

# **Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire**



**Newsletter No 61**

**October 2011**

# CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE

*Founded 1992*

## **Committee**

Chairperson	Hazel Mitchell
Vice-Chair	Peter Blakeman
Secretary	Carole Blakeman
Treasurer	Neville Hobday
Membership Secretary	-
Other members	Veronica Brown Hywel Davies

## **Other positions:**

Newsletter Editor	Peter Blakeman
-------------------	----------------

E-mail: [ccnb@ccnb.org.uk](mailto:ccnb@ccnb.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.ccnb.org.uk>

Promotional website: <http://www.cyclebedford.org.uk>

## **Campaigning Representation**

CCNB is represented on the following committees:

Bedford Cycle Strategy Group

Bedfordshire Rural Transport Partnership Forum

and is a key stakeholder on the preparation and implementation of the:

Bedford Green Wheel

Bedford Stations Travel Plan

Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

It is affiliated to the following organisation:



(previously Cycling Campaign Network - CCN)

# Contents

Committee	2
Campaigning Representation	2
Editorial	4
Farewells	5
CCNB Christmas Dinner	5
Cemetery Extension	6
A Thought	6
Green Wheel Link	7
Forest Centre Tandem	7
Rural Style Cycle Stands	8
Local Sustainable Transport Fund	9
New Members	9
Cycle Promotions	10
Cycling England Replacement	10
Transition Cycles 3rd Birthday	10
European Mobility Week	11
Allocations and Designations Plan Update	12
LATEST - Speed Limits	12
Cycle Sign Clutter	13
'Garibaldi' Bridge Update	14
New Riverside Underpass Proposed	14
Cycle Stands 'Not Fit for Purpose'	15
A History of Cycling Routes in and about Kempston	16
Advanced Stop Lines	19
New Cycle Stands - Ashburnham Road Car Park	20
Bike Week 2011	21
Solar Cycle Path to Generate Electricity	22
Cycle Lane Obstruction	22
Going Dutch	23
Cycling Boosts Economy	24
Dutch Army Cycling Band	24
cyclenation Appoints President	25
cyclenation/CTC Autumn Conference 2011	25
Government e-petitions	26
Pen Portrait - Peter Blakeman	27
Diary	28
CCNB Vision and Objectives	28

## Editorial

It is a dark period for cycling within the borough.

First - It was announced in July 2011 that the bid to the government for £5m over three years for cycling and public transport improvements from the local sustainable transport fund had been rejected (page 9).

Second - The government's austerity measures has meant that the Borough Council must find £36m savings over the next four years. This has resulted in the loss of several people involved with cycling (page 5). In addition a 'modernisation' plan put forward in September will probably result in further losses and changes in the organisation. This will mean that very little new cycling infrastructure or improvements will take place over the next few years with the exception of those that can be funded through other work or developer's contributions (page 12).

However looking on the positive side, we still have a Cycling and Walking Officer with considerable cycling experience obtained over a number of decades. A new section of what is part of the Green Wheel has just been completed (page 7) as well as the re-surfacing and improvements of sections of other routes. Also the borough this year was one of only a few towns and cities in the UK that promoted European Mobility Week (page 11).

Cycling is fun, cool and **safe** and it does no harm to reiterate once more that, particularly for short distances from A to B, it meets most of the government and borough's aims for reductions in urban congestion and pollution and increasing the accessibility, health and fitness of its residents to give them a better quality of life.

The latest edition of the Bedford and Kempston town cycle map has had to be reprinted three times to meet the demand to see where safe cycling routes are to get around the area. This year CCNB has heavily promoted cycling at a number of events as well as advertising and writing articles in several publications (page 10) and will continue to do so during 2012. On top of this nationally, cycling is still increasing with more cycles sold in 2010 than ever before (page 24).

On a lighter side the Dutch have been playing on their bikes as well as influencing the future programme of the London Cycling Campaign and the formation of a new national cycling organisation (pages 24 & 23).

Lack of secure and suitable cycle parking stands at their destination always comes up in the top of reasons why people do not cycle. There are many areas of the borough where there is a lack of stands but equally there are still many new ones being installed of the butterfly or slot type which are 'Not fit for purpose' for most bikes (pages 8 & 15).

Finally - The way to eliminate obstructions on cycle lanes in Lithuania might be one that could be tried in Bedford (page 22).

## Farewells

It was a big disappointment that CCNB has had to say farewell to two enthusiastic members of the Borough Council's cycling team, Nigel Hooks at the end of September 2011 and Peter Knight at the end of October 2011. This follows on from the departure in June 2011 of Richard Noon, Sustrans Bike It Officer for a number of Bedford schools.

Nigel has been Sustainability and Road Safety Team Leader in the Planning, Strategic Transport and Housing, Environment and Sustainable Communities Department for the last two years with the added responsibility of doing the Cycling and Walking Officer - Patrick Lingwood's work while he was on secondment to the Department for Transport.

