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Stevenage & North Herts CTC
Part of Cycling UK

News Release 28 March 2017

CYCLING UK CHALLENGE SERIES LAUNCHED IN STEVENAGE **200 women and men celebrate summertime * Including TT1000 riders**

Start to finish sunshine greeted the two hundred cyclists who launched Cycling UK's new Challenge Ride series at the Stevenage Start of Summertime Specials on Sunday. This was the very first event in the new national series which will also finish with "Emitremmus" in Stevenage in October. There'll be rides throughout Britain during the months in between, including The Wirral in early April through to Leicestershire in May and Ayrshire in June, followed by East Anglia in July, North Wales in late August/early September, and the New Forest in October.

Despite putting their clocks forward an hour the previous hour everyone was up bright and early and in Fairlands Valley Park for the start and a choice of four rides.



CTC is now Cycling UK, Stevenage CTC is now Cycling UK Stevenage and this was the first time to see the new branding in the town with banners, gazebos and clothing.

These were the twenty fourth SSoSS rides since they were launched by Stevenage CTC and this time there was a choice of four – 62 kilometres to Reed, Barkway and Buntingford; 115 kilometres to Thaxted and back; the new SSoSS century ride of 160 kilometres (or 100 miles); and the 210 kilometres all the way to Lavenham in Suffolk and back.

These were not races but they were challenges with upper and lower time limits.

At 8.15a.m. sharp Tony Upfold from Cycling UK's national office started the longest ride and a keen 24 set off to attempt the 130 miles to Suffolk and back. Then at 9a.m. he was ready to send the Century Riders on their way, this included many such as Nicola and Jason Morris from Stevenage attempting their first ever hundred mile ride as well as the twin towns 1000 team preparing for their ride in June.

A group of seven from Cycling UK Stevenage (Stevenage CTC) - Nicola, Jason, Penny Schenkel, Lynn Bonnici, Jim Brown, Matthew Newton and Steve Lusby soon settled down into an excellently paced ride giving time for a relaxed lunch break in picturesque Finchingfield and a finish at 7.20p.m., twenty minutes to spare! 29 finished the 100 miles.

The Deputy Mayor of Stevenage, Councillor Pam Stuart was on hand to start the most popular ride. 87 attempted the 115 kilometres ride to Thaxted and back; and then the 56 riding about 40 miles to Reed, Barkway, Hare Street and back.

Many on the shorter rides were delighted with their achievement including Helen Harris and 14 year old Marriotts student Sophia Morris accompanied by Jenny Smith on the 62 kilometres. Sophia really enjoyed the ride. She wants to try the fifty mile Stevenage Circular now as it's a bit further and she feels ready for the challenge. Just four people failed to finish their ride within the various time limits. All superbly organised by Jill and Jim Borchers from the Stevenage group of Cycling UK. Lots of thanks to them and the twenty volunteer helpers scattered far and wide or sweeping.

Changing the clocks was just the start of a very busy Spring and Summer for Cycling UK Stevenage. Coming up are the Stevenage Festival of Cycling; the Spring Rides – every day in mid May; Bike Week – every day in mid June; the Stevenage Circular; a skills challenge; off road challenge; Emitremmus plus dozens of local group rides with many suitable for starters. The Circular Cycle will be starting from Marriotts School on Sunday 18th June.

Their Saturday Starters are a fantastic introduction to group cycling. The half day rides leave Costello's Café in Fairlands Valley Park (SG2 0BL) at 2p.m. EVERY Saturday. These are rides at a sociable pace with a leader and sweeper linked by radio, and a

refreshment stop in a tea room or café. This Saturday's (1st April) Starter ride is to the Old Post Office in Datchworth.

Then there are the evening rides EVERY Wednesday evening at 7.15p.m. from the green near Springfield House Community Centre in Old Stevenage (SG1 3EJ). You'll be back about 10p.m. Please bring good working lights. Next Wednesday's (5th April) evening ride is to Willian where there will be a short break in the Three Horseshoes.

See the website www.stevenagectc.org.uk for the huge variety of Sunday rides. There are also opportunities to enjoy away events and participate in Cycling UK competitions.

Cycling in a group is fun and good for you. Why not have a go this year? There are local CTC rides EVERY Wednesday evening and the Saturday Starters EVERY Saturday all year round.

With Cycling UK people ride with each other not against each other. Newcomers will be welcome but under 16s should bring a responsible adult please. There are accredited ride leaders and sweepers usually with a radio link so no-one gets left behind.

On all evening rides please ensure you have working, effective lights.

You'll find the full programme on www.stevenagectc.org.uk but it includes:

- Evening rides from Old Stevenage at least EVERY Wednesday at 7.15p.m. Meet near Springfield House Community Centre and the war memorial (SG1 3EJ). Expect to cycle a total of about 20 miles with a brief break in a country pub. Back about 10p.m. so please bring lights.
- Starter half day rides from Fairlands Valley Park EVERY Saturday. Meet at Costello's Café (SG2 0BL). Sociable pace with a refreshment break in a café or tea rooms. The Starters are afternoon rides leaving at 2p.m. during the Spring and Summer. In winter they are at 10.30a.m.

- A huge variety of Sunday rides from short half day trips to quite demanding “A” and challenge rides including the Stevenage Start of Summertime Specials and Emitremmus.
- Most rides are on lanes and quieter country roads but there are some off road activities. And there’s the opportunity to enjoy Cycling UK’s national events. The group sends “teams” to away events on a regular basis. The club rides are free but Cycling UK (CTC) would like you to join them after you’ve enjoyed a few.

