



Newsletters are on display in the Clubroom,
Previous issues can be found on the Members' Area of the website.

TT SUCCESS

For Team Sky's Edvald Boasson Hagen in the [Tour of Oman](#) and Bradley Wiggins in the [Tour of Andalusia](#).

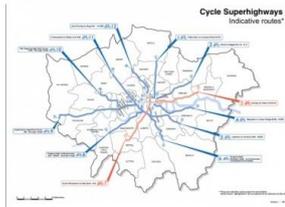


TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Not much decent weather for cycling at the moment but some good news comes as the Government pledges to put [cycling at the heart of transport strategy](#). CTC, while pleased, would like some firmer goals and timetables. The commitment allocates £12.5 million to cycle-training for school children, cycle-to-work schemes, cycle parking and 20mph zones.

In Sevenoaks Councillors are more reluctant to incorporate cycling so assuredly. Members of WK CTC and Sevenoaks Cycling Forum attended a meeting on Wednesday, 24th to put pressure on them to take the issue seriously. You can read their address [here](#).

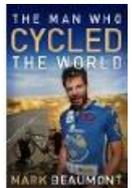
In London work has begun on two [Cycle Superhighways](#) of the 12 planned to be ready by 2015. Plans for the two routes - Merton to the City via the A24, and from Barking to Tower Gateway along the A13 and Cable Street - can be seen [here](#). Future routes will include Woolwich to Tower Bridge, London to Victoria, and Penge to Bank.



MARK BEAUMONT



After completion of another [epic journey](#), this time from Anchorage in Alaska to Ushuaia in Argentina, Mark Beaumont begins his UK lecture-tour in March. His ride - the length of the American continent - was filmed for a BBC documentary, his book is available in paperback, and you can see him on his tour at [Assembly Halls, Tunbridge Wells](#) on Tuesday, 23 March.



IL CAMPIONISSIMO

This month's [Guardian's Bike Podcast](#) features some great cycling books, including William Fotheringham's *Fallen Angel, The Passion of Fausto Coppi*. A captivating book, it is about the life of a champion as much as the climate of post-War Italy, of racing intrigues and relentless drive.

INVENTIONS

Don't forget your designs for the Great Egg Race or if you want to *go further*, try your inventions with [Dragons' Den](#).

BARNES WWT CENTRE

Did you recognize the Wildfowl and Wetlands shot in *Winged Words*? More of Andy Meaton's pictures and videos can now be seen on the [Bexley RSPB site](#).

Please consider helping with WK Outdoor Events!

WEST KENT'S GREAT EGG RACE
Thursday, 22nd April

WANTED TANDEM
Lightweight touring tandem suitable for mother and daughter. Sized 21" X approx. 18". Any design.
Marie Davis
Email: jeff.davis3@tesco.net

Winged Words Contributions to *Winged Words* by 8th March, please.

MAINTENANCE

My car wouldn't start this week. With various neighbours' assistance, I discovered it had no water or oil in it. Of course, being a girl, we all just laughed. Ha, ha. But the truth is I have concentrated far too much on another, far more interesting, sort of maintenance. I particularly liked [this find](#). If you know all that already, what about [this sound advice](#) for cleaning the winter muck off?



BIKE TUBES

Watch **Planet Armstrong**, focusing on the American rider's return to competitive cycling: 3 March, British Eurosport. Also Paris-Nice (7-12 March) and Tirreno-Adriatico (12-16 March), British Eurosport. Share [Bike Radar's celebration](#) of 5 years of You Tube videos. Then [send me yours!](#)



OVER MY HANDLEBARS



**WEST KENT
CTC**



68th PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

**Judge - Roger Force FRPS
(Dartford Camera Club)**

plus slide presentation

“Over My Handlebars”

by

Martin Lloyd

A light-hearted look at cycling experiences, travels etc over the years, or in his words, “Slides that I should have thrown out!”