Peter was hired just under two years ago as Cycling Development Officer under Nigel and amongst his many other cycling activities has organised a number of successful cycling promotion events.

Richard took over from Jason Falconer as Bike It Officer for Bedford, Luton and North Herts in October 2008 and has been responsible for working with three Bedford schools each year helping to create a pro-cycling culture which would continue long after the Bike It Officer had left. The last three schools he worked with were Goldington, Daubeney and Robert Bruce Middle Schools

CCNB would like to thank all three people for their hard work in trying to enhance cycling within the borough and gives them its best wishes for the future.

If the Borough Council's proposed 'modernisation' budget for 2012/13 is approved we will also see on 1 April 2012 the loss of the Head of Transportation, the current person responsible for the Sustainable Transport and Road Safety Team. The Sustainable Transport part will be transferred to the Transport Policy Team under Planning Policy and the Road Safety part (including Bikeability cycle training) back to Transport Operations.

### **CCNB Christmas Dinner**

This years CCNB Christmas Dinner is once again at the Skyline Restaurant at Bedford College.

***The date is Wednesday 14 December 2011***

A booking form with the menu details will be sent to all members later in the year.

In the meantime please make a date in your diary for what is always an enjoyable occasion at which to meet other members.

## Cemetery Extension

Bridleway No 26 which runs from Salph End Renhold to the new Pegasus crossing on the A4280 St Neots Road was closed for several weeks during the summer while a new road was constructed across it to serve an extension to the cemetery off Norse Road. The work was part of a Section 106 agreement with the developer of the adjacent house building site.



*New roadway to cemetery extension*

*Bridleway No 26 crossing new roadway*



## A Thought

**Question:** Is a Sat Nav of any use to a cyclist?

**Answer:** Yes - It means that we can get lost more accurately!

## **Green Wheel Link**

A new link from Asgard Drive to the Pegasus crossing on the St Neots Road across the green area behind the Renhold Brook which runs parallel to Norse Road has just been completed as part of Bedford's Green Wheel (see the front cover photograph of the newsletter).

At the same time the footpath on the east side of Norse Road between the cemetery entrance to Asgard Drive has been widened and converted to a dual use track thus extending the Norse Road track from Hookhams Lane as far as Asgard Drive.

This means that it is now possible for cyclists, particularly the inexperienced cyclist or those with young children to safely cycle from the Brickhill and Putnoe areas to Willington and the National Cycle Network route 51 along completely off-road dual use paths with just a few non-signal controlled minor roads to cross (Hookhams Lane, Maskel Drive, new Orbit site entrance, the cemetery and Asgard Drive).



*One of the new Green Wheel markers recently installed along Wentworth Drive and Norse Road*

## **Forest Centre Tandem**

The cycle hire facility at the Marston Vale Forest Centre now has a tandem available to hire in addition to its fleet of high quality bikes.

The facility is open from 10am to 5pm on weekends and bank holidays in term time and every day except Wednesday and Thursday in school holidays. From October, bikes should be booked 24 hours in advance by calling 07773 254627. The Centre and car park are open 7 days per week from 9am to 5pm (10am to 5pm after 30 October).

## Rural Style Cycle Stands

A number of benches with slots at each end have been erected during the summer on the Bedford Green Wheel route in the north east of the town, some with (see below) and some without a back.

It is great to be able to stop and rest while out on your ride. Unfortunately the benches are 'Not fit for purpose' for parking your bicycle. The slots are too short and too wide for tourers and hybrids and can easily damage the spokes, particularly if it is windy and the bike is heavy with panniers.



*Bench in Norse Rd  
Others are on  
Wentworth Drive  
and Route 51 near  
the sewage works*

*Wooden slots for  
cycle parking at  
Bromham Mill*



Cycle parking slots (above) provided at Bromham Mill are similarly 'Not fit for purpose' for most bicycle types as they can also damage wheels.

## **Local Sustainable Transport Fund**

In April 2011 CCNB gave support to Bedford Borough Council in their bid for £5 million from Tranche 1 of the Department for Transport's four year £560 million Local Sustainable Transport Fund (see Newsletter No 60) to support packages for sustainable travel schemes that will generate economic growth and help to reduce carbon emissions.

It was a big disappointment when it was announced in early July that Bedford Borough had been turned down for funding. 39 projects from 37 local authorities out of 73 projects were given the go-ahead with funding of £155 million and a further 13 invited to resubmit through Tranche 2.

Cambridgeshire County Council with their 'Travel for Cambridgeshire' and Central Bedfordshire Council with 'My Journey: Travel Choices for Central Bedfordshire' were amongst the latter.

Most of the successful bids had a strong bias towards cycling with routes and infrastructure doing well. They also connected people to jobs, and businesses to labour markets, and demonstrated their contribution to the two key objectives of economic growth and cutting carbon. It was interesting to note that many of the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns were successful.

