

FROM CYCLING UK'S CHIEF EXEC

CHANGING GEAR, NOT DIRECTION

*CTC has a new name but the agenda remains the same. Chief Executive **Paul Tuohy** explains*

FOR OVER a century, CTC and CTC members have done all we can to promote and protect the gift of cycling. In the 21st century, that gift is at risk due to a chronic lack of investment in cycling infrastructure. While sports cycling has received millions, cycling for pleasure and transport has been largely ignored. CTC needs a new way of thinking to promote and protect cycling effectively today, one that capitalises on our amazing work, knowledge and heritage. That's why CTC now has a new identity: Cycling UK.

Change is contentious. There is a 'cycle' of opinion that I am familiar with from my work with other charities whenever a big change takes place. It goes something like this... At the beginning, things are positive; there's agreement on the need to do things more effectively. Then there's a dip, as scepticism overrides the initial excitement. Finally, after the change takes place, the mood picks up again. 'Why didn't we do this sooner?' people ask.

This process is no different with CTC, except that this time I have a personal stake in it because I adore cycling. It's always been part of my life. Getting things absolutely right is personal for me, just as it is for CTC Life Members. I love CTC's heritage and history – and they're not for sale. In fact, they will help us 'sell' cycling to people as we shape the future of cycling in the UK, not just for ourselves but for our children and for our society.

CYCLING UK: THE CYCLISTS' CHAMPION

Everyday cycling was ignored in the 1970s, and cycling and CTC's membership dwindled. It was overlooked in the 1990s, even though investment in sports cycling took off. Now it's time for us to change that. I'm fed up of being asked where my helmet is when I go for a ride. My response is simple: 'I'm not racing, I'm riding!'

CTC is cycling's best-kept secret. We might be the greatest cycling movement in the world, but we're unknown to the millions of potential cyclists I want to join us as members and supporters. To change this,



● Paul Tuohy, Winged Wheel badge firmly affixed, makes the case for change

we have to embrace change ourselves.

What about the Winged Wheel and touring? I'm wearing my Winged Wheel badge now as I write, and I wore it as I shook the Transport Minister's hand this morning. Touring is very much part of our plans. Thousands experience the pleasure of touring the countryside with their Member Groups every week, come rain or shine. Touring is a hidden treasure that needs to be promoted as a key part of our offering to members of Cycling UK.

Whatever way you want to ride your bike, be proud that CTC is the guiding influence

behind the new Cycling UK. CTC's heritage and history are parts of our offering to members, along with campaigning, inclusive cycling projects, lobbying, advice, forums, cycling holidays, and more. As Cycling UK, we have a huge amount to offer future members and supporters.

Remember too that every pound you give as a member helps us raise so much more. So as well as providing CTC's traditional benefits to you, we can champion cycling for society as a whole. That is what makes us a very special club. Here's to the next 138 years! ●

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Photo by Joaze Dymond