



working for cycling

Editorial

There were only a couple of responses to the 'interactive bit' in the last Cycle Talk. Remember the question was, what are CTC "Open Days" for, and how should we use the idea best to promote cycling in general and CTC's role in particular. How do we work with other organisations to get out the message that cycling is a practical mode of transport, enjoyable, fun, healthy, safe? Is an Open Day meant to be itself an outreach event, or is it for us (who are already committed) to get together (again) to talk about how to do it? Yes, we do need to plan our campaigns, but we also need to do something. Your comments are appreciated, but would have more validity if there were more of them. With the great cycling weather during August, perhaps we have to assume that you were all out cycling. I'm told that there was not a great deal of incentive to do long hard rides in Dorset at the Birthday Rides – although Nobby Clarke from Forres got the prize for cycling the longest distance to get to Dorset.

Windfarms

In common with other users of the countryside, we have been consulted recently on a windfarm proposal in the Forest of Ae. As this proposed site at Harestanes is on John Taylor's patch the Secretary was quick to pass the documentation on to him for action! John has consulted with CTC and found that there is no 'party line' on windfarms. Whatever the opinions may be on the beauty or ugliness and practicality and efficiency of these seems to be largely immaterial as a consideration relating to cycling. The effect they might have on access is much more relevant. These are to be situated in a forest, and one consequence will be that some form of access road will be needed. One of the benefits will be that the engineering will include enhancing provision for countryside users, so we can expect that paths and tracks for walkers, horse-riders and cyclists will be better than before. It looks like a scheme that we as cyclists should endorse. Any comments (relevant to **cycling**) welcomed.

CYCLETALK

Produced by CTC Scotland
No 29: Oct/Nov 2003

Looking ahead –

May 1st or 2nd or 3rd - or June 6th or 13th!

2004 is once again the year for the **Vets Triennial** rides. Anyone over 50 is eligible, and under-50s can join in to encourage and keep the Vets company. Following on from the 125th events at the start of May this year, HQ decided to do the same with Vets rides. Some Scots think that May may be too early for the oldies to have oiled their chains, and suggest the start of Bike Week. Exactly where and when in Scotland has not yet been decided – possibly Stirling in June with options for rides of different lengths from 100 miles to 50km – but mark the event in your diary now.



Jan 17th

Not quite so far into the year will be the AGM of CTC Scotland. Saturday January 17th is the date (11:00-16:00) and the place is yet to be fixed. September is the time of year when affiliated clubs have to inform the Secretary of their nominations, and with DA AGMs coming up soon, they also need to be sorting out who their reps to the CTCs committee will be. Volunteering is not fashionable, but all organisations need volunteers to do a wide range of jobs, not just to keep the organisations afloat, but also to promote development. Don't just leave it to the same set. Note: you can find the date and place of **your District Association's AGM** from the issue of Cycle which encloses this newsletter.

CTC Scotland

Chair: Ron Harrow, theharrows@lineone.net
Sec: Mike Harrison, Secretary@CTCScotland.org.uk
+44 (0)131 554 7773

Web Sites

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

Sustrans Trailblazing part 2

So why did it take 2 days to get from Edinburgh round the Forth via Stirling back to Edinburgh?

Well, the first thing was the photographs! John Grimshaw (Chief Engineer and head man of Sustrans) must have taken hundreds of photos. A lot of the time he was dashing ahead to position himself for the next one, but many involved us stopping and posing. The route took us through territory where it seemed sometimes that no man had ever passed. Fortunately it was pretty dry underwheel (and underfoot in the places where we had to scramble). Some parts of the route took us through places where bikes are not encouraged, but most of it was on recognisable tracks, with more on-road (albeit quiet ones) on the Sunday. Apart from the questions of access in some places, most of the issues about the route are ones of making the links – half a mile here where a cycleable path needs to be made, a safe crossing of a heavily-trafficked road there. Some of these are already being tackled. For example the road crossing of the main approach to the Kincardine Bridge is being sorted as part of the work done in the creation of the new bridge there.

Among the 40 or so people who joined in the ride for all or part of the 2 days we were pleased to have two MSPs, and especially welcome on the Sunday as we emerged from Clackmannanshire into Fife were some of Fife Council's road engineers. Having the support of the people who can actually make things happen and put the vision into effect is a great encouragement.