Saturday 6th March 2010

**Methodist Church Hall, Otford (near Sevenoaks)
includes display of members' Arts and Crafts**

Doors open 5.30pm - Presentation 7pm

Tickets from: Peter Scott 01474 833123

or from any West Kent CTC Group Contact

Price £4.50 in advance or £5 on the door

Refreshments available - ample parking and dry cycle storage

www.westkentctc.org.uk

[BACK](#)

WEST KENT CTC NEEDS YOUR HELP NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE

The West Kent CTC Medal Series and other events are under threat due to a lack of club members who are unwilling to give up just a few hours of their time on a few occasions each year.

The first event on the Outdoor Events calendar is the [Grimpeur 100km / Hilly 50km on Sunday, 14th March](#). This is currently short of four Official Helpers for the following locations and times.

[8.00 - 10.00 Otford Church Hall](#) (at the start to take registrations and dish out food and drinks); one helper required to work with John Warren and Jan White

[11.30 - 18.30 Otford Church Hall](#) (check-ins and food for returning riders); one helper required to work with John Warren, Martin Gill and Brian Juchau, choose a time if you can't do the whole seven hours.

[10.30 - 15.30 Sevenoaks Weald](#) manned control, one helper to assist Peta Masey.

[11.00 - 14.25 Yorks Hill car park](#) manned control, one helper to assist Brian Barrett, particularly 11.50 - 13.25 when riders may be coming from both directions.

Without assistance, it may not be possible to run this event, and the same applies to other events later in the year. If members were to pitch in just once, it really would make a difference. Is that too much to ask?

Why not experience that feeling of knowing you've done your bit for your club? As a token of its appreciation, the BAR Competition recognises the contribution of members as BAR points, available for Organiser / Assistant Organiser (10pts / 6pts respectively) and Official Helpers (5pts).

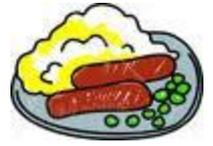
Tempted? Contact the individual Organiser of the event you think you can help out on - see Events drop down on our web site for details.

Alternatively, email Bob MacDowall on <mailto:wkctcouthoorevents9@googlemail.com>.

Thank you for your help!

[BACK](#)

BANGERS AND MASH TUESDAY, 16th MARCH



Dear West Kenter,

It is time once again for one of our popular Bangers and Mash evenings and a great chance to catch up with members of other groups!

As usual, it will be held in the Crown pub in Shoreham village on Tuesday 16 March 2010 at 20.30 hours. A Veggie option is available on request.

I will confirm the numbers to the Crown on Sunday, 14 March, so please let me know before that date by email or 01689 821475.

The cost will be held at the same price of £10.00, including a dessert and a tip (financial not a racing tip)!

We look forward to seeing you, although I appreciate it is too far for some of you to ride, so motorised assistance is acceptable in those circumstances.

Yours in cycling,

Kind regards,

Peter

PS. PLEASE ADVISE ANYONE NOT ON EMAIL OF THIS DATE.

THANKS!

[*BACK*](#)



WEST KENT'S GREAT EGG RACE

Now with two classes!

This year's spectacular will be held at the Clubroom on
Thursday, 22nd April.

There will be two classifications:

Class A will be for vehicles driven by a single axle, either front or rear drive.

Class B will be for vehicles powered through any number of axles.

In both classes only one rubber band may be used to provide the motive power.

The band may be used either as a loop or cut to one length.

Only rubber bands supplied by the organiser may be used. These will be available soon.

Whether you intend entering a machine or just coming along as a spectator, this event has great entertainment value and is not to be missed.

As usual, there will be eggcellent prizes both for speed and appearance.

DON'T MISS IT!



[BACK](#)

PAUL MEPHAM, LIVE AT THE CLUBROOM

On Thursday, May 13th Paul Mepham of Harry Perry Cycles will make a welcome return to the West Kent CTC Clubroom to give an evening of help, guidance and tips on, among other subjects, wheel building.

Paul is a firm favourite with members and his visits are always eagerly looked forward to. Make a note of the date in your diary NOW to avoid missing what promises to be an informative and entertaining evening.