Although Bedford's bid contained a lot of the above, it was refused on the grounds that it was unclear in sections and perceived that it would not achieve the required outcomes.

As previously reported a themed bid for improving access to a number of railway stations is being put together by Sustrans for funds under the Department for Transport's Tranche 2 for small projects up to £5m. The Borough Council is the co-ordinating local authority for this joint bid under the title 'Access to Stations'.

An expression of interest was submitted on 6 June 2011 alongside those from 40 other local authorities. The deadline for the full bid is 24 February 2012 with decisions on successful bids expected in May 2012. If approved, Bedford's share of the funds will be used to partly deliver the comprehensive action plan of the Council's Bedford Stations Travel Plan.

In the meantime cycle parking stand use at the Midland Road station has almost reached capacity showing a strong demand to cycle there.

### **New Members**

We welcome to CCNB new members:

Robert Hobson, Joel Carré, Nigel Hill, Janet Holmes, Sue Percival and Kim Northwood.

## Cycle Promotions

Over the summer CCNB has promoted cycling to Borough residents in a variety of publications.

**cycleBedford**  
creating a  
Town of Cyclists  
and  
Cycle Friendly Communities

**cycleBedford**  
creating a  
Town of Cyclists  
and  
Cycle Friendly Communities

**cycleBedford**  
creating a  
Town of Cyclists  
and  
Cycle Friendly Communities

**cycleBedford**  
creating a  
Town of Cyclists  
and  
Cycle Friendly Communities

Cycling is fun and safe

- Good for your health
- Great for your fitness
- Environmentally friendly
- Fastest mode of transport for short journeys
- Saves money on fuel and parking

1,000s of Borough residents already cycle

**Cycling Campaign  
for  
North Bedfordshire**

[www.ccnb.org.uk](http://www.ccnb.org.uk) & [www.cyclebedford.org.uk](http://www.cyclebedford.org.uk)  
[ccnb@ccnb.org.uk](mailto:ccnb@ccnb.org.uk)

## Cycling England Replacement

It has been reported that the Department for Transport is looking to start a Cycling Forum to replace Cycling England, one of the quangos which was closed in March 2011, although there are no details at the present time.

## Transition Cycles 3rd Birthday

CCNB congratulates Transition Cycles - Stephen Hayton and his staff - on celebrating its 3rd Birthday at 44B Castle Road in Bedford.

## European Mobility Week

This year's European Mobility Week (EMW) - as reported in Newsletter No 60 - took place on 16 to 22 September 2011 with the theme 'Alternative Mobility' - To support the transition towards a resource efficient transport system by promoting clean fuel efficient modes and human-powered travel to make urban life healthier, safer and more enjoyable.

CCNB was extremely pleased to see that the Council used almost the full week to highlight the options for sustainable travel for residents across Bedford Borough.

Europe wide there were 2055 participants this year but compared to the 40 to 60 UK towns and cities that had took part over the previous few years only 7 in addition to Bedford participated this year with Luton being the nearest to our town.

In Bedford the week started on Saturday 17 September with a free rickshaw pedicab service across the town centre to determine if there was a demand for this alternative service. A lot of people participated in the service and it was also run on the Thursday.

Monday 19 September saw the launch of a Sustainable Travel Competition where local residents were challenged to use only sustainable transport on the Wednesday and Thursday, the latter being - **In town without my car day**. Those taking part could submit their entries for the competition to the Council and winners were drawn for each category - bus, train, motorbike, bicycle, pedestrian and car share. More than 100 residents participated with approximately 25% using a bicycle.

A 'Commuter Challenge' took place on Tuesday 20 September during the peak morning rush hour when volunteers from Councillors and Brorough Council staff travelled from Tyne Crescent in Brickhill during the rush hour into Bedford town centre by bicycle, motor bike, bus and hybrid car to demonstrate that sustainable travel is a viable way of travelling during busy periods. The cyclist was the winner just beating the motor cyclist by 30 seconds while the car driver took nearly 25% longer and the bus passenger twice the time.

A video of the 'Commuter Challenge' will be available on the Borough's website shortly.

EMW road shows were arranged at Bedford Midland railway station, Bedford College and Bedford South Wing Hospital.

There was also a market stall in the town centre offering tips and advice on Wednesday and Thursday 21 and 22 September, the latter day also had a Dr Bike' service offering free repair's. safety checks and advice for all cycle users.

## **Allocations and Designations Plan Update**

The pre-submission draft of the Allocations and Designations Plan was published by the Borough Council on 30 September 2011 for a six week consultation period ending on 14 November 2011 and is now expected to be submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2012.

This is later than the time mentioned in earlier Newsletters (58 and 59) due to the need to consider a number of issues including the Gypsy and Traveller Sites section which will now be dealt with in a separate Plan.

The pre-submission consultation stage offers the opportunity to comment on the 'soundness' of the plan. Tests of soundness relate to the process and procedures followed during the preparation of the Plan and the suitability of the evidence base.

