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Photo: Cycling England

Wheels of fortune

Support for cycling was erratic over the winter, with winners, losers, and some still waiting to see where the funding roulette wheel will stop

Cycling is a broad church, and sometimes that makes for conflicting messages – especially where money is concerned. This winter was no exception.

First the good news. Sustrans' Connect2 project won 'the People's Millions' public vote. Sustrans Chief Executive John Grimshaw sent a personal note to CTC, asking us to thank you for your support.

Also, CTC's Lottery Funded programme 'Cycling Champions' is now under way, with 11 of the 15 staff already appointed. In the next issue we'll introduce the teams and explain a bit more about what each of them is doing, but check out www.ctc.org.uk/champions for updates.

CYCLING ENGLAND EXPECTS

Now the bad news. When we went to press, Cycling England was still waiting to hear about its future, some four months after submitting its funding bid. The Department for Transport has been curiously silent, with just a murmur from

Transport Minister Rosie Winterton, who promised to 'work with Cycling England and give long term commitment' when she spoke at a conference showcasing the progress of the six Cycling Demonstration Towns. She didn't say when this commitment would be forthcoming.

Cycling England's funding seems to be mired in an internal bun-fight within the DfT about how to balance sustainable transport against the mighty roads and runways lobby. Tristram Hunt wrote a good piece in

'How a play on the slide at the local pool is sport while a two-hour bike ride is not is something we have yet to work out'

the Guardian – worth reading online. Search for 'stop sniffing the petrol'.

NOT VERY SPORTING

But the award for 'lack of joined-up thinking by a government department' goes to an announcement from the

Department of Culture, Media and Sport that Sport England is shifting from physical activity back to 'real sport', arguing that it was someone else's job to worry about the nation's physical activity levels. Cycling could be the biggest casualty. Unlike swimming, sailing, horse riding or even skydiving, cycling has been split apart, with competitive cycling (road racing, BMX and mountain biking) considered sport, and everything else classed as recreational – i.e. not sport.

Quite how a play on the slide at the local pool is sport while a two-hour bike ride is not is something we have yet to work out. But CTC, British Cycling

and many local authority sports departments will be highlighting just how daft the distinction is. Long-term, it could mean that one of our best Olympic sports ends up as the poor relation, despite many great successes over the past few years.

Gordon Selway: 1949-2007

CTC Councillor Gordon Selway, one of cycling's hardest working campaigners and most formidable intellectual forces, died suddenly in November. Gordon was not only CTC Councillor for the West Midlands Region and a Trustee of the Cyclists' Defence Fund (see p8) but held seven other CTC voluntary campaigning posts at local and national level. He volunteered for at least six other charities and was an elected member of Bromsgrove District Council.

In particular, Gordon was a nationally recognised expert on rail issues, and his knowledge of legal matters was unparalleled. Whether you wanted to know about traffic, highways and planning law, employment, charity or health and safety, through to the most obscure aspects of rights of way legislation, Gordon usually knew the answer. And if he didn't, he would always know where to hunt it down. It was perhaps fitting that he passed away on a train, having cycled to the station that morning. He had several health issues, which generally he chose to ignore and just get on with doing the things he liked to do and which he knew he could do best.

Responding to the many tributes, Jill Kieran, Chair of the Council, said: 'Gordon was indefatigable and the range of his interests and knowledge were extraordinary. Over the years his ability to give detailed support to campaigners throughout the country on the most complex of issues has made a huge difference to cycling. He will be sadly missed.'

Born in Bromsgrove, Gordon attended King Edwards, Birmingham on a scholarship and



Photo: Mike Harrison

moved on to another scholarship at Oxford where he read classics. After teaching Latin and Greek, he went into a legal career until ill health forced him to return to Bromsgrove in the late '80s. This became Gordon's chance to get involved in voluntary organisations, including CTC and Birmingham's Push Bikes cycle campaign group.

CTC Director Kevin Mayne recalled: 'My abiding memory is him phoning me at 10pm one night because he thought he ought to remind me that he had just petitioned Parliament about the Crossrail Bill on the club's behalf. I didn't worry, because when it came to that level of policy detail he could be trusted implicitly to get it right.'

