



Stanley J. A. Cotterell, Founder of the CTC.

SINCE 1878

AS CTC BECOMES CYCLING UK, TONY UPFOLD COMPARES THE CLUB'S HISTORICAL AIMS AND ACTIVITIES WITH TODAY'S

CTC HAS BEEN promoting cycling and protecting cyclists since 5 August 1878. On that Bank Holiday Monday, thanks to the vision and vigour of Edinburgh medical student Stanley Cotterell, the Bicycle Touring Club was formed in Harrogate. Five years later, it was renamed the Cyclists' Touring Club.

The oil-powered lamps have given way to LED lights, the CTC uniform of dark green serge jacket, knickerbockers and peaked helmet has morphed into figure-hugging lycra (some would say for the worse), while cloth-backed maps and sepia-tint photographs have developed into GPS and GoPro videos.


Just as technology has advanced, so CTC has adapted to the times. It's been a process of evolution over 138 years – and yet nothing much has changed, really. The club's principal stated objective from day one was: 'To promote, assist and protect the use of bicycles, tricycles and other similar vehicles on the public roads.'

That aspiration is as true and relevant today as it was then. CTC has always been the voice of the everyday cyclist, and many of the projects, campaigns and issues it tackles in 2016 are remarkably similar to those it dealt with in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

BIKE WEEK

THEN: CTC was the driving force behind the first National Bicycle Week in 1923. The club helped organise a nationwide programme of rallies, fancy-dress parades, public meetings, massed club runs, race meetings, school lectures and BBC talks.

The great 'Ride A Bicycle' campaign included an 888-mile relay round England, with cyclists carrying a message on vellum from the Lord Mayor of London, which was signed by 30 civic dignitaries en route. The last day of the relay, 3 June, coincided with King George V's 58th birthday. The day before, a CTC procession rode to Buckingham Palace conveying a message of congratulations to the club's patron.

NOW: Ninety-three years later, Cycling UK's Bike Week 2016 will again be spreading the cycling word from 11-19 June, with the emphasis on getting people to ride to work. Last year, half a million people took part in more than 1,000 events to make the biggest nationwide cycling event in the UK another resounding success. Bike Week demonstrates the social, health and environmental benefits of cycling, whether it's for 

» fun, as a means of getting to work or school, to get to the shops or just to visit friends.

CAMPAGNING FOR CYCLISTS

THEN: Campaigning has been in CTC's DNA from the start. It had to be, bearing in mind the amount of anti-cycling sentiment that has existed ever since the first boneshakers appeared on roads in 1867. One of the greatest victories in CTC's history came in 1888, when a skilfully-waged campaign led to the Local Government Act recognising cycles as 'carriages' with the right to use roads for the first time – legislation so important, it was dubbed the 'Cyclists' Magna Carta'.

Until then, cyclists had suffered under unreasonable bylaws that differed from one local authority to the next. For example, in Southampton cyclists were 'compelled to dismount if signalled by a horse rider or carriage driver.' That changed after Parliament agreed a motion proposed by Sir John Dorington, MP for Tewkesbury, on behalf of CTC. Sir John was a CTC member and his club colleagues bombarded MPs with letters calling for their support.

NOW: With your help, we've been lobbying MPs ever since that landmark 1888 Act – never more so than earlier this year, when politicians of all major parties debated funding for cycling at Westminster Hall. Ahead of that debate on 3 February, Cycling UK set up an online action enabling members to email their local MP to persuade them to attend and speak up in support of investment for cycling. We also briefed MPs.

Cycling UK is campaigning for some of the Government's £15billion roads budget over the next five years to be reallocated to the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS). That's due to be launched imminently but it's set to receive a derisory £300million.

The current investment of £1.39 per head is not enough to realise Prime Minister David Cameron's dream of a 'Cycling Revolution'. With your help, we will continue to campaign for at least £10 per head per year to be invested in cycling.

CYCLE TRAINING

THEN: Thousands of people up and down the country will still have their metal Cycling Proficiency Test badge tucked away in a drawer – possibly even Prince Charles, who passed at the age of 12 in 1960.

"The club's principal stated objective from day one was: 'To promote, assist and protect the use of bicycles, tricycles and similar vehicles on the public roads.'"