The Allocation and Designations Plan, as described in Newsletter No 57, is one of the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) making up the Bedford Development Framework which replaces the Borough's Local Plan adopted in 2002. It contains policies to promote development and to protect uses and space all of which must be in conformity with those already adopted in 2008 in the core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan.

CCNB originally responded to the Issues and Options Consultation Draft of the plan in June 2010, in particular with respect to chapter 13 on the cycling network incorporating the Green Wheel.

Many of the changes recommended have been incorporated in the pre-submission draft including the provision of greater clarity as to the meaning of the different levels of the cycling network. These have now been reworded - 'Existing Cycle Routes', 'Proposed Cycle Routes' and 'Required Improvements to Cycle Routes'.

A further explanation has also been included of how the cycle network overlaps with the Green Wheel and how the network links the urban area where possible with the surrounding villages.

A large number of detailed comments on elements of the proposed cycle network have been added.

### **LATEST - Speed Limits**

Just prior to the publication of this newsletter it was reported that at the October 2011 Conservative party conference an announcement would be made about a consultation later this year on raising the speed limit on motorways to 80mph and increasing flexibility in the rules to enable local authorities themselves to sign off 20mph zones in urban areas.

The latter widely campaigned for by CCNB and others makes roads safer, cleaner and more pleasant for people who want to walk and cycle and particularly for children who would like to travel independently.

## Cycle Sign Clutter

The section of path on the north side of Brickhill Drive between Manton Lane and Eagle Gardens was converted, by widening and adding dropped kerbs to the entrances it crosses, to a shared use path by Bedfordshire Highways in late 2006. For some reason it was signed with an excessive number of blue shared use roundels. The photograph below shows six of the eight roundels installed.

Since that time CCNB has been trying to get at least every other one removed, leaving just those attached to lampposts, in the interest of reducing street clutter.

It was therefore opportune that the Mayor Dave Hodgson a few months ago announced a street clutter campaign to remove unnecessary road signs, railings and bollards in the borough.

A further request has been made to the borough and as a result of a survey by the Cycling Development Officer hopefully in the near future some seven posts and signs will be removed from the stretch between the Manton Lane roundabout and just past Curlew Crescent.



*Shared use path alongside Brickhill Drive showing excessive roundels*

## **‘Garibaldi’ Bridge Update**

The Borough Council has received a new planning application from the developers of the Britannia Wharf site in Ampthill Road, opposite the Bedford South Wing Hospital, for the construction of a pedestrian/cycle bridge to span the River Great Ouse from the site on the east side of the river to the existing riverside path, part of the National Cycle Network Route 51, on the west side.

The provision is part of the Section 106 agreement between the developer and the council. The feasibility study for the bridge was approved in 2004 and the current design is basically identical to the one approved at that time. There is some concern with regard to the height of the bridge sides which may compromise the safety of cyclists. Ideally it should have been wider and have better landing rights on the north side by utilising a small section of unused Network Rail land.

The design is for a two metre wide cable stayed bridge supported from a single, 16 metre high, inverted ‘V’ shaped mast founded on the development side of the river. The superstructure will have a minimum clearance of 2.1 metre above the normal river water level.

The bridge will be a significant asset to the town’s cycle network with its link to Ampthill Road. In conjunction with the adjacent new underpass of the Bedford to Bletchley Railway line it will be an attractive route to the town centre for residents of the Britannia site as well as visitors and staff to the hospital opposite. It will also be an alternative route to the town centre for residents from Kempston.

**Why the name Garibaldi?** Guiseppi Garibaldi, the leading figure in the nineteenth century struggle for Italian unification, visited the site for one day in 1864 and the late Mayor of Bedford, Frank Branston, considered it would be appropriate to celebrate the link of Bedford’s large Italian population with one of their national heroes.

## **New Riverside Underpass Proposed**

As part of the project to introduce a new fleet of 12 carriage trains on the ‘Thameslink’ route between Bedford and Brighton to increase capacity on the line, five new sidings to accommodate the increased length trains are being provided just north of the River Great Ouse and the footbridge over the Marston Vale Line along the riverside path. To allow the overhead electric lines to be installed along the new sidings the footbridge has had to be demolished.

As the footbridge is on a Right of Way, Network Rail have agreed to provide a new underpass in its place.

**Note** - CCNB Christmas Dinner date (page 5).

## Cycle Stands 'Not Fit for Purpose'

One of the areas where there is a need for secure cycle stands is the Saxon Centre in Kempston and the adjacent Sainsbury's superstore.

Both CCNB and the Borough have recently written to Sainsbury's requesting if cycle stands can be made available for both their customers and staff. They are at the present time considering the situation.

In a recent planning application they stressed how easy it is to cycle to the store and the advantage of being adjacent to the National Cycle Network Route 51 and cite that eight cycle parking spaces are located close to the store entrance. These are however in the Saxon Centre and are 'Not Fit for Purpose' old and loose butterfly clips (see below).



