

Cycle Bedford

Lifestyle change to
improve our health

Let's cycle
or
cycle more often

Issue 65
February 2013

The Voice of Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire



Cycling could reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes

CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE

Founded 1992

Committee

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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  (<http://www.cyclenation.org.uk>)

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New Members

We welcome new members: Carol O'Brien and Gerry & Sue Sansom.

Editorial

The year 2012 has been an extremely good one for cycling after the Tour de France and the London Olympics accumulating in Bradley Wiggins becoming the third cyclist in five years to win the BBC's Sports Personality prize and then being knighted in the New Year honours alongside a Damehood for Sarah Storey in the London Paralympics.

Also in 2012 was the launch of The Times safety campaign - 'Cities fit for cyclists' which has resulted in a Parliamentary Inquiry, currently underway, on 'Get Britain Cycling' (page 24/25).

All this has resulted in a shift in political support for cycling from all parties.

Additional funds have been made available which has allowed Bedford to put in a bid to improve the safety of cyclists at one of its roundabouts (page 26/27).

Cyclist injuries have increased recently and during 2012 there have been further national campaigns (page 14/15) as well as reports resulting in an updated Government guidance this January on 20mph speed limits to make it easier for local authorities to implement them where they are needed - not just around schools but in all residential areas and town centres.

Concerns of cycle safety have brought about a new national standard for cycle 'Bikeability' training and the grant scheme expanded to allow Level 3 training on busy urban roads (page 30/31). Local concerns has resulted in three petitions to the Borough (page 16-18).

We are all living longer but not always in good health. Over the last 20 years to 2010 diabetes has moved up six places to 9th in the causes of death. People with high BMI (body mass index) - obesity - has increased by 72%. We have to make lifestyle changes not only in what we eat but also in the way we exercise and this has resulted in a Walking and

Cycling guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (page 19)

Is cycling an idea whose time has finally come again? The real test will be when a person is thought to be odd if they do not walk or cycle that short distance from A to B.

Car use is believed to have passed its peak with several years now of falling traffic volumes while 2011 saw for the first time a decline in the number of driving licences held, particularly by people in their 20s.

But there is still a need for changes in attitude and in the law as well as continued investment in cycle training and safe infrastructure.

Is cycling an idea whose time has come again?

Level 3 cycle training & more 20mph speed limits required

STOP PRESS - Riverside North Cycle Bridge

The planning application (12/02490/MAF) for the Riverside North development site was made available for public consultation in late January 2013. One important part for cyclists is the proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge linking the site with St Mary's Gardens. Will this be adequate? Initial impressions are that it will be too narrow for the volume of cyclists (and pedestrians) who will make use of it. For cyclists it will not allow a direct through route to the town centre and beyond.

Front Cover - Cycle to keep Healthy

The picture on the front cover of this issue shows an ice cream bicycle in Harpur Square in early November 2012 during Diabetics UK's road show visit to Bedford.

Around three people every 10 minutes in the UK are diagnosed with diabetes. There are currently 2.9m people living with this condition and estimates suggest a further 850,000 people have Type 2 diabetes but are unaware.

Lifestyle choices such as a good diet and regular exercise play a big part in helping prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes.

This means eating healthily, losing excess weight and doing at least 10 minutes of physical activity a day such as swimming, walking or **cycling**.

For further information on diabetes see <http://www.diabetes.org.uk>.

Friday 10 May 2013 at 7.30 pm

**Friends Meeting House, 5 Lansdowne Road, Bedford,
MK40 2BY**

'Local Infrastructure Developments'

**Presentation by Peter Bate,
Sustrans Area Manager Bedford, Central Bedfordshire,
Luton and Hertfordshire**

followed by

CCNB Annual General Meeting

**This is a chance to meet other members and to find out what is
happening on the cycle scene in the Bedford area.**

Please put the date in your diary.

New Cycle Schemes - Recently Completed

Pilgrim Track

The cycle track between the Brickhill Drive/Larkway junction and Bedford Park was finally completely resurfaced in early December last year having been progressively getting worse over the last few years with cracks, ruts, potholes and 'hills and dales' due to adjacent trees making it extremely difficult to negotiate a push chair or wheel chair along its length let alone a bumpy ride for the many cyclists that use the route from Brickhill and Putnoe to the town centre.