- (TOP) Space for Cycling ride
- (ABOVE) August 1888 Gazette hails the ruling that bikes will be recognised as carriages
- (RIGHT) Bikeability training



The proficiency test was the brainchild of CTC. At the 1938 AGM, Reginald Cairns Shaw, assistant editor of the CTC Gazette, proposed a motion calling for education authorities to introduce cycle instruction into the school curriculum – as cycling casualties had been rising.

The outbreak of World War Two meant it was 1947 before the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents introduced a scheme for training and testing children in cycling proficiency. CTC prepared the instruction manual, with seven children taking part in the pilot session on 7 October.

NOW: CTC helped co-ordinate a new look for Cycling Proficiency in the 21st century, and its

successor was born. In 2007, it was renamed Bikeability under the new National Standard for Cycle Training. More than 1.8million young people have had formal cycle training so far and, just before Christmas, the Government announced £50m for Bikeability over the next four years.

Cycling UK does all it can to encourage kids to cycle for the benefit of their health and the environment, holding after-school cycling sessions around the country and running such projects as Play On Pedals, which aims to teach all four-year-olds in Glasgow to cycle before they start primary school and is set to be rolled out nationally in Scotland.

GROUP RIDING

THEN: One of CTC's founding objectives in 1878 was 'to provide companions for a tour from a list of members to be kept by the hon sec'. Before long, there were groups of CTC members riding together around the country.

Sometimes national events brought these groups together. Remembering the



● (ABOVE) CTC group riding, probably 1950s
 ● (LEFT) CTC touring holiday by air in the '50s
 ● (RIGHT) Winged Wheel on a wall in Forth



Photos: left by Gerald Davison. Others by CTC.



success of the great Relay Ride during the first National Bicycle Week 12 years earlier, CTC decided to repeat the event to mark King George V's Silver Jubilee in 1935. Teams of riders from 42 District Associations covered 2,250 miles in 15 days, travelling from the south coast of England as far north as Dundee, with excursions into Wales at Cardiff and Llandudno. There was also a 200-mile ride in Northern Ireland. A message of congratulations for His Majesty, CTC's patron, was carried on the relay and signed by nearly 100 mayors and provosts.

NOW: Cycling UK's 130 Member Groups and around 60 informal groups put on 13,613 rides last year, an average of 262 a week. There were 248 sportive and challenge rides around the UK and more than 1,000 off-road rides. CTC has more than 600 Affiliate Groups, 400 of which put on about 20,800 rides in 2015, involving 8,000 individual cyclists. And a staggering 1.5million hours were contributed by CTC volunteers.

TOURING HOLIDAYS

THEN: Those early cycling pioneers swiftly turned their attentions to touring abroad. There were enormous benefits to being a CTC member. The first 'Continental Road Book' was published in 1887, costing 10 shillings for three volumes and covering such destinations as Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

Two years later, a special foreign customs committee was set up, and before long various countries waived the import tax for a ridden bicycle when crossing their border if you held a CTC membership card.

In the 1930s, the Cyclists' Touring Club advertised an all-in tour for £3 10sh, staying at hotels recommended by cyclists.

NOW: Formed in 2000, CTC Cycling Holidays sells around 1,200 holidays a year, mainly to Europe but also further afield, with a rate of 60% return bookings. France is the most popular destination but there are long-haul tours each year to the likes of South-East Asia, India, Japan and China.

CYCLING FOR ALL

THEN: On 27 October 1898, CTC member Florence Wallace Pomeroy, Lady Harberton, was refused service at the Hautboy Hotel in Ockham, Surrey, because she was wearing 'Rational Dress' – baggy knickerbockers and a jacket – rather than the ankle-length skirt that made cycling a hazardous occupation for women at the time. Lady Harberton was told she could have lunch in an apartment off the public bar, which was occupied at the time by three men who were smoking and drinking.

CTC removed its Winged Wheel from the Hautboy and took the hotel's landlady, Martha Sprague, to court for 'wilfully and unlawfully neglecting and refusing to supply a traveller

with victuals.' It took an all-male jury just 12 minutes to find Mrs Sprague not guilty, but the case hit the national headlines, made CTC a lot of friends, led to more women's cycling groups, and was a milestone on the road to female emancipation.

NOW: Cycling UK believes cycling is for everyone, of any age, ability or background. Our community cycle clubs around the country hold regular rides to encourage more women to cycle, including those from the Asian community. We provide regular cycling opportunities around the country for the disabled and disadvantaged, helping people to overcome personal barriers to cycling.

