many people do we get on our normal club rides? More critically, if we get a newcomer along to one of our normal club rides, do they come back for another one? And this is where we fall down. The answer is usually 'no'. They will come once, but will not come back again. So what we provide for the committed club member is not really what the newcomer is looking for.

To give an example, a couple of years ago the Lothians DA decided to offer easier and shorter rides to encourage new riders. To avoid duplication of effort it was decided to make this the 'official' club run for that day. Result on the day – no new people turn up, so the run becomes just like any other one. Next time – hurrah we have a new rider, go off on the run, but of course as the last one was just a normal run

# CYCLETALK

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## EDITORIAL

The last issue was the 'bad news' one. Let's hope that we don't have too many more of those. This is going to be a 'good news' issue, with reports of some initiatives which may give you ideas that you can use in your own situation. Every CTC household in Scotland receives this, so if you think that one of these would be a good thing to try in your own area, don't just say 'someone on the committee will organise it', offer to do it yourself, or at least to help. Please remember that those who volunteer to be on the committees of CTC District Associations or Cycle Campaign Groups are giving up their time to promote cycling in all its forms, but you don't have to be on a committee to volunteer to help!

(because there was no reason to modify it), this one turns out the same; result – it goes too far and too fast, the newcomer doesn't really fit in, doesn't come back again. This is a slight simplification, but I'm sure you get the picture. What we need to learn from this is that we need to use the expertise of members to design routes, deal with 'group management', technical issues (helping with bike mechanics), but when it comes to the actual run, it must be a ride for the target clientele and supported by the regulars rather than a regular ride modified for the novices. A few novices cannot be carried along very easily by a gang of 20 experienced riders. If you disagree with this, please write and tell me why – it might even get published in the next issue.

While at the Cycle Campaign Network Conference in Liverpool I heard about the "Bike Time" rides held every 2 weeks in summer. Start at 13:00 and time is about 2 to 3 hours. One feature of this is the free **pre-ride bike check** from 12:30. No major work is done, but an experienced cyclist will look over the bike and point out any adjustments which should be done, if possible doing them with the bike owner watching and helping, and thus encouraging the owner to do this themselves in future. For more difficult jobs they are referred to a bike shop. Under 14s are required to bring an adult with them. So successful have the Bike Times been that they are continuing once a month in the winter.

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## Web Sites

CTCS: [www.ctcscotland.org.uk](http://www.ctcscotland.org.uk)  
SCDP: [www.scottishcycling.org](http://www.scottishcycling.org)

## PATH UPGRADE, RIVER ALMOND

*Peter Hawkins*

Volunteers from a university conservation group upgraded a stretch of the River Almond path on Sunday (27 Oct.). About 15 tons of stone (Type 1, for the technically minded) were loaded into barrows and trundled along the path to make a firm base, replacing the mud and puddles which hitherto spoil the path for all users.

The project was a joint effort between the 'Dirty Weekenders', as Edinburgh University's conservation group style themselves, and Peter Hawkins from Spokes, who set the project up. The stone was provided by Scottish Water, or rather by their contractors John Kennedy, who were under obligation to remove stone from two roadways they had to construct from Nether Lennie Farm to the river to carry out sewage work. The stone would have had to be transported away and disposed of, so it was of help to the contractors themselves to be able to dispose of it nearby.

The landowner (Dalmeny Estates) had no objections to the project, and the tenant farmer was also well disposed, because path users were in the habit of walking through his field to avoid the poor conditions on the path.

This co-operation between the parties was planned and arranged in advance. Other benefits happened by chance. Waiting in pouring rain for a site meeting with the contractor, Peter was invited in to a cottage near the farm and explained what the project would be doing. The tenant Robert and his mother, Cecile were most sympathetic and supportive. They offered the cottage as a 'base camp', Robert offered to come and help with the work, and Cecile insisted on making soup and rolls for the students.

Even the weather co-operated. After dire forecasts of heavy rain, the day actually was quite dry and sunny. 14 students turned up. There were two main tasks for the volunteers: one was to load the stone into barrows and lay it out along the path; the other was to form a whole new section of path along an embankment, to avoid a stretch of about 30m which was a complete 'lake' which could never be filled with stone.