CCNB has also written to Lidl head office with respect to the butterfly stands located on the trolley isle sides of their Kempston store.

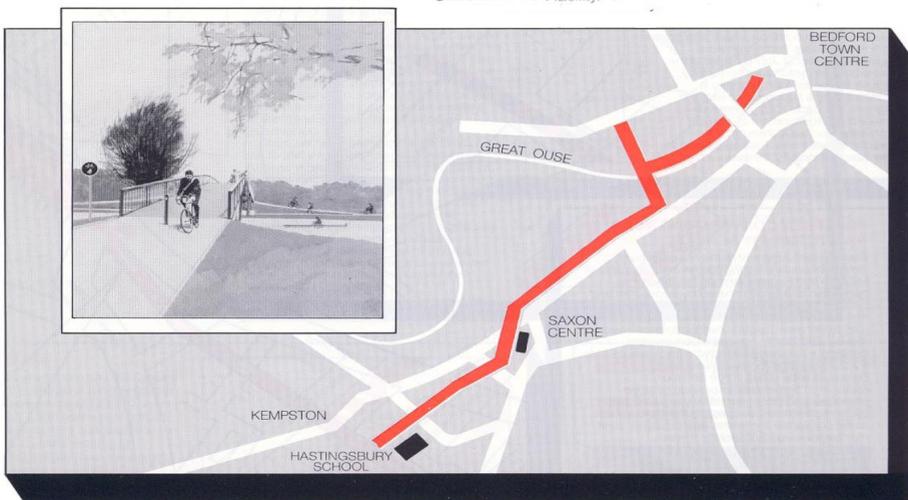
A similar letter earlier in the year to the manager of the Go Outdoors store in Norse Road - a bicycle supplier - did result in two Sheffield type stands being installed at each end of the original set up of a row of wide slots.

## A History of Cycling Routes in and about Kempston

Kempston alongside Bedford has always been popular for cycling since the bicycle was invented due to its largely flat terrain and compact area and for many decades both towns have been known as one of the main urban areas for cycling in the UK.

With the increase in motoring during the 1950s and 60s cycling declined but then started to revive again in the 1970s and 80s, not least due to the oil crisis of 1973 and the increasing concerns for the environment, but also as it provides a cheap, efficient and convenient method of transport for both children and adults at minimum cost for both pleasure and town use.

However with the still increasing traffic on the roads many cyclists were becoming concerned for their safety and it was with this in mind that the Department of Transport (DTp) at the time put forward in the 1980s an innovatory cycle scheme known as the Kempston Urban Cycle Route Project and latter the Hastingsbury Cycle Route. This involved the creation of a continuous route of about 3 miles between Kempston and Bedford and was jointly funded by the DTp, the County Council and North Bedfordshire District Council.



The mainly off-road route ran from Hill Rise near Hastingsbury School in Kempston via St John's Walk to the Saxon Centre and then along Bedford Road on an advisory cycle lane before going off-road again along the southern edge of Addison Howard Park. It then continued behind the footway along Bedford Road until it turned northwards just past Austin

Canons along a former footpath over the River Great Ouse at Queen's Bridge where it turned eastwards towards the town centre alongside the riverside path.

The route was opened in June 1986 by Peter Bottomley although due to objections it was not entirely completed until 1993.



*Peter Bottomley MP (2nd from right) opening the route in June 1986 with Cllr Bill Astle Mayor, Nick Lyall MP and Cllr Audrey Cowell.*

It was not until 1993, however, that the on-road section in front of the shop parade in Bedford Road was converted to off-road.

The route is currently part of the National Cycle Network Route 51 from Oxford to Harwich and Colchester although at the present time there are still gaps, particularly between Sandy and St Neots on its way to Cambridge.

A second route was later constructed called the South Kempston Route from Orchard Street via Jowitt Avenue and Ashdale Road crossing over Spring Road and then joining the Hastingsbury Route opposite Beatrice Street.

Since then other routes have been created, part on-road along quiet roads:

- Thirlmere Road (on the Hastingsbury Route) to The Maples and on to Orchard Street via The Links,
- Orchard Street to the Ampthill Road off-road route,

- Orchard St. via Chantry Av. to the Woburn Road Industrial Estate,
- Saxon Centre (on the Hastingsbury Route) to Camstone Lower School via Springfield Avenue.

In 2002/03 with the upgrading of Kempston Road/Bedford Road an off-road route was provided alongside the road from the turn to Queens Bridge as far as Prebend Street as an alternative to the Riverside route to the Town Centre. Since August 2010, cyclists have also been allowed to use the inbound bus lane.

It has been shown that where radial cycle routes have been completed throughout to a good standard an increase in cycling has occurred. A cycle count over a 12 hour day following the opening of the route showed an increase of 30%.

In fact, in the 2001 National Census (the results of the latest ten yearly one will be available in 2012), Kempston had the highest number of people who travel to work in Bedford Borough with 7.0% versus Bedford at 6.0%. The highest Ward, South Kempston had 7.9%.