What about it as a route? Once consolidated it will provide pleasant cycling, some good views, pleasant scenery, a range of points of interest both natural and man-made. Hardened cyclists might find it fiddly and devious in places and want chances to be able to roll a bit more, but there are chances to pick and mix with ordinary roads. Total distance is about 160km (c100 miles) and could be done easily in one day by many once the walking bits (like the walk along the beach from Blackness to Bo'ness) have been replaced by cycleable sections. On the other hand, for a leisurely family ride, it's easy to make a two-day expedition of it, as we did with an overnight stop in Stirling. Edinburgh people could also easily use a train and cycle only half the circular route as a one-day trip. We made a short stop at Culross and had a mini-lecture, but the tourist might want to spend an hour or two there; similarly at Blackness Castle, or the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway. I don't think that many would want

to stop in Grangemouth – but even that is much pleasanter once you get into it than you would think, just seeing it from the motorway!

And the answer to last month's question – 'What's the significance of the bridge in the photo?' It's the only wooden 'trestle-type' railway bridge on the whole of the National Cycle Network, just like the ones you see in the old Wild West movies, except that it's in Fallin.



Tayside DA invites you to.....

Pitlochry 150k DATC/AUK

The date of Tayside DA Pitlochry 150k (90mile) has been changed to Sunday 12 October. For more information, contact Charles Irvine, Annfield House, Manor St., Forfar, DD8 1BQ. Phone 01307 463508

Edzell weekend – Friday-Sunday 24-26 Oct 2003

Join us for the weekend staying at Angus House Edzell

Cost per person £22.50 for 2 nights self catering.

Limited camping £3.50 per person per night.

Further info: Charles 01307.463508; info & bookings Ron 01575.574082



A chance meeting

On a cyclepath in Renfrewshire, Transport Minister **Nicol Stephen** had just reopened the recently upgraded cycle paths (new tarmac surfaces). The official party was standing in the middle of the path, and had to keep stepping aside to let walkers and cyclists past, when suddenly **Michael Addiscott** (SCDP Development Officer) greeted a pair of passing cyclists. The lady was then introduced to the Minister as **Rita Montgomery**, a well-known character and former holder of several cycling records. A brief and completely unscripted public conversation followed in which Rita replied to the Minister's questions that she used the path frequently and greatly appreciated the improvements – confirmation that well-designed and well-maintained paths are used not only by dog-walkers and shoppers, but also by those who go further and faster. We'll say nothing about the badly-designed and poorly-maintained ones...

Cycling Scotland

The same day **Nicol Stephen** had made the formal announcement of the Scottish Executive's support for a new body to be known as Cycling Scotland. This has been under discussion for over a year and is designed to fulfil the same kind of function as the team in England in pursuing the aims of the National Cycling Strategy.

The Chief Executive and five officers will work with government, local authorities, health authorities, environmental organisations and of course existing cycling organisations to these ends. The idea has developed from a simple idea of a body which would provide information on cycling to the public enquirer to one which will be proactive in development and will have expertise to advise other professionals.

The finance for this is coming from the Scottish Executive and is new money – it's not coming from existing cycling budgets. CTC Scotland has been fully involved in the consultations which have taken place to establish this.

Its start has been timed to begin from September 2003, at which time the Scottish Cycling Development Project will cease to exist after 6 years of pioneering work.

CTC Scotland sends good wishes to Cycling Scotland, and looks forward to working with it.



Up in the forests...

There's quite a lot going on at the moment in the off-road world.

Forestry Commission Scotland are now on the hunt for a highly motivated team to drive forward a new mountain bike business opportunity in the Scottish Borders.

The successful candidates will run a new business providing a range of mountain bike services for cyclists coming to the new facility being developed at Newcastleton.

The business start-up is part of the Euro-funded **7stanes** project that is creating seven specialist biking centres right across the south of Scotland.

Forestry Commission Scotland recreation manager in the Borders is Jeremy Thompson, who said:

"Through the **7stanes** project, we are putting the south of Scotland forward as a mecca for mountain bikers. We will be building top-class trails and providing quality services that all go to attract new visitors to the area.

"This new business opportunity is great news for the south of Scotland, and in particular, for the community of Newcastleton.

"We are looking for highly motivated and experienced people who know exactly what services mountain bikers want. We've got it right at The Hub in Glentress, and we want to get something similar up and running in Newcastleton."

