

news

CTC'S ANALYSIS OF
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN
THE CYCLING WORLD

PAGE 63 HOW CHANGES TO CIVIL AND CRIMINAL COSTS CAN AFFECT CYCLIST DEFENDANTS



Low-level traffic lights for cyclists are to be installed at 12 locations in London

POSITIVE SIGNALS

The Department for Transport has given a green light to new traffic signals for cyclists. **Chris Peck** reports

THE DEPARTMENT for Transport (DfT) has finally given the go-ahead for 'low-level' traffic lights for cyclists. It's the latest in a series of relaxations on traffic regulations – regulations that have tied the hands of local authorities in the UK wanting to emulate the infrastructure of the Netherlands – and it's something CTC has long campaigned for.

In recent years, the DfT has: relaxed rules on making one-way streets two-way for cyclists; permitted the use of a wider range of cycling-specific direction signs; and begun, with Transport for London, experimenting with ways to

make fully-segregated routes better and safer for cyclists. New signs and markings authorised by the DfT are permitted in England, and can also be followed by authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Such changes are required if Prime Minister David Cameron's promise of 'cycle-proofing' is to become a reality.

Low-level traffic lights for cyclists are helpful at junctions because they're easier for someone on a bike to see. Such lights are a common sight in other European countries and have been thoroughly tested in track-based trials

CYCLE-PROOFING

Improving cyclists' safety at junctions is one of the key elements of cycle-proofing. See page 56 for more

Coming up



£30K FOR FILL THAT HOLE PAGE 6

Transport minister Robert Goodwill announced DfT funding for CTC's pothole-reporting website and app



STOP RIGHT THERE! PAGE 8

Crown Prosecution Service drops case against cyclist who stopped in front of a car-occupied 'green box'



SEEING SENSE PAGE 10

The sudden spike in cyclists' deaths in London late last year must spur safer lorry designs, to allow drivers to see cyclists easily

in the UK over the last year. The first set will be installed at London's Bow Roundabout this year, with 11 other sets to follow in the capital in the near future. Campaigners will be monitoring the results at Bow closely, given that this junction has recently been the site of three cycling fatalities.

The DfT is also considering approving the use of low-level lights to give cyclists an 'early start' at junctions. Advanced signals can help cyclists because they allow them to get ahead of motor traffic legally, and low-level signals are less likely to confuse other road users. However, all 'early start' systems need to be very carefully planned and designed, particularly in the case of large junctions.

When CTC's Roger Geffen gave evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's 'Get Britain Cycling' Inquiry back in February 2013, he said that the cause of non-standard low-lights had been hampered by 'red tape', so it is good to see the DfT changing their minds about permitting local authorities to install them.

At a DfT organised event in December, the cycling and roads minister Robert Goodwill gave assurances – later reiterated in Parliament – that he was determined to remove the barriers to enable local authorities to use more innovative and cheaper means to give cyclists priority.

£30k for Fill That Hole



Android app will enable more roadside reporting

Left & below left: iStockphoto.com

SIGN UP FOR CYCLECLIPS

CTC's free weekly email newsletter: email your membership no. to membership@ctc.org.uk

THE DEPARTMENT for Transport (DfT) has pledged £30,000 to enable CTC to revamp the 'Fill That Hole' pothole-reporting website and to develop a new smartphone app. An Android version will stand alongside the existing iPhone app.

Cycling and roads minister Robert Goodwill made the announcement on a visit to Oldham. The cash is part of a £5.8 billion additional spend on highways. Goodwill said: 'At best, potholes are an

irritation. At worst they can damage vehicles and pose a serious danger to cyclists. That is why we want people to tell councils where to find them so they can fill them in. This app means more people are going to be able to report potholes more easily.

'Filling potholes in quickly is only one half of the story. Research has also shown a long-term approach to road maintenance, rather than patch and mend, can save councils and taxpayers

money and potentially save lives thanks to better road conditions.'

Nearly £24m was paid in compensation by local authorities across England last year due to their poor roads, according to the Asphalt Industry Alliance. Since CTC launched the 'Fill that Hole' website in 2007, there have been over 91,000 pothole reports filed. Updates to the site and app will take place in the first half of 2014. fillthathole.org.uk

READY, SHEDDY, GO

RECOGNISING THAT over two thirds of bicycles lie gathering dust in garden sheds, the Brighton and Hove CTC Member Group has begun offering a series of rides aimed at these bikes' owners. Across the UK, fewer than 10% of people cycle regularly, even though 43% have access to a bicycle.