A fuller obituary, including links to examples of Gordon's work, appears on the CTC Obituaries web page.

FROM THE CAMPAIGNS DEPT ROGER GEFFEN



Road safety looks set to be a major focus of our campaigning in 2008.

Firstly, the Government's decision to carry out a study of cycle safety issues is long overdue. It is good news that they will look into the problems of collecting the data needed to assess cyclists' safety in the first place. The under-reporting of cyclists' casualties is a well recognised problem, but research is still needed on how best to address it. The Department for Transport (DfT) also proposes to assess the relative benefits to cycle safety of cycle-specific provision (e.g. cycle lanes or tracks) and other measures (such as lower speed limits).

However, the study also needs to understand the factors which most endanger cyclists – e.g. bad driver behaviour (such as speeding), highway layouts (such as dangerous roundabouts) and vehicle design, particularly HGVs. And it must avoid exaggerating the 'dangers' of cycling – its health benefits still far outweigh the risks involved.

Meanwhile, the Commons Transport Select Committee will be conducting an inquiry on all aspects of road safety. CTC will be making the arguments for lower speed limits, better street design and more emphasis on driver awareness campaigns backed by tougher and better-enforced road traffic law. The aim must be to make speeding, mobile phone use and other forms of dangerous driving as unacceptable as drink-driving.

Along with consultations on the training of novice drivers and on penalty points for speeding drivers, we also await the introduction of new 'bad driving' offences, along with recently published policies on the prosecution and sentencing of bad drivers. Mobile phone users will be treated more severely (something CTC had called for) but surely the guidelines are wrong to classify drivers who pull out of side roads as merely 'careless' not 'dangerous'! Ultimately the legal framework itself still needs a proper overhaul.

The Commons inquiry and the cycle safety study will both have a major impact on a new Road Safety Strategy for the coming decade, which the Government is due to start work on later this year. CTC is now drawing up plans for a major road safety campaigning initiative. Watch this space for more information!

CHANGES ON COUNCIL

A gaping hole has appeared on CTC Council with the death of Gordon Selway (above). There will never be another Gordon, but many members will have other skills that they could bring to Council.

This is an exciting time for CTC with the start of a new five-year plan for the organisation. If you are interested in standing for Council to represent the West Midlands until the end of December 2008, complete a nomination form (available on the CTC website or from National Office) and return it by 29th February 2008. If you want to know more about being a councillor, see the CTC website or phone any existing member of Council or Director Kevin Mayne at National Office.

The last issue of Cycle called for nominations to fill vacancies in London and the North West. Three nominations were received for the North West; ballot papers are included with the magazine for members in the region. No nominations were received for the vacancy for London, but Council has extended the deadline to 29th February. To stand, complete a nomination form as above.

The vacancy in London was triggered because the existing Councillor, Philip Benstead, is disqualified from acting as a CTC Councillor from 31st July 2007 for five years. Under CTC's article of association 'No person disqualified from acting as a trustee of a registered charity by virtue of section 72(1) of the Charities Act 1993 shall serve as a member of the Council.'

FROM THE TOURING DEPT
MARK WATERS



If it's cold and miserable outside, it means that your time could best be used in thinking about all those

wonderful places you're going to visit this year on your bike. It has been said that your tour begins the moment you open the map out and start planning.

There was a time when researching a tour involved visits to the library, travel agent and local bookshop. Invariably maps of a scale suitable for cycle touring, or of unusual destinations had to be ordered and you never really had an idea as to whether they were the best ones for the job.

How times have changed! You hardly need actually to go on holiday these days, such is the breadth of knowledge and number of travel reports available from down a broadband cable.

With the plethora of sites describing routes and destinations, it's easy to forget the time and effort that goes into making CTC information sheets useful to members. Whilst human resources are strictly limited, we do our best to keep our 'country information sheets' up to date. So when you're wondering which are the best maps to use on your forthcoming tour to wherever, it's worth taking a look at the relevant CTC country information sheet. You can get them from the website or from National Office.

Do remember, when you get back to let us know of any information you've gleaned from your trip which others might find useful. Happy touring!

Cycle safety review

CTC has welcomed a Government decision to commission a study of cyclists' safety, but cautions that it now needs to ask the right questions if it is to come up with useful answers!