[BACK](#)



SEVENOAKS TRANSPORT STRATEGY

AN OPPORTUNITY... OR JUST A PHOTOCALL?

Two preliminary remarks. Thank you Mr Chairman for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Sevenoaks Cycle Forum. Firstly, I would like to point out that if the written consultation process for this document had worked properly, then we would not be taking up your valuable time. We would be sitting at the back and applauding. So I'm not going to apologise for speaking for a little longer than you might wish. Secondly, we would like to exempt you Mr Chairman (Councillor Coates) and Councillor Brazier from our brickbats, because you made a real effort to engage with us and understand what we wanted. Unfortunately your efforts on our behalf were insufficient to produce a real change in this document.

Let me recap briefly: last November we prepared a response to the draft Sevenoaks District Transport Strategy (SDST) entitled *A Cycling Plan for Sevenoaks - Safer Greener Journeys*. Our 14-page submission called for a comprehensive approach to promoting cycling in the district, with more ambitious targets and quick action in priority areas such as Sevenoaks station. It pointed out that Sevenoaks was the only district in Kent with no cycling plan and emphasised the contribution cycling could make to solving a range of problems including road congestion, carbon reduction, youth policy, community safety, healthier living, and air quality management. Councillor Peter Fleming met us for a photocall when we delivered copies of our submission for every district councillor. The result was a very nice picture in the Chronicle - Mr Fleming is a good-looking chap and enhances every picture that he's in!

But a photo-op is no substitute for action. We said that the Transport Strategy provided an opportunity for decisive action to improve the environment for all, but we now think that opportunity has been missed. While individual councillors, even cabinet members, have welcomed our ideas, there has been no sign that Sevenoaks is going to move up from the bottom of the league table in Kent as far as cycling provision is concerned, or take seriously its commitment to cutting carbon emissions under the Nottingham Declaration. Most of our arguments seem to have fallen into a black hole somewhere between Sevenoaks and Maidstone. We note with concern that Sevenoaks Cycle Forum is omitted in Appendix 21 from the list of organisations which responded to the consultation. We don't want to point the finger of blame, but it is clear that transport is a fertile area for buck-passing between the district and county councils. There has been no response from SDC to our offer of a dialogue about cycling matters. We thought at least the council might name an official who could talk to us - a cycling liaison officer. We floated a few trial balloons in the hope that someone in local government might pick them up - making Sevenoaks a Cycling Town, celebrating National Bike Week in June, organising a Family Cycling Day. The response has been zero. We are concerned not just by this strategy, but by the lack of focus on cycling in other recent SDC documents. The draft Sustainable Community Action Plan and the consultation response by SDC to KCC's transport integration paper *Growth Without Gridlock* show no sign that cycling is anywhere on the radar of SDC officers or councillors.

We have tried very hard to be polite and constructive and we have believed, perhaps mistakenly, that local government will respond best to well-thought-out rational argument rather than noisy protests. There is now a national consensus about the benefits of cycling. The government wants this to be the decade of cycling. All we are asking is that Sevenoaks should join it. We know that eventually our district will catch up with other districts, but by that time everywhere else will have moved on. The only question is, how many years it will take? How many generations of Sevenoaks children will have to grow up unable to cycle on the roads because they aren't safe? Perhaps you are all hoping we will just go away and stop being such a nuisance. Well, we are not going to go away. Nor are we going to be fobbed off with vague promises and half-measures. If it takes a mass demonstration of schoolchildren outside SDC waving placards saying 'Stop Killing the Polar Bears' we can no doubt organise that, but we think there is probably an easier way.