The first 'Shed Ride' took place on Sunday 5 January. It was a gentle ride from Hove Lawns to Worthing and back, mostly on cycle paths. Organiser Howard Blanks from Brighton and Hove CTC said: 'We recognise that many people are put off cycling because of lack of confidence, the amount of traffic, or perhaps being worried about having to cycle too far out of their comfort zone. If you join one of our rides, you do so safe in the knowledge that a Shed Bike Ride is over a shorter distance, generally on cycle paths and at a very comfortable pace, and will be led by experienced cyclists.'

The group is also introducing free bicycle maintenance courses. For information



Nearly half of the UK has access to a bicycle

on either the rides or the course, email: shedbikerides@gmail.com. If you would like to organise a similar event with your group, contact Membership Manager Matt Mallinder: matt.mallinder@ctc.org.uk.

FROM THE VICE-CHAIR OF CTC

Martin Cockersole

WHEN I was sorting through my late father's possessions, I came across some cashbooks belonging to my grandfather. I was delighted to find in each year an item for CTC subscriptions, both for him and my father. In 1936, the subscription was 7/- with an extra 3/- for CTC bike insurance, equivalent to 35p and 15p!

It made me think about CTC then and now. In the '30s, the bicycle was the primary transport for many people and cycle touring was very popular. So CTC had two key roles in promoting touring and campaigning for better conditions for cycling. Local groups flourished.

The cycling world has changed dramatically since. 'Traditional' touring is now one of many recreational cycling options, alongside day rides, challenge events like sportives, and mountain biking. Utility cycling has receded but is now making a comeback, particularly in London. CTC is embracing this new world and has made its mark, particularly in campaigning. But we still need greater recognition amongst the wider public. When you say you belong to CTC, how often do you hear: 'What's CTC?'

To be really successful in the future, CTC needs a strong membership base and to be recognised in the wider world. CTC Council and our Chief Executive have been focused on steps to ensure both are achieved, and some may be quite radical. Watch this space!

On a personal note, I'm not standing for re-election as Vice-Chair this year. It has however been a privilege to serve in this role.



CTC champions adapted cycles



LOTTERY FUNDED

cycling projects wheels for all

THANKS TO a grant from the Big Lottery Fund, CTC and Cycling Projects have secured funding to help get more people riding on adapted cycles. An England-wide Inclusive Cycle Champions Programme is being set up to coordinate inclusive cycling promotion.

While there are already many inclusive cycling projects across the country, the new funding should help them thrive, attract a broader range of users, and integrate with mainstream



cycling activities. Four regional clusters will enable easier networking between projects, and the sharing of resources and best practice.

Through the regional clusters, local projects will also have the opportunity to shape the national standards and provision for inclusive cycling. With our support, individual

projects will become part of a framework that aims to attract future funding and provide ongoing support for inclusive cycling activities, projects and centres across the UK.

If you are involved in or know of an inclusive cycling project in your area and would like to find out how we can help, please contact your nearest regional inclusive cycling development officer.

- **NW England:** Jayne Rodgers, **01925 234213**, jayne.rodgers@ctc.org.uk
- **NE England & Midlands:** Gavin Wood, **07825 785 490**, gavin.wood@ctc.org.uk
- **SW England:** Tim Trew: **01225 787 927**, tim.trew@ctc.org.uk
- **SE England:** Tim Janes: **07980 895 113**, tim.janes@ctc.org.uk



Advanced stop lines are routinely encroached on by other road users

Photo: Clive Andrews

STOP RIGHT THERE!

A CYCLIST WHO was fined for stopping in front of an Advanced Stop Line at a set of traffic lights because the 'cycle box' was occupied by a car has had the proceedings against him dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service. As we reported last issue (p8), Alex Paxton was given a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) by a police officer on Fulham High Street in London for 'failing to stop at a red light'.

With the support of the Cyclists' Defence Fund, which provides guidance on the law relating to cycling and which fights precedent-setting legal cases, Mr Paxton challenged the FPN. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

dropped the case in late 2013 on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of a conviction.

Miss Puneet Rai, of Thomas More Chambers, who acted for Mr Paxton, said: 'I am very pleased common sense has prevailed. It's great news for Alex, for the Cyclists' Defence Fund, and cyclists generally. In making this decision, the CPS clearly accepted that in the circumstances Alex had no real option other than to act as he did to ensure his own safety. Clearly, road traffic laws have to be obeyed but not to the point that cyclists are forced to place themselves in danger in order to do so.'

NEWS IN BRIEF

› LAST CALL FOR AGM MOTIONS

CTC members wishing to propose a motion for the AGM on Saturday 10 May (see p12) should send it in writing to CTC Chief Executive Gordon Seabright at CTC National Office by 14 February 2014. The motion should be proposed and seconded by two members. CTC Council strongly recommends that members wishing to propose a motion contact their CTC Councillor (details on the separate address sheet included with this issue of Cycle) or Gordon Seabright well before the deadline for a discussion about it. It is important, for proxy voters in particular, that the purpose of any motions on the agenda is clear.