News of the study, to commence shortly, coincides with media reports of the death of cyclist Kate Charles, a 41-year-old lawyer at the Department for the Environment, killed by a lorry at the junction of Brixton Hill and the South Circular Road in south London. We understand she is the sixth cyclist – and the third woman cyclist – to be killed by a lorry in London during 2007. And her death came just one week after HGV driver Colin Jones was cleared of careless driving following the death in 2006 of 28-year-old cyclist Victoria Buchanan. He claimed he had checked his mirrors repeatedly but failed to see Buchanan in her hi-viz top as he turned left across the cycle lane where she was riding.

CTC Campaigns manager Roger Geffen said: 'While it's great that the Government is studying cyclists' safety, it is vital that they look beyond the obvious issues of cycle tracks and helmets. Cyclists don't fall off for fun – there is usually a very good reason. The risks cyclists



face are overwhelmingly from dangerous roads and junctions, from lorries and other dangerous vehicles and – above all – from dangerous drivers. We have to find ways to crack down on the classic "sorry, didn't see you mate" and other similar "little errors", whose consequences can sometimes prove catastrophic.'

FIGHTING FOR CYCLING

The Cyclists' Defence Fund (CDF) is looking for two or three new trustees to oversee its work on legal issues relating to cycling, and a number of lawyers to sit on its Advisory Panel. The CDF was originally set up by CTC but is now an independent charity. Its work includes providing support for legal actions which may impact on the legal treatment of cycling and cyclists.

Do you have expertise in planning, road traffic, highways, rights of way or health and safety law? If so, would you be willing to be an Advisory Panel member to assess cases which CDF is being asked to support and advise the board on whether CDF should back them? Or perhaps you have the skills to make decisions as a CDF Board member, taking advice on proposed cases and other projects, keeping an eye on their legal, political, financial, PR or fund-raising implications?

For either role, please email info@cyclistsdefencefund.org.uk or see www.cyclistsdefencefund.org.uk for more information. Those without internet access should contact CTC National Office in the first instance.

NEWSINBRIEF

DEATH BY CARELESS DRIVING

The Road Safety Act's new offence of 'causing death by careless driving' comes into force early in 2008. We remain concerned that, instead of increasing the sentences for drivers who kill, it could result in cases being treated as 'careless' when previously the more serious offence of 'causing death by dangerous driving' would have been used. In any event, the new offence still does not address the mismatch between the tough sentences now available for drivers who kill compared with those whose driving is potentially lethal but where nobody dies.

Carbon paper

Back in November last year, the Department for Transport (DfT) released its vision for the future of transport: the snappily titled 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System'. They have been running workshops around the country, with CTC staff, Councillors and Right to Ride reps in attendance.

The DfT has proposed that any carbon reductions from transport will come from surface transport alone and be made by technology changes (very hopeful!) and tackling short car journeys – in part by cycling.

The document also acknowledges the health contributions of transport in one of the



Department's new priorities - also potentially of benefit to cycling. This will lead to a Green Paper in May, with a White Paper later in the year, all of which present us opportunities to lever a better role for cycling.

For more information, see www.ctc.org.uk/campaigns.



WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR LOCAL NEWS STORIES
We'll publish them here and on the website. Email publicity@ctc.org.uk

Scot free bike hire

INVERNESS



Inverness isn't quite the Paris of the north, but it does have a bike hire service – and it's free. Since last autumn, 20 unclaimed bikes from the Northern Constabulary have formed a hire pool that operates out of the town's main car park.

Inverness is a compact town with a recent influx of rail commuters. There has been a 200% increase in the number of trains heading into the

town from Tain and the North Line, and a new commuter train from Kingussie. Most offices are 3/4 to 1 1/2 miles from the station – on the long side for walking, but ideal for cycling.

With a commendable pragmatism the Local Transport Forum obtained 20 bikes and set up a free cycle hire scheme to fill this need. Most free bike schemes take a very naïve stance and trust the hirers to return bikes promptly. This scheme makes use of staff already on duty at the main Rose Street car park, which is right beside the bus station and two minutes from the rail station. All users have to register (free) and advance booking is the preferred way of working.