The path doesn't have a high usage rate (yet! – it might, once the public realises it has been improved to a usable state) but it is used by walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders. It (the route) is described in Derek Storey's '100 Countryside Walks Round Edinburgh'. The river here is lined with mature trees, with farm land and woods beyond. It is a superb corner of rural tranquillity (marred a little by the proximity of the airport!), only 5 miles from the city centre.

All agreed it was an enjoyable and worthwhile project, and Cecile's soup (homemade!) was excellent. The cost? The volunteers charge about £20 for their services (usually more – mileage for the minibus, but the bus was unavailable). The stone was free. Tools were provided by the volunteers and by Spokes. So for this small sum, about 500m of path has been completely upgraded and made serviceable, and good public relations established with the local community.

*The future? We in Spokes feel the voluntary sector has an important role to play in making access to the countryside more available, and at very little cost. Councils and other interested bodies could exploit this potential by, for example, providing the stone on site (in this case it was free, but that was unusual), or, for larger projects, agreeing to support the costs of plant hire.*

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### Development opportunity

The Scottish Waterways Trust is a charity which works with British Waterways to encourage use of the canals. They are developing a project to introduce children to canoeing, cycling, walking and fishing along the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals. Pilots have been running successfully for 2 years, and now they are getting funding to set up some permanent bases, starting in Glasgow and Falkirk. The canoe programme runs mainly in the summer, but the other activities fill in the rest of the year. They will be looking for people to assist as instructors for the cycling. Much of this will be during the school day, so volunteers with ordinary jobs will not be suitable. What we need is for there to be a pool of people with qualifications (and there's a problem for starters) and experience to work with these children. Given appropriate Senior Instructors (or whatever the correct term is in the cycle training world) there might be opportunity for young adults who are currently unemployed to be trained as Assistant Instructors (again taking the terminology from another sport) to work on this project as paid instructors. Anyone interested in this contact CTC Scotland and you will be put in touch with the SWT.

#### **2003 Calendar**

*get your events into the 2003 What's On guide*

*go to [www.scottishcycling.org/events](http://www.scottishcycling.org/events) and key in the details*

*events entered by the end of December will appear in the printed guide*



## The Bike Station

The Castlecliff Workshop is now appropriately renamed the Bike Station, being located under the main concourse of Waverley Station in Edinburgh. It was formally opened in October by Sarah Boyack. They now employ not only Grace Nicol as a fundraiser/organiser/trainer, but have two part-time mechanics poached from bike shops who will not only do some repairs, but will train others in repair skills. The premises are a warren of burrows, including a rifle range formerly used by railway staff (I'm assured as a recreational facility not so that they could snipe at passengers). There's a new website to reflect the new name – [thebikestation.org.uk](http://thebikestation.org.uk)

## CTC – aged 125

Next year CTC will be 125. What is your area going to do to celebrate this? Every local group is being asked to think of ways of getting more members to wave the flag for cycling. While events can happen throughout the year it is suggested that the long weekend at the beginning of May would be a good time to arrange an event targeted to get **every** local member participating. There are ideas for events which would have a core route of about 25 miles but with opportunities for the faster riders to either extend it or cover it with more than one lap, so that there would be a concentration of riders able to help each other along. If this is to happen in May, NOW (December 2002) is the time to plan it so that it can be included in the cycling 'What's On' guide and also in local authority leisure guides. We don't need to do these things completely on our own, we should try to bring in other organisations, but we need to do this soon. So the weekend May 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> 2003 is the date. Tell us what you think you might do, and in particular, tell us details once you have them sorted.



**The CTC Scotland AGM/Committee Meeting will be in the Friend's Meeting House, Whitehall Crescent, Dundee on Jan 18th 2003 (probably at 11:00)**

**See <http://quakerscotland.gn.apc.org/dundee/> for description and map**

## Scottish Cycling

England now has regional coordinators to progress the National Cycling Strategy (NCS) from a range of backgrounds (cycling officers, road engineers, road safety, etc.) plus some officers with specialised knowledge and remits but no area responsibility (traffic/highway engineering, health promotion, travel plans, school travel, transport planning). Of course the NCS itself does not officially apply in Scotland, but the Scottish Cycle Forum accepts the principles and aims of the NCS, so in practice there shouldn't be much difference. However, up to now, no money has been made available for any structure like the one described above. What is currently on the table is a plan for something similar which will have the name of 'Scottish Cycling' and will provide a Director and 5 Area Officers who will promote the aims of the NCS. This includes improving the infrastructure, arranging training, providing information, working with local authorities and existing cycling campaigns and clubs, and (most important) changing the mindset of the travelling public – motorists and walkers – to get them to see and use cycling as a real means of achieving in both transport and leisure.