CCNB had requested this improvement several years ago and in the interim period the track had been repaired on a number of occasions.

Let's hope the tree roots do not disturb the surface too quickly.

Brookfield Road/Polhill Avenue Track

The cycle track connecting Brookfield Road and Polhill Avenue between the University of Bedfordshire and Goldington Academy was also partly resurfaced late last year.

Cauldwell Street Improvements

Advanced stop lines and a cycle link to Cardington Road for cyclists was installed recently at the west end of Cauldwell Street opposite St Mary's Church following road resurfacing.



Riverside Lighting

A number of residents for some years have asked for lighting on the section of the National Cycle Network Route 51 between the Priory Park entrance and Longholme Way. The track is a very popular one used by many commuters from the Riverfield Drive estate to the town centre, railway station, Borough Hall and the South Wing of Bedford Hospital. It is however dark and unwelcoming during the winter months.

The lighting was made possible with the 'Access to Stations' grant from the Department for Transport last year. The lamp standards were all installed towards the end of last year but still require wiring up. This is now expected to be completed by the end of March 2013.



Goldington Road On-Road Cycle Lane

A short stretch of cycle lane was installed late last year along Goldington Road on the approach to the Polhill Avenue signals to help cyclists get nearer to the lights.

Park Avenue Scheme Completion

The Park Avenue scheme has now been completed with the marking of the missing western section on the south side between Kimbolton Road and St Augustine Road.

Bedford Meadows Cycle Link

The developer for the Kempston West site in late 2012 constructed dual use path from the end of the current National Cycle Network Route 51 at Hill Rise Kempston as far as Bedford Meadows, the first phase of the housing development, where it then joins the existing dual use footpath to the Woburn Road/Wolseley Road roundabout.

In the future the path will be part of the new Route 51 joining up with the path across the Western Bypass river bridge and eventually onto Bedford and in the south to the underpass of the bypass and onto Wootton.



^
|
Hill Rise crossing

New path without top surface



Bypass underpass



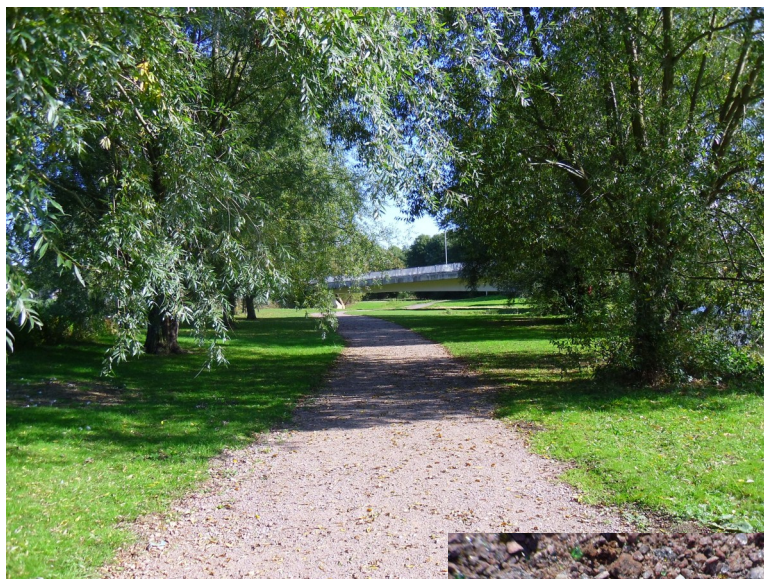
Path from Woburn Road

New Riverside Path

Following on from the completion of the Riverside Hydro Power Plant a new path was constructed last October between the boating lake and the main River Great Ouse from alongside the Bedford Schools' boathouse to the Longholme Way underpass. Although not strictly a cycle track it has and will be used by families with children/grandchildren walking or cycling alongside them.

CCNB was therefore extremely concerned when it was reported by a member that the track had been constructed with material containing a high percentage of coarse green glass with some extremely large pieces present. This could potentially be quite dangerous for young children if they fell over while walking or riding a bicycle as well as possibly causing punctures.