The main cost has been bike parking (pictured), which was supplied by Hitrans, while the bikes are maintained by a youth skills programme called MP33. Highland Council gives the space in the car park and staff time. Details at www.intrans.org.uk – follow the Re-Cycle links.

NEWSINBRIEF

GRAMPIAN RALLY

The 4th Grampian Rally will take place on 23rd-28th May in Maryculter, Aberdeen. There will be daily rides of 20, 40 and 60 miles followed by nightly social activities culminating in a ceilidh and buffet on the last night. The routes will traverse parts of The Victorian Heritage Trail, The Coastal Trail, and Scotland's Castle Trail with an experienced local rider leading each group. For information or booking, contact Heather Reid, tel: 01224 873380, h_w_reid@yahoo.co.uk.

CHESTER & NORTH WALES 100

The group's flagship event, the Bert Bailey Memorial Veterans' 100, will take place on 6th July 2008. This very popular fixture will be limited to 100 riders next year and entries will be accepted strictly in the order received, so early application is advised. Besides being roadworthy, all bikes must be equipped with mudguards and either a saddlebag or bar-bag. Entry forms will be available from 1st February – email diamentina@btinternet.com or write to: David Ackerley, Ardmish House, Tattenhall Rd, Tattenhall, Nr Chester, CH3 9QQ.

SOUTH BUCKS WEBMASTER HONOURED

At CTC South Bucks' 2007 AGM, webmaster Paul Robinson was honoured for his work in setting up and running the group website. Jane Crombie said: 'Paul took this job on a few years ago and, starting from scratch, built it up to the magnificent site it is today. He is always adding innovations and trying to improve things. We showed our appreciation by presenting him with a certificate.'

RUBBISH ROADS AHEAD

CTC is supporting an initiative to help clear the roads of debris such as broken glass, metal, gravel and other rubbish. The British Motorcyclists' Federation (BMF) has produced a 'Rubbish Roads Ahead' booklet and is writing to every local highway authority urging them to clean-up the areas of carriageway used by two-wheeled vehicles. CTC Campaigns & Policy Manager, Roger Geffen, said: 'Rubbish Roads are as much as a problem for cyclists as they are for powered two-wheelers.'

NEW CTC LOCAL GROUPS

CORNWALL, DUMFRIES, FYLDE

New CTC member groups are springing up in the West Country, Scotland, and Lancashire. Each will have an inaugural meeting, at which all local CTC members are urged to attend.

The meeting to form CTC Cornwall takes place on 2nd March at China Clay Country Park, Wheal Martyn, Carthew, St Austell, PL26 8XG. It will run from 11am to 1pm and refreshments and a buffet lunch are included. The meeting must collect the signatures of 10 CTC members to form the group. Cornish members considering attending should contact Alex Geen, tel: 01483 238334, alex.geen@ctc.org.uk.

The meeting to form CTC Dumfries and Galloway will be on 15th March at 1.30pm at the St Ninian's Church Hall, Whitepark, Castle Douglas. For details, contact John Taylor, tel: 01556 670395, johnwtaylor@care4free.net.

The Fylde Bicycle Belles in Lancashire are also about to become a CTC member group. The meeting will be at 12 noon on 24th February at Billington's Café, Roots Lane, Blackleach (near Kirkham), Lancashire. Contact Ursula Walker for details, tel: 01253 768889, uwalker@tiscali.co.uk.

Stands up for cycling

Congratulations to cycle-campaigner David Garfield, who managed to get these splendid cycle-stands installed outside the Havering Council Offices in Romford. He writes: 'Promoting the bicycle as a viable transport mode is central to my advocacy and campaigning. That's why I ride a properly equipped, user-friendly, low-maintenance bike that won't mark my clothing. Similarly, a bike owner should be enabled to take a pride in the bike's appearance.'

'Conventional cycle-stands are designed with the flawed principle that the bike's frame should be leaned against it. Damage can result to the paintwork, graphics and protruding components (brake arms, lamp brackets, panniers, etc.). That's why I arrived at this alternative design, which only requires contact with the seat and pedal. There are other advantages, but it's advisable to anchor the front wheel to prevent it twisting sideways. (It's recommended to use two locks in London anyway.)'

LONDON