Planning is well under way for a series of trails at Newcastleton. The plan is to build up the trail network in stages, starting with a short, four-mile technical loop with full jumps, berms and timber features. A long cross-country route and a family trail will be built later.

Newcastleton is one of the **7stanes** centres earmarked for development under the biking project. The other centres are based in the Tweed Valley and in Mabie, Dalbeattie, Ae, Glentroll and Kirroughtree forests.

The **7stanes** project is being managed by Forestry Commission Scotland with partners Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway & Borders Tourist Boards, Scottish Enterprise Borders, Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Solway Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. All the partners joined forces to raise £1 million towards the initiative, and match-funding from Europe brought the £2m project to life.

The Future of Cycle Talk

At the next CTC Scotland committee meeting this will be one item on the agenda. In the past, Cycle Talk has not cost CTC Scotland its full commercial cost. We are now to be charged more than we can afford. Anticipating that the committee may have to take drastic action, either killing the publication completely, or at least reducing the number of issues per year, here is another appeal for an alternative solution. Cycle Talk could move over to an entirely electronic distribution. This would reduce the costs from £240 per issue to zero. Obviously those without internet access or email would be disadvantaged, but at least a significant number of members would get it, and it would be better and more useful than having no Scottish newsletter at all.

CTCS has members in about 2500 households. Cycle Talk is currently published on the web in HTML format and a PDF copy of the printed issue is also posted there. How many people look at it in either of these formats? What could we do to encourage you to do so? If we stopped sending out a printed copy would you remember to look regularly? The best way is to have an email list and send out notices saying that it's there waiting to be looked at (rather than emailing a copy out). At least two clubs that I belong to now do this with their newsletters. To do this though, I need email addresses. Last time I asked I got about 30. Thanks to those who did respond, but 30 out of some 2500 wasn't worth taking action on. CTC (UK) has only just got round to getting telephone numbers of members (!) so it might be the next century before they collect email addresses. If we want to go down this route, we will have to do it ourselves.

So, just in case this is the last ever paper issue of Cycle Talk, please send your email address and name and/or CTC Membership Number (it will not be passed on to other organisations) to E-CTCS@CTCScotland.org.uk, and the next time we issue Cycle Talk you'll get an email with a link to the Newsletter.

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.

CycleTalk – Issue 29 edited & compiled by Mike Harrison
© 2003 CTC Scotland, 11 Stead's Place, EDINBURGH, EH6 5DY

Access

John Taylor recently wrote this to the CTC's Scottish Right-to-Ride reps:

Remember that the time is getting nearer when we shall have the opportunity of declaring to Councils which off-road routes we know of which we consider should be in the cycle path network, and also which routes we feel are needed to complete links in that network (traffic calmed roads or roadside paths included) and/or to access places we feel we should be able to get to with a bike. In my case, I have got the Council to agree to send me a set of maps of D&G on which to indicate what routes I think we should have and am consulting other cyclists to help me. I shall show; routes which I think would be used significantly, needing various degrees of attention (including none), where I know there are locked gates or other obstructions to be removed, and/or where links are required; and routes which we would accept as rough-stuff routes, often accepting present surfaces or needing spot treatment to complete their passability, or sometimes completely new.

There is also the question of proposing strategic routes. It is uncertain as to what degree the new legislation will assist the ease, speed (and hence cost) of negotiation on these. They currently come (usually?) under transportation departments' provision and funding and I daresay that, because of their intermediate status between roads and paths and their general need for high quality surfaces, that situation may continue. However, Sustrans routes are amongst those which can be incorporated into the Core Path Networks, so we should make our requirements for strategic routes known in the course of this exercise.

Lastly, apart from in some large forest areas (and that really means almost all Forest Enterprise), I still do not see how core, or any, cycle path networks can be established anywhere without incorporating roads. For us, off-road routing cannot be compartmentalised. Therefore, off-road routes must incorporate the general consideration of rural road treatment.

I leave you with these thoughts and hope that many of you can assist with this giant exercise in your areas.

John

This is a big task, and data must be registered in time. You can help your local Right-to-Ride rep with this. And if you are in an area which doesn't have one, it may be up to you to make sure that we don't lose the use of existing paths and tracks.

If you don't know who your rep. is contact
John Taylor (johntaylor@care4free.net; 01556 670395) or
Peter Hawkins (peterhawk@care4free.net; 0131 443 6712).