Remember Cycling UK ride with each other not against each other. Stevenage CTC group rides have experienced ride makers, a leader and sweeper with a radio link, on the front and back – no-one gets left behind. You can get more details by contacting Penny (07787 816434); Jim (0793 968 7509); Jill (07816 625901) or Tina (01438 235881) or by emailing jim@stevenagectc.org.uk

Cycling with your local CTC group is a great way to get fit and enjoy the local countryside in good company. Cycling is fun, it’s good for the environment, sociable and it’s also good for you. Stevenage CTC is the local group of Cycling UK – the National Cycling Charity.

ENDS

More from JIM BROWN 0793 968 7509 or Tina Walker 01438 235881. For national information contact the national Cycling UK press office on 01483 238 315, 07786 320 713 or email publicity@cyclinguk.org

The CTC, now known nationally as Cycling UK, is the national cycling charity. It is run by cyclists for cyclists. The national website is at www.ctc.org.uk

CTC/Cycling UK works to promote cycling by raising public and political awareness of its health, social and environmental benefits, and by working with all communities to help realise those benefits.

CTC/Cycling UK has been protecting and promoting the rights of cyclists since 1878. It now has more members than at any time in its history. CTC is a not-for-profit organisation funded through memberships and donations. We focus on the social side of cycling as well as being a powerful and independent voice on behalf of ALL cyclists. CTC offers a range of benefits, including insurance and legal advice, for every type of cyclist. By joining CTC YOU are supporting UK cycling and giving us a louder voice on issues that are important to all users of cycles.

Notes to editors:

Cycling UK, the national cycling charity, inspires and helps people to cycle and keep cycling, whatever kind of cycling they do or would like to do. Over a century's experience tells us that cycling is more than useful transport; it makes you feel good, gives you a sense of freedom and creates a better environment for everyone.

Local Website www.stevenagectc.org.uk

To join CTC / Cycling UK visit <http://www.cyclinguk.org> or 'phone 0844 736 8451

Jim Brown, 106 Oaks Cross, Stevenage, SG2 8LT

National release:

For immediate release: Friday 17 March, 2017

CYCLING UK'S NEW CHALLENGE RIDE SERIES HERALDS START OF SUMMERTIME

Cycling UK has announced a new Challenge Ride Series of sportives for 2017 – which gets underway with Cycling Stevenage's 'Start of Summertime' on Sunday, 26 March.

Hundreds of riders will be losing an hour's sleep the night before the popular Hertfordshire event, as the clocks go forward at 1am.

The Challenge Ride Series 2017 comprises 16 handpicked rides organised by some of Cycling UK's local Member Groups, which will involve nearly 3,500 participants in total.

Cycling UK Chief Executive Paul Tuohy said: "Many of the rides include a choice of distances, so anyone interested in taking part should find one to suit their own requirements – whether it's 14 miles, 50, 100 or 130.

"The series will give people the perfect excuse to cycle in some of our amazing countryside and perhaps discover an area they haven't visited before.

"You can, for example, enjoy Momma's Mountain Views with Two Mills CTC, go Back to the Fuschia with Leicestershire and Rutland CTC, and explore the delights of Devon with Devon CTC. Whichever you choose, a grand day out is guaranteed!"

All finishers will receive a Challenge Ride Series medal and ribbon branded with the event name, a certificate, and a Cycling UK goodie bag, in addition to anything supplied by the local organisers.

The series kicks off with Cycle Stevenage's Start of Summertime ride on 26 March and ends with its Emitremmus Desrever (Summertime Reversed) on 29 October.

In between, there will be rides throughout Britain in locations including The Wirral, Ayrshire, East Anglia, North Wales, the New Forest, Newcastle and Swansea. And, for night owls, there's always the Morecambe Midsummer Midnight Madness ride.

Cycling UK Challenge Ride Series 2017 – event list

26 March:	Start of Summertime	Starts: Stevenage	(Number of riders – 200)
9 April:	Early Season Challenge Ride	Starts: Farndon, nr Chester	(250)
23 April:	Bowland Forest Populaire	Starts: Wray, Lancaster	(40)
14 May:	Back to the Fuschia	Starts: Thornton, Leicestershire	(40)
21 May:	Between the Parks/Park2Park	Starts: Woodley, nr Romsey	(100)

4 June:	Bamburgh Summer 100	Starts: Gubeon Golf Centre, nr Morpeth	(30)
11 June:	Cumnock Canter/Glespin Gallop	Starts: Troon, South Ayrshire	(100)
25 June:	The Des Radford 100 Miler	Starts: Sail Bridge, Swansea	(30)
9 July:	Diss Dawdle/Diss Dander	Starts: Diss, Norfolk	(150)
16 July:	Devon Delight	Starts: Newton Abbot	(200)
20 August:	Tour of the Hills	Starts: Shere, Surrey	(200)
27 August:	Wild Wales Challenge	Starts: Bala, Gwynedd	(600)
2 Sept:	Momma's Mountain Views	Starts: Tattenhall, Cheshire	(50)
16 Sept:	Discovering Shropshire (Blue Remembered Hills)	Starts: Upton Magna	(40)
8 October:	Gridiron 100	Starts: Lymington, New Forest	(800)
29 October:	Emitremmus Desrever	Starts: Stevenage	(300)

Total number of participants: 3,130

For more information contact the national Cycling UK Press Office on 01483 238 315, 07786 320 713 or email publicity@cyclingsuk.org

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2. For more information about Cycling UK's Challenge Ride Series 2017, and details of individual events, visit: <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/article/cycling-guide/challenge-ride-series>

To join or support us visit cyclingsuk.org; phone 01483 238301/0844 7368450; email cycling@cyclingsuk.org.

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