We could go on for hours about what is wrong with this document, although we note it does include a vague reference to the possible need for a district-wide cycling strategy in 2012-2013. I intend to come back to that in slightly more detail. Most of the flaws which we pointed out in the previous draft are unchanged, particularly the very unambitious targets for increasing cycling in the district. It is long, repetitive, poorly drafted, contradictory and ignores important elements of government transport policy - firstly cycle-rail integration and the secondly the

importance of cycling in promoting public health and reducing obesity. There is now a huge amount of national guidance on cycling policy, but nobody seems to have read any of it. Here's a recent quote from the Secretary of State for Transport, Lord Adonis: *"There is nothing more important in transport policy today than promoting cycling at the local level."* By coincidence, this week the departments of health and transport have jointly published a new paper on "active travel" which means cycling and walking. This transport strategy not only lags far behind government policy; it also fails to include any real research on the transport situation in Sevenoaks. How many cycle stands are there in Sevenoaks town centre? How many children cycle to school? The appendix tells us there are 528 car parking places at Sevenoaks railway station, but nobody has bothered to count the spaces for bikes. These are all very simple questions which nobody has bothered to ask, let alone answer in the three years this document has been in gestation. There are sentences which are worthy of an anthology of local government gobbledegook. Page 12: *'Another fragile balance are the competing demands between society's desire for easy convenience to a variety of transport modes and the potential harm transport can impart on the environment.'* Somewhere inside that sentence there is a thought struggling to get out. There is a lot of padding, cut and pasted from other documents, which also fail to treat cycling as anything other than an afterthought. We find it astonishing that the current Air Quality Action plan for Sevenoaks lists 17 action points, but promoting cycling isn't one of them. There are a few pious phrases in the Strategy to suggest that cycling might be a good idea, but they are meaningless because there are no real targets. The document sets a target of a 2% annual growth in cycle trips between now and 2026. This is cut and pasted from the current LTP for Kent and it is absurdly unambitious, given the low starting point in this district. Appendix 14 shows that the cycle count for Sevenoaks rose by 4.5% between 2007 and 2008, so growth of 2% would actually be a step backwards. During the same period Tunbridge Wells recorded a growth in cycling of 19.9% and Dover 42.2%. The average growth in the government's cycling towns is 27% over three years.

We appreciate that this Strategy is already overdue, and there is no appetite for sending it back for another round of rewriting. However, we think it would be quite wrong for the JTB to approve this final version unamended.

On the solitary page (page 49) devoted to cycling, there is a key sentence which is so badly drafted it is hard to decipher the meaning. *"(To) promote and target limited resources it may be necessary to develop a district wide cycling strategy looking at all aspects, including both leisure and commuter cyclists and their journeys and such a move will be reflected in the Implementation Plan."* On Page 10 of the implementation plan a cycling strategy is pencilled in for 2012-13 at a notional cost of £50,000 and Sevenoaks Cycle Forum gets a mention. To us, a cycling strategy is a process, not an event, and we don't see why it can't begin before 2012, nor why it has to stop in 2013. If a district-wide strategy "may" be necessary, then that leaves open the alternative possibility that it "may not". So it's quite possible that nothing at all will happen. It's all as clear as mud, and I suspect that the people who wrote it don't understand it either. I think officers are sitting on the fence because councillors aren't giving a clear enough lead. We want to suggest a revision. The first word in the sentence has been accidentally omitted, so it has to be rewritten whatever happens. Why not cut the ifs and buts and maybes and say unequivocally that Sevenoaks will have a district-wide cycling strategy? We are here as members of the public and we have no power to propose amendments. But you have that power, and we would like you to use it. This is our alternative wording:

It will be necessary to develop a comprehensive cycling strategy for the district, beginning with Sevenoaks urban area and prioritising commuter access by bike to Sevenoaks station. Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council will work together with local stakeholders to set ambitious targets for growth in cycle use. The long-term goal will be to make Sevenoaks a safe place for children to get around by bike. Work will start on a cycling survey of the district in 2010.

We want to make Sevenoaks a safe place where parents can allow their children to cycle. That is a long term task and it requires a proper commitment to a comprehensive cycling plan. Here's another quote from Lord Adonis: *The first and most important message . . . is that we need strong leadership at the local level. Leadership that believes in the benefits of cycling and that is willing to support, promote and encourage it.* Can Sevenoaks rise to that challenge? We believe it can, and it must.

Sevenoaks Cycle Forum, 1 Nightingale Road, Kemsing TN15 6RU Tel:01959 523257

[**BACK**](#)