## Across the North Sea

It's too early to assess the success of the Rosyth-Zeebrugge Superfast Ferry as a commercial venture, but a number of cyclists have used it. Ron Stewart has a few comments, others have accepted the procedures. If you have used it and have comments, then share them.

### From: Pat Harrow, CTCS Councillor:

This is the time of year when you may decide to cut back on cycling in view of the possibilities of icy patches or slippery leaves or the early onset of dark nights. So this may not tempt you on to your bike but it might encourage you to have local cyclists come to you!

CTC members are a mixed bag as regards their cycling experience. You may be a commuter, leisure cyclist, tourist, Audax or DATC rider, a potterer, a bit of each or just have fond memories of what you did in your earlier days. You may be quite content with the amount of cycling you do but if you would like more opportunity or want to meet up with other cyclists, then contact me if you would like to find out more about existing groups in your area. On the other hand if there is unlikely to be anything happening near to you, then why not choose a date and a starting place and ask others to join you. Indicate the type of ride you would like, the distance or pace. This could be anything from a leisurely, sociable 15 - 20 mile ride to visit a local place of interest or tea room to a faster paced run or whatever.

Or you may decide to have a rendezvous ride and have riders come to you for a cup of tea or to meet somewhere at a tearoom. Let's have lots of ideas and we will print them in the next copy of 'Cycletalk' so that all members in Scotland have the opportunity to get out, meet other members and discover local cycling possibilities.

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### TALK TO US!!!

*Comments on any issues raised in this newsletter are welcomed.*

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[www.CTCSScotland.org.uk/mwforum/](http://www.CTCSScotland.org.uk/mwforum/)

### From: Ronald STEWART

In early June I travelled with Superfast from Rosyth to Zeebrugge. I found the ship in sparkling condition, good food, with a pleasantly mannered and helpful crew, yet the journey was marred for me by what I considered a rather cycle unfriendly attitude. I cannot decide if this was caused by overbearing security measures or just a lack of understanding of cyclists needs. Perhaps I am the only one that feels this way, or perhaps I appeared to be a security risk for some reason not disclosed.

First of all I was told to remove all 7 items of luggage from my bike for them to be passed through a scanner, then one bag was physically searched. I was told I would not be permitted to take the bicycle on to the ferry, but must load all luggage into a bus, be driven the 200 metres or so on to the ship then carry my luggage in to my cabin. Company staff would take the bicycle on to the ship after emptying the fuel from my camping stove, which is carried on a clip attached to the cycle frame (as water bottle). I was not happy to be separated from my bike and said so, but was left in no doubt this was how it would be. After struggling to the cabin with 4 panniers, a backpack, handlebar bag and bedroll, I found I was sharing the cabin with another 3 cyclists. There was a lot of luggage in that cabin and stowage space was woefully inadequate. On arrival at Zeebrugge, I found my bicycle leaning against another, not securely stowed for a sea crossing as I would expect. I asked the deck officer to refill my fuel container but this was refused. I asked how it was that cars were being driven off the ferry as they presumably had had their tanks drained also, but at this stage he claimed not to understand English. I am left mystified as to what the scanner was set up to reveal, as a potentially lethal knife and several other sharp items passed through without comment. I spoke with a foreign cyclist who had made the trip from Zeebrugge to Rosyth and it seemed travel in that direction was more straightforward.

My return to the UK by Brittany Ferries was a relaxing experience as I cycled on to the car deck tied up my bike and just took up with me the one bag I required for the duration of the crossing. Indeed the return crossing was as stress free as all the other international ferry crossings I have made in the last few years.

It would be interesting to hear the views of others who have used this service with their bicycles. Should we as an organisation approach Superfast with a "Cycle Code" or just complain as individuals, or perhaps some of us like to have our bikes taken on board by baggage handlers?