ROAD JUSTICE

THEN: One of the original objectives of the Bicycle Touring Club in 1878 was: 'The protection, so far as funds permit, of members against unprovoked assaults on British highroads whilst riding bicycles.' By December 1934, that philosophy resulted in the establishment of a Defence Fund, initially worth £500, 'for the purpose of resisting the continued encroachment upon cyclists' rights and the persecution that is spreading in so many directions.' A resolution was also carried 'condemning the scandalous conduct of coroners' courts when considering fatal road accidents.'

NOW: Cycling UK's Cyclists' Defence Fund is raising £75,000 to bring a private prosecution in 2016 against the driver of a car which hit Mick Mason from behind as he cycled on London's Regent Street two years ago. Mick died 19 days after the incident but the police failed to press charges against the driver. See www.justgiving.com/justiceformichael.





- (ABOVE) Access campaigning in Wales
- (TOP RIGHT) Cycle carriage: a battle since 1878
- (RIGHT) But in the '50s, cyclists chartered trains!



Photos: far left by Nicola Pugh. Others by CTC.

» Daniel Squire, 18, was killed by a van, whose driver had failed to see him cycling along a straight road in Kent on a clear day. Yet a jury cleared the driver of all charges, even though he had been texting continuously until seconds before the collision. Daniel's devastated family are now donating money raised through fund-raising to CTC's Road Justice campaign.

IMPROVING ACCESS

THEN: In 1885, Richmond Park and Regent's Park in London were the first of several Royal Parks opened to cyclists as a result of CTC action. According to the CTC Gazette: 'It was confidently predicted by the anti-cycling brigade that such a step must be attended by disaster. The good sense of the great body of riders has, however, happily triumphed.'

In 1968, CTC helped enshrine in law – the new Countryside Act – the right to cycle on bridleways and long-distance cross-country routes.

NOW: Throughout September last year, CTC and Open MTB ran the joint Trails for Wales campaign, galvanising the support of more than 4,000 people from the off-road community and wider cycling industry. The campaign called for open access to the Rights of Way network in Wales, as enjoyed by Scotland since 2003. The Scottish economy has benefited by £46.5m a year thanks to increased mountain bike access. It is hoped Wales would enjoy similar success

– and help pave the way for open access rights to be considered in England.

BIKES ON TRAINS

THEN: From its inception, the Bicycle Touring Club was in conflict with the railways over charges for carrying cycles and their careful handling. Astute negotiation did result in a 50% reduction in rates between 1878 and 1886, with the occasional concession for the cyclist as well as the cycle itself. CTC even promoted a competition in 1896, with a prize of 20 guineas, for the best-designed luggage van suitable for taking cycles.

NOW: Cyclists looked set to be treated as third-class passengers again last year when Eurostar announced it would make them dismantle and box up their bikes to travel. But CTC made sure that particular plan hit the buffers thanks to its 'Zero Stars for Eurostar' campaign. Nearly 10,000 people protested through an online petition spearheaded by CTC and ECF (the European Cyclists' Federation), and we gained support from politicians on both sides of the Channel, which resulted in a U-turn from Eurostar.

A WELCOME FOR CYCLISTS

THEN: Favourable rates for members were agreed with hotels and hostelieries around the country before the first Christmas carols had even been sung in 1878 – and the first 'Handbook and Guide', listing club-friendly establishments, was published in 1879.

CTC's legendary Winged Wheel badge was adopted in 1886 and the following year giant plaques of the emblem started appearing on those inns and hotels recommended by the club, many of which can still be seen in situ today. The locations are recorded at www.wingedwheels.info.

NOW: CTC's Winged Wheel emblem was the ultimate accolade for a hotel owner, long before Michelin stars were being handed out. But being made out of cast iron and two feet in diameter, it is a little cumbersome – which is why it has now been replaced by a more manageable window sticker with the CTC logo that states Cyclists Welcome. A searchable directory of cyclist-friendly accommodation (and more) is online.

So there you have it: little has really changed. At the end of the day, it's you, alone or with friends, on road or off-road, cycling in the open air and exploring the world with a spirit of freedom and adventure – just as it was 138 years ago.

We're still encouraging people to enjoy the gift of cycling and protecting your right to do it, as we have every day since 5 August 1878. We'll continue to do so every day in the future... with the help and support of the people who count most: you, our members. ●

“The Cycling Proficiency Test was the brainchild of CTC. An AGM motion in 1938 called for cycle instruction on the curriculum”



we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion **UK**

CTC NORTHAMPTON