November 2010 saw a re-instatement of the diagonal crossing at the Bunyan Road/ Bedford Road junction as well a short spur of on- and off-road track from Stuart Road to the adjacent Toucan crossing. In March 2011 the uncontrolled crossing of Williamson Road was converted to a signal controlled Toucan crossing.

Last year a cycle route was created around the new Marsh Leys interchange as part of the Western Bypass and the dualling of the A421.

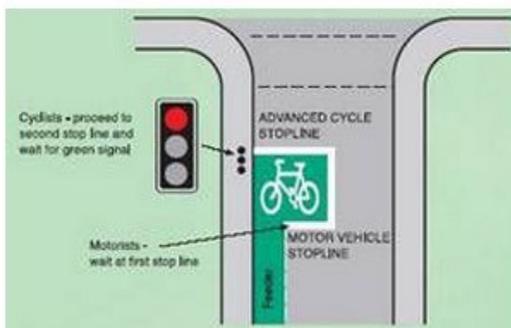
Additions to the cycle network, including the Borough's Green Wheel project to connect up the green spaces around the urban areas, are still going on as part of the new developments at Kempston West and Great Denham.



*Riding along the on-road section (now off-road) in front of the Bedford Road shopping parade after the route launch in June 1986.*

## Advanced Stop Lines

Advanced Stop Lines, also known as ASLs, are becoming more and more common in Bedford in conjunction with signal controlled junctions. They consist of two parallel stop lines, the first one at which all traffic except cyclists must stop and the second one nearer to the junction in which only cyclists may proceed to give a box containing a cycle symbol. UK traffic regulations also demand a cycle lane to legally filter the cyclist past the first stop line.



### Advanced cycle stop line

The arrangement theoretically allows cyclists to filter to the top of queuing traffic during the red phase of traffic lights. Cyclists turning to the right are able to position themselves to make the turn safely. Straight-on cyclists can maintain a prominent position to safely cross the junction within the main traffic stream. The ASL also allows cyclists to reduce their exposure at junction with left turn filters.

In terms of safety it is advised only to use the feeder lane if it can be seen that the traffic signal has only recently turned to red, particularly if there is a left hand filter lane. One of the biggest safety hazards for cyclists is from Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and buses where they have blind spots on their nearside and depending upon their make also for up to four metres directly in front of the cab. In such cases it may be safer to hold back.

Several CCNB members have mentioned that not all drivers stop at the first line of an ASL and are seen to frequently encroach into the box.

The Highway Code (rule 178) states that motorists, including motorcyclists, MUST stop at the first white line reached if the lights are amber or red and should avoid blocking the way or encroaching on the marked area at other times, e.g. if the junction ahead is blocked. It also states that cyclists should be allowed time and space to move off when the green light shows.

## New Cycle Stands - Ashburnham Road Car Park

The final stage of the temporary use of the old 'Focus' store site in Ashburnham Road has seen the Borough Council in July 2011 install cycle parking stands at the north end together with a motor cycle parking area and car spaces for users with young children.

The cycle parking spaces are of the 'Sheffield' type. A row of eight stands with four along the back of the area give room for 20 bicycles. Although not under cover they are under CCTV surveillance and are a welcome addition for cyclists commuting to the adjacent railway station from the Prebend Street, Midland Road and Ford End Road direction.

Unfortunately to date there is no sign of either the cycle stands or motor bike spaces being used while those at the station itself are virtually fully utilised with bicycles now starting to be locked to trees and other upright posts.



*Cycle and motor bike stands so near yet so far from the adjacent station entrance*

## Bike Week 2011

National Bike Week (18-26 June) this year had the theme 'Britain's Biggest Bike Fix', an ambitious plan to get as many of Britain's bikes fixed and used during the week by encouraging everyone to dig their bike out of the shed and get it (and themselves) fit for summer.

Team Green Britain, sponsors of Bike Week 2011, have stated that this year over 1,900 events took place across the UK attracting over 400,000 people with an estimated 26,000 bikes fixed.

A number of events took place in Bedford including CCNB and Sustrans Cycle Promotion Stands with the Borough's Dr Bike area for a free check over of your bicycle in the town market on Saturday 18 June.

CCNB had a good turnout for a members evening ride to Willington on Wednesday 21 June (the longest day).

On Saturday 25 June there was a 'Cycle Fest' at Priory Country Park organised by Bedfordshire Road Cycling Club and was billed as Bedford's first festival of cycling featuring adult and junior race events, cycle cross, mountain biking, a 'come & try' track, trade stands, route planning and much more. It was estimated that more than 1500 people attended the event.



## Solar Cycle Path to Generate Electricity

The Netherlands is renowned as a cycling country so it would not be a surprise that a cycle path in Krommenie, a town near Amsterdam, has been chosen by the local government for the installation of solar panels. The modular system scheduled to be embedded into the path next year will consist of a 1cm layer of silicon solar cells, laid into thick concrete slabs which are then protected by toughed glass. The electricity generated by the SolaRoad will be used for street lighting, traffic lights as well as houses.



