



MILDENHALL CYCLING CLUB

PRESS RELEASE Rally No 1

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Mildenhall Cycling Club has unveiled exciting plans to relaunch their nationally acclaimed annual Cycling Rally, as a festival to reflect its appeal as a celebration of cycling that families and enthusiasts can come together to enjoy.

Over its 28 years the popular event has attracted up and coming names from the world of cycling including Victoria Pendleton and Laura Trott - now this year, the new look festival has relocated to West Row offering a purpose built Village Hall & licensed bar and an adjacent camping field with views looking out over the Fens! It is just over two miles from the old Rally site, but Mildenhall can be reached very safely using the tarmacked Wamil Way bridleway and will still take place over its traditional August Bank Holiday weekend (26th-28th August).

Chairman of the organisers, Mark Burchett said, "We felt that continuing to call it a rally, no longer did the event justice. Calling it a festival is a reflection of what the event represents, a celebration of cycling that is open to everyone.

But, it is far more than just a name change. As well as the fabulous new venue, the Mildenhall Cycling Festival will have a new logo and website that is compatible with tablet and smart phone devices. But it will retain all the regular features of the Rally as they have become synonymous with 'Mildenhall' throughout UK cycling."

"Having had a one-day test event there in 2016, I am delighted to say that everything went very well, with the new venue passing with flying colours. Not only that but all the feedback we have had already has been very supportive" added Mr Burchett.

The organisers have been working on this project for the last eighteen months with the very accommodating trustees of the Village Hall complex, who have made changes and improvements to their facilities to cater for the three-day Festival. These will be complemented by the upgraded toilets and the separate blocks of individual showers for Men and Women, provided again by local company Hallmark Event Hire, who deal with all the large music festivals.

"The Rally was known throughout the UK's cycling community as one of the best all-round cycling weekends that appealed to cyclists of all ages and especially families. We hope this move to the picturesque venue that surrounds the West Row Village Hall complex the Festival will appeal to the next generation of cyclists too", explained Mr Burchett.

The new venue means the organisers are once again able to offer camping and caravan facilities from 4pm on Friday 25th August 2017. To reward the loyalty of those that regularly support the event the prices of pitches are discounted, so if you book before the Spring Bank-Holiday, a Cycle-Camper pitch will be £25 while a Motorised pitch for car and tent or caravan will be £36.

The organisers are very keen to promote the environmentally friendly aspects of cycling and are offering an incentive to those that cycle to the Festival. When they book their cycle camper pitch, they will get a £5 voucher that they can redeem on their arrival, which if they booked at the discounted rate their pitch will cost them just £20 for the whole weekend.

After 29th May, the prices will be £28 for the cycle-campers and £40 for the standard pitch.

The grass-track will continue to form the centrepiece of the Festival, with racing every day from 12noon. The Saturday will be dedicated to the under16's and one of the new events, a senior fun omnium event. Although, unusually for 'Mildenhall', they won't be hosting any National Championships this year with the Heckington Show, quite rightly, being awarded all three to commemorate the 150th year of the Lincolnshire event.

Some of the Rally favourites retained include the Cycle Jumble, which will take place Sunday evening in the marquees and the Quiz Night on the Sunday evening in the Village Hall, with its licensed bar that will be open every evening of the Festival.

On the competitive front there will be the Children's Duathlon on the Sunday and Mildenhall's traditional 'Madison' Cyclo-Cross on the final day of the Festival. Both will take advantage of the rural setting and will provide an interesting and testing course on the bike.

Providing a suitable backdrop to the grass-track arena will be the two day Trade Show with the 50m long marquee. This offers a unique opportunity for the cyclists attending the event who already know the advantages, as well as local people, to see a variety of companies selling a range of cycles, clothing and accessories often at bargain prices, all on their doorstep!

On the touring front, C.T.C. (Cyclists Touring Club) Suffolk will be offering 57, 100, 160, 200 & 300km timed-touring rides on the Saturday, under the auspices of the Audax organisation. For those that want something more relaxing, Mildenhall Cycling Club will have their range of touring leaflets available, offering a variety of scenery over varying distances.

The Club can trace this event back to a one-day grass-track meeting that originally formed part of the Mildenhall Carnival, which began in the 1960's. Ever since it has been attracting some of the top names in amateur cycling and if you want to watch a potential future International or Olympic cycling Champion there's no better place than the Festival. Over the years as the Mildenhall Rally, it can boast among its many thousands of competitors such impressive stars as Nicole Cook MBE, Ben Swift, Jason Kenny OBE, Steve Burke MBE, Emma Trott and Laura Kenny (nee Trott) OBE and of course Victoria Pendleton CBE, who was a member of the Mildenhall club when she was growing up. It is at grass-tracks like this where these young riders cut their teeth and the skills they learnt have then stood them in good stead on the top international velodromes around the world.

Day entry to the Festival will be by donation but will include free day parking and is an ideal cheap day-out for families, whether you are from a cycling background or not.

On the Saturday, West Suffolk Wheelers will again be organising their Skilful Riding for 4-14 year olds, which will consist of five Go-Ride skill bases where you can earn points towards a Certificate for completing. There will Children's Sports every day, with a mega bouncy castle and face painting by Kellii from Off the Curb & Over the Rainbow on the Sunday & Monday, with a children's entertainer and circus skills workshop on the final day.

All the details of everything happening at the Festival can be found at www.mildenhallfestival.bike

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NOTES FOR EDITORS.

- PLEASE DO NOT PUBLISH ANY PHONE NUMBERS. The website has an email address they can write to which gets checked daily, but unfortunately as we are all volunteers, we cannot deal with the volume of phone enquiries from the public that the Festival generates. Thank you for your co-operation.
- If you want to use the Festival logo, please contact Mark Burchett for a high-resolution version.
- For more details from Forest Heath District Council, please contact Mark Beaumont (Media Officer) 01638 719236 or Julie White 01638 719728