The Borough had the contractor back immediately to pick up the large pieces and the Borough will monitor the track from time to time.



*Coarse green glass particles
with occasional large pieces*



Green Wheel

Last Autumn a distinctive display board was erected in Mowsbury Park in north Bedford describing the Green Wheel project, including a map of the Green Wheel, and giving information on Mowsbury Park, Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort.



Display board in Mowsbury Park



Thurne Way link

CCNB has asked for the muddy link from Thurne Way to the Woodlands Park section of the Green Wheel to be given a hard surface.

Get Britain Cycling Early Day Motion 679

EDM 679 is the fifth most supported motion in this sessions parliament.

That this House notes that cycling benefits public health, the economy, the environment and quality of life; further notes the strength of public and parliamentary support for The Times newspaper's Cities fit for Cycling campaign, and its backing for an inquiry by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group on Getting Britain Cycling; further notes from national cycling organisations call for a cycling action plan to increase cycling among people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, and to reduce the actual and perceived risks of cycling, whether for day-to-day travel, outdoor recreation or sport; and calls on the Government to provide leadership, resources and Cabinet-level co-ordination across Government departments and external partners to produce and implement such a plan as part of our Olympic legacy, including measures to strengthen road traffic law and its enforcement, improve cycling conditions and perceptions of safety, integrate cycling with public transport, promote cycling through schools, colleges, workplaces, community organisations and beyond, and embed cycling into the heart of transport, planning and other relevant policies.

The EDM has been signed by 126 MPs by the end of January 2013 but not Bedford and Kempston MP, Richard Fuller (see also page 24).

Tour de France 2014 to Visit Cambridge

It was announced in mid January 2013 that Stage 3 (175km) of the Tour de France 2014 will start in Cambridge with the closing phase passing through Epping Forest and the Olympic Park before a finish in central London on the Mall.

Huge crowds are expected and this should be an opportunity for Bedford residents to go and see the race at first hand.

This will be the first time it has visited England since 2007. The first two stages will be from Leeds to Harrogate and York to Sheffield.

Bedford and Kempston Cycle Map

Due to high demand for CCNB's cycle map of Bedford and Kempston, a reprint of the 4th edition became available in November 2012 with some updates based on recently completed schemes.

Howbury & Bower Street Cycle Contraflows

Cycle contraflows will be introduced when the above are made one-way.

Roundabout Vegetation

The Borough has had a policy for many years of placing high vegetation on roundabouts with the idea that motorists will reduce their speed because they can not see around them. Over the years CCNB has believed that this policy is flawed and creates more safety problems than it solves and has tried unsuccessfully to have this reversed. Many motorists do not slow down enough when entering a roundabout.

A more serious consequence of the high vegetation is that sightlines are obscured for vulnerable people and many have to take their life into their hands as they cross when they see a gap and are then caught out by a sudden fast approaching vehicle. This is particularly the case for the elderly, families with children, pushchairs or wheel chairs, who are not always able to respond quickly enough. To date it is believed this has not resulted in any fatalities although there have been numerous near misses.

The two roundabouts with the most dense vegetation in the urban area giving problems have been:

1 - Newnham Avenue/Barkers Lane

Problem crossing on Barkers Lane side from north to central reservation and also in reverse.

2 - Manton Lane/Clapham Road/Shakespeare Road

Problem crossing on Clapham Road west side from south side to central reservation and also in reverse.

In the rural area there is also a problem cycling along the A6 for cyclists at the Sharnbrook (Mill Road) roundabout.

It was therefore very gratifying to see that the recent annual pruning of the Newnham Avenue/Barkers Lane roundabout had reduced the height of the vegetation to a respectable height. It remains to be seen how low this will remain during the growing season.



*Newnham Avenue/
Barkers Lane
roundabout from
Barkers Lane side central
reservation*

Bikes and Advertising

Over the last decade we have seen a progressive rise in the use of bicycles in advertising in the press and magazines for literally hundreds of different products. The bicycle itself is also used for advertising and the pictures shown below have been selected from just some of those seen in various parts of the country over the last year.