## Cycle Lane Obstruction

The mayor of Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, an avid cyclist, has been filmed using an armoured vehicle to crush a car parked illegally in a cycle lane. Mayor Zuokas has long urged city residents to take up cycling through the introduction of various bicycle schemes and cycle lanes.



## Going Dutch

Members of the **London Cycle Campaign** (LCC) were asked a few weeks ago to vote from four activist chosen campaigns:

- Going Dutch: cycling space on main roads
- Unwind: removing gyratories
- Start Right: children cycling to school
- Love Thy Neighbourhoods: doubling local bike journeys

to select the main campaign theme in the run up to the 2012 Mayoral Elections.

Over half of all members who voted chose the Going Dutch theme, making it the clear winner.

LCC campaigns manager Tom Bogdanowicz said, 'We're delighted to lobby for continental-style clear spaces for cycling on main roads although all of the themes are important.' 'All these issues form part of a progressive cycling vision for London alongside other Dutch-style facilities such as cyclist priority at junctions, reduced speed limits in residential areas, shared zones and ambitious parking facilities.'

Early September 2011 saw the official launch in London of a new



national cycling organisation '**Cycling Embassy of Great Britain**' which seeks to create conditions that will bring about mass cycling in the UK.

The organisation has been founded by campaigners wishing to share the first hand experience and practises of the Netherlands and Denmark, which have achieved mass cycling through the design and implementation of high quality cycling infrastructure which separates cyclists from dense and fast moving traffic.

*Photo by Amsterdamize*

## Cycling Boosts Economy

Cycling generates nearly £3bn a year for the UK economy according to a report recently published by the London School of Economics (LSE). The figure takes into account factors such as bicycle manufacturing, retail and cycle-related employment and states that £51m was raised for UK manufacturers from the 3.7 million cycles sold in 2010 - a rise of 28% over 2009.

It claims that more than a million people started cycling last year, bringing the total number of cyclists to 13 million. Last year more than £1.5bn was spent on bikes and another £850m on accessories, with the LSE estimating that the cycling industry is now worth some £2.9bn a year. There are now 23,000 people working in cycling, contributing more than £600m to the economy in wages and taxes.

The report also states rising fuel costs, improved cycle networks, concern for the environment, and the pull of the Olympics are all possible factors for the increase in popularity for cycling. A 20% increase in cycling levels by 2015 could save millions of pounds in reduced congestion, pollution levels and NHS costs.

Regular cyclists take 7.4 sick days per year, compared with 8.7 sick days for non-cyclists, saving around £128m through reduced absenteeism, with projected savings of £2bn over the next 10 years.

## Dutch Army Cycling Band

The Royal Netherlands Army Mounted Regiments, known as The Dutch Army Cycling Band with its origins back to 1917 was a guest at this year's Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Dressed in World War I uniforms and mounted on vintage bicycles, the band played tunes which included Tulips From Amsterdam and Loch Lomond in tribute to their hosts.



## **cyclenation Appoints President**

cyclenation is the umbrella organisation for urban cycle campaign groups of which CCNB is a member. At its AGM held last May in Birmingham, it was announced that Phillip Darnton had agreed to become the Honorary President of cyclenation.

Phillip is an ex managing director of Raleigh and was the former chairman of Cycling England, one of the government's quangos until its demise on 31 March 2011. The chair of cyclenation, Andre Curtis, said that it is a real coup to have Phillip on-board and he will undoubtedly be an inspiring public presence for the group.

## **cyclenation/CTC Autumn Conference 2011**

As mentioned in Newsletter No 59 (February 2011) it has been decided to hold only one conference per year instead of the usual two. As a result the cyclenation/CTC conference scheduled for Spring 2011 will now take place on Saturday 15 October 2011 in Sheffield at the University hosted by Cycle Sheffield, previously called Pedal Pushers.

The theme for the conference will be '**Cycle Campaigning and Localism - Threats and Opportunities**'.

It is emerging that national organisations like the cyclenation and CTC need to be organised in a different way to respond to the government's localism agenda. Therefore it is increasingly important that we give a consistent view on issues like 20's Plenty, liability, helmets, standards for cycle routes, etc even when negotiating locally. Thinking how we ought to go about doing it will be the basis of the conference.

Phillip Darnton will deliver the opening address as President of cyclenation and Danny Dorling, Professor of Human Geography at the University of Sheffield, will give the keynote speech on the subject "Social Mobility and Access - Cycling's contribution?"

Topics for discussion are national campaigns and collaborative national campaigns such as the UK Cycling Alliance and parliamentary agenda, the Helmets for Children Bill, Localism Bill and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and how groups can work with the Local Authorities to influence bids and enactments.