› 10% OFF CTC TRAINING COURSES

Members can now get 10% discount on CTC's training courses. There are more than 40 courses to choose from. You could develop your personal skills, such as riding or maintenance, or become a leader, instructor or trainer for on or off-road riding. This is a time-limited offer. See more at ctc.org.uk/education or contact mtb@ctc.org.uk

› HAVE YOUR SAY

The CTC website has many articles covering campaign issues and events. New for 2014 we have introduced a comments button so you can now have your say too. CTC webmaster Jonathan Pontet explained: 'You'll notice a new facility to add your thoughts to articles. Comments will be read for suitability and then published so other visitors can see your views.'

› OFF-ROAD ACCESS DENIED

Surrey and Hampshire cyclists are finding that the Ministry of Defence is increasingly restricting access to its land for cyclists (whilst also making life harder for horseriders and walkers). Is this happening where you live? CTC wants to know if you are experiencing problems accessing Ministry of Defence land. Please email cycling@ctc.org.uk. This will help CTC with any national discussions with the Ministry of Defence, and when negotiating about local problems such as Hankley Common in Surrey.

READ ALL ABOUT IT GO ONLINE
Visit ctc.org.uk/campaigning for a more in-depth analysis of this and other stories



Lorry mirrors don't prevent big blindspots

not to hug the kerb. A recent Twitter-spat between BBC broadcasters Jeremy Clarkson and Jeremy Vine suggests that Clarkson, and many like him, have no appreciation of this last point.

As Cycle goes to press, the Government appears to have shelved plans for a long-awaited Green Paper on driver testing and training. It's a real shame if that's true. If it does appear, CTC will press the case for cycle awareness – and preferably actual cycle training – to be integral to the driver training process, particularly for drivers of lorries and other large vehicles. Watch this space.

Stop danger at source

Awareness and training initiatives can only do so much, though. As explained in CTC's evidence to a hastily-convened Commons Transport Select Committee inquiry, the best way to reduce risk is tackle it at the source. If cyclists are being killed by lorries, particularly at junctions, the top priorities must be to improve the safety of junctions and lorry design, while reducing lorry numbers on busy roads at busy times.

There have been many cases where cyclists have been killed by criminally irresponsible driving. But in looking for solutions, we shouldn't start by arguing over whether fatal cycle/lorry collisions are the fault of lorry drivers or cyclists. The principal problem is the lorry itself.

The so-called 'blind spot' around lorries is a lethal design flaw. Why do lorries have the driver seated so high off the ground, and surrounded mostly by metal rather than windows? Compare them with buses, whose drivers can easily see cyclists at traffic lights. The sooner the Government, EU, and lorry industry get together and solve this issue, the better.

It's also high time the Government looked at continental best practice on reducing lorry use on busy urban streets. If Paris and other European cities can do it, why can't we?

The good news is that Transport for London and the Government are now taking seriously the debate on how to improve cyclists' safety and priority at junctions (see page 56). This too will be a key issue for the Government's Cycling Delivery Plan, due out later this year.

For more information, enter the term 'lorries' in the search box at ctc.org.uk



Scan this with your smartphone or tablet to go to the story

SEEING SENSE

The surge in cyclists' deaths in London last November must spur real safety improvements, not victim-blaming, says CTC Campaigns Director **Roger Geffen**

THE SHOCKING spike in cyclist fatalities in London last November prompted a deluge of media, political and protest activity. After six cycling deaths within 13 days, journalists, politicians and the public demanded to know: 'What should be done to prevent cyclists' deaths on our roads?'

Boris Johnson's suggested answers didn't help. He claimed not to be 'finger-pointing', before clearly pointing the finger at cyclists' behaviour. His inflammatory and insensitive comments bore little relationship to any evidence that CTC is aware of.

CTC has repeatedly pointed out that, in collisions between cyclists and drivers, the police attribute responsibility solely to the driver three times as often as to the cyclist

(However, they are somewhat more likely to blame the cyclist if the cyclist is a child or if the cyclist is killed – both of which seem harsh!)

GET MORE ON CAMPAIGNS

Sign up to CTC's online, monthly campaigns bulletin, *CycleDigest*, at ctc.org.uk/cycledigest

Training & enforcement

CTC believes absolutely in the importance of safe and responsible road behaviour by cyclists and drivers alike. We want cycle training widely available for all, not just for young children but also for teenagers and for adults wishing to discover or rediscover cycling.

We also want to see much more effort put into public information campaigns to promote driver awareness of cycle safety issues, such as: looking out for cyclists at junctions; not overtaking too closely; and understanding why cyclists are trained