Cambridge

s



Keswick



Bristol



Isle of Wight

20mph Campaigns - Update

The drive to make 20mph the default speed limit in town centres and residential areas has been gathering momentum over the last few months as up to 80% of the public and 75% of drivers support 20mph as the speed limit for residential roads.



Go 20

The start of last year's Road Safety Week (19-25 November 2012) saw the launch by Brake of a new national campaign appealing to drivers and authorities to 'GO 20', to bring about a 2012 legacy of safe walking and cycling for everyone. The coalition of partners, made up of Brake, Living Streets, Sustrans, 20's Plenty for Us, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Ramblers, the National Heart Forum, CTC, British Cycling and Bicycle Association, is also calling for 20mph limits to become the norm across built-up areas, so children and adults can walk and cycle for their health and enjoyment, and for cheap and sustainable travel, without being or feeling endangered.

Phillip Darnton, Chief Executive of the Bicycle Association and President of cyclenation said: "We believe lowering the speed limit in built up areas to 20mph would be the single most effective way to increase safety, reduce fatal/serious accidents, and encourage more women to cycle."

20 is the new 30

Sustrans way back in July 2011 had launched their free range kids campaign which had a pledge, now called '20 is the new 30', calling on local and national governments to introduce 20 miles per hour speed limits in residential areas and to invest in walking and cycling routes, particularly around schools.

Setting Local Speed Limits

It also became one of The Times eight points in their 'Cities fit for cycling' manifesto published in February 2012 (see page 24) which was taken up by the Cycle Stakeholders Forum who following their meeting on 19 March 2012 said that it would be a quick win to publish a refreshed 'Setting Local Speed Limits' circular with strong steer and vision on making 20mph the norm in built-up areas and 40mph the norm on minor rural roads - with local authorities having the freedom to identify where different limits should apply in consultation with their local communities.

The final version of the guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits following on from the July 2012 draft (see Issue No 64) was published in January 2013 adding further support for 20mph limits in towns and villages.

Transport Secretary Stephen Hammond said that the new guidance “incorporates recent changes that create more flexibility for authorities to implement 20mph limits and zones.”

The new guidance encourages 20mph limits in a number of ways :-

- **Paragraph 12** - As a priority for action it states that “Traffic authorities are asked to keep their speed limits under review with changing circumstances, and to consider the introduction of more 20 mph limits and zones, over time, in urban areas and built-up village streets that are primarily residential, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists, using the criteria in Section 6.”
- **Paragraph 30** - It recognises the importance of the “composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users)” as a key factor that needs to be taken into account.
- **Paragraph 32** - It recognises that “Fear of traffic can affect peoples’ quality of life and the needs of vulnerable road users must be fully taken into account in order to further encourage these modes of travel and improve their safety. Speed management strategies should seek to protect local community life.”
- **Paragraph 84** - On Urban Speed Limits local authorities are reminded that “based on this positive effect on road safety, and a generally favourable reception from local residents, traffic authorities are able to use their power to introduce 20mph speed limits or zones on:
Major streets where there are - or could be - significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or where pedal cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic. This is in addition to:
Residential streets in cities, towns and villages, particularly where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support and the characteristics of the street are suitable”.

Bedford Borough

Excessive speed is one of most common issues raised with Councillors from all over the borough and as a result a Speed Watch scheme has been introduced to help enable volunteers to work within their community to raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and to help control the problem locally.

Although there have been a number of small scale 20mph zones in place for several years CCNB believes there is a need to introduce 20mph speed limits to much larger areas. A number of requests have been made by residents over the last few year for 20mph speed limits including ones in the Castle Road and Park Road Kempston areas - but progress on implementing them has been very slow. The new guidance should help introduce these much more quickly at minimal cost.

Cycling Petitions

Whilst CCNB has been campaigning not only for members but for all borough residents for many years for improved cycling infrastructure to make the area safer for cyclists and potential cyclists it is very grateful to see other residents also making contributions in respect of petitions to the council.

It has been possible for some time to petition the Council but since September 2010 an e-petition facility has been available on its website in addition to one which may be posted or delivered to the Council's offices.

If a petition has received over 30 signatures, it will be scheduled for a Council debate at a later meeting of the Full Council unless sufficient notice is given.

A list of all petitions since late 2007 is available on the borough website under:

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/public_petitions_questions.aspx

Over the last few months there have been three petitions relating to cycling including one e-petition.

1- **Zebra crossing** requested in Barkers Lane Bedford (16 October 2012 - 61 increasing to 136 signatories - debated 28 November 2012)

The request was for local residents who wished to enjoy the Priory Park area to be able to cross the road in a safe environment.

After the north side of Barkers Lane had been made dual use in 2003 CCNB requested a dropped kerb opposite the Priory Pak entrance and had been told at the time that it was too dangerous to encourage crossing at this point due to poor sightlines and fast moving traffic. CCNB agreed with this assessment but was then astonished to find a dropped kerb together with directional signage installed two years later.

To enable a safe crossing to be installed at this point there would have to be the removal of a hedgerow and extensive tree pruning as well as speed controls. For cyclists a Toucan crossing would be preferred.

The Council resolved to include this request in the work programme for consideration.

2 - **Additional cycle paths** requested in Bedford (29 October 2012 - 100 signatories - debated 16 January 2013)

The request had been made by two students from Biddenham Upper School on behalf of more than a hundred of their colleagues who were particularly concerned with the hazards of riding to/from school across the **Bromham Road railway bridge** and the two min-roundabouts at Ashburnham Road and Shakespeare Road.

The bridge and double mini-roundabouts have been one of CCNB's top

safety priorities for improvement for a number of years and have also been in the top 10 of concerns in station commuter surveys.

A survey two years ago found more than 650 cyclists and 1575 pedestrians crossed the bridge on a daily basis with at least half of the cyclists using the footpath due to safety concerns. Biddenham Upper School has approximately 20% of its students cycling to school, the highest in Bedford, the majority of whom use this route.

Bromham Road at this point is extremely hazardous for non-experienced young cyclists due to the volume, speed and queuing (at peak periods) of traffic and the narrowness and incline of the carriageway on both sides of the bridge and as a consequence, the majority of students cycle across on the north side path. This position is not likely to be changed for non-experienced cyclists if on-road wide cycle lanes are installed. The traffic hazards associated with the narrow carriageways would still be present.

CCNB has recommended the following immediate and future solutions.

Immediate Solution for Railway Bridge

Students can not wait another 3-6 years for improvements. Therefore although not ideal it should be made legal to cycle on the north side path from Beverley Crescent to Shakespeare Road until a more longer term better solution can be found. Most cyclists (the minority apart) adjust their position and speed to take into account any other path users and thus do not cause any conflict. It is believed there have been no serious incidents or accidents on the path over the last few years. The path width on the bridge itself at 1.8m is no different from the width of a number of other sections of dual use path in the Borough.

More confident experienced cyclists are able to command the primary position on the road, that is, the centre of the carriageway, and ride at a faster speed (although this is not easy with the incline on both sides of the bridge) and are not disturbed by the traffic at times (sometimes aggressively) queuing up behind.

Future Solution

When the A428/A6 link is completed it is claimed that traffic volume will be lower with possibly HGVs banned (except for access). The electrification of the line north of Bedford will require a new bridge to be built as part of the first phase but this cannot be started until the A428/A6 link is opened so that Bromham Road can be closed until the new bridge is built. This can be designed to have at least a 3 metre wide dual use path although there will still be the question as to whether the links on either side are also able to be widened.

The double mini roundabout will have to be signalled to improve safety.

The Council confirmed their commitment to provide resources to enable cyclists to travel safely.

e-Petition

The third petition is an e-petition

3 - **Cycling Safety** in Bedford (20 December 2012 - e-petition still open until 28 February 2013).

The petition states “We the undersigned petition the council to make Bedford a safe cycling area and safe for children to cycle to school and adults to cycle to work - all year around. If we make people feel safe cycling more people will cycle to work and school. It will improve the town's health and will therefore reduce the cost of health care for the increasing overweight adult and child population. There are many