**The Localism Bill** introduced to Parliament on 13 December 2010, will shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. In its introduction it states "We are committed to this because over time central government has become too big, too interfering, too controlling and too bureaucratic. This has undermined local democracy and individual responsibility, and stifled innovation and enterprise within public services."

## Government e-petitions

The Government's new e-petition system went live on 4 August 2011 and immediately crashed after 1,000 visits a minute, equivalent to 1.5 million visits per day.

The system is an easy way for a person to influence government policy in the UK. As long as it does not already exist an e-petition can be created on any subject that the government is responsible for and if it gets at least 100,000 signatures, it will be eligible for debate in the House of Commons.

Cycling topics come under the Department for Transport (DfT). A look at the DfT section of database for cycling e-petitions just prior to publication of this newsletter showed the following top five:

**Safe Guarding Cyclists** (closing date 04/08/12) Votes to date: **265**

The Government to debate passing a law imposing strict liability upon motor vehicle drivers when they injure a cyclist, in line with the model adopted in The Netherlands. In the spirit of equality, the Government ought also to impose higher penalties for cyclists who flout road laws.

**Banning Cyclists for Pavements and Licensing Cyclists** (closing date 05/08/12) Votes to date: **245**

The illegal use of pedestrian footpaths by cyclists has reached epidemic proportions. Many cyclists believe that they have a right to cycle on or off the pavement or road as they choose, especially at traffic lights. Each year people are injured and sometimes killed by careless cyclists speeding along pavements. Furthermore cycles should be treated as vehicles and their users compelled to have some form of registration plate or device fixed to the bicycle, this would be coupled with the requirement to have personal liability insurance and to pay towards a road fund license, in just the same way as conventional motor vehicles.

**Petition opposing compulsory wearing of bicycle helmets.** (closing date 04/08/12) Votes to date: **123**

**Compulsory road safety training for cyclists** (closing date 04/08/12) Votes to date: **121**

**One Metre Rule to be Adopted for Cars Passing Cyclists** (closing date 018/08/12) Votes to date: **100**

As you can see most of these have a long way to go to reach the required level of signatories but it is still early days. CCNB certainly supports **Safe Guarding Cyclists** which is one of the main campaigning topics of our umbrella organisation **Cyclenation** and asks members, if they agree, to sign up to this one.

To create and sign e-petitions online go to the website:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/>

## Pen Portrait - Peter Blakeman

*Each newsletter we intend to give a pen portrait of one of our members. For this second one we have the person who is currently our Vice-Chair and Newsletter Editor.*

I have been cycling almost since I learnt to walk, first on a tricycle (right) and then a utility bicycle which oscillated between a single speed free or fixed wheel. On completing my 'O' levels my grandfather bought me a Coventry Eagle 10 speed derailleur racing bike (below) which came direct from the manufacturer and had to be collected from our local railway station.



With this Bicycle I clocked up the miles combining my interest in steam trains by regularly visiting, particularly on Sundays, most of the train sheds within 100 miles of our home - no problems in those days walking around the sheds and climbing onto the footplates.



During the late 50s I cycled a number of long distance trips of 1000 miles or more using main roads such as the A1, A5 and A6 (very little traffic and M1 just starting to be built).

I joined the CTC in 1956 but only kept up my subscription for about three years and even today have not re-joined although I have been a member of Sustrans for nearly 15 years and of CCNB since 1993.

On coming to Bedford in 1965 my wife and I have always used our bicycles for shopping and leisure although unfortunately working in St Neots for 35 years and spending a considerable amount of time out of the country I only occasionally cycled to work. Our children have been brought up on bicycles and for a number of years we toured various parts of the Netherlands for one of our holidays, hiring bikes locally where we were staying.

Bedford and the local area are ideal for cycling and many residents already use this mode of transport to help them carry out their daily activities. Since my retirement I have spent a lot of time promoting cycling on behalf of CCNB and campaigning to ensure that it is safer and easier to cycle and hopefully improving the quality of life for future generations. It is good to see our grandchildren already becoming keen cyclists.

## Diary

- Saturday 15 October 2011 - cyclenation/CTC Conference - Sheffield
- Tuesday 18 October 2011 - Dr Bike - Bedford Midland railway station  
4 - 8pm
- Wednesday 14 December 2011 - CCNB Annual Christmas Dinner at  
Skyline Restaurant Bedford College

# cycleBedford



## Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire Objectives

- ◆ To promote, encourage and support cycling as an important means of transport and recreation.
- ◆ To encourage consideration of the needs of cyclists in all aspects of transport planning and management, access issues and recreational use.

## Membership

If you have not already joined, or if you know a friend or relative who would be willing to lend their support, we would be delighted to welcome you as members. Please write to:

**Membership Secretary, c/o 15 Dove Road, Bedford, MK41 7AA**

Please include your name, address, postcode, telephone number and e-mail address (if available) together with your subscription.

Adult £3.00 (£13 for 5yr); Under 16 £1.00; Family £5.00 (£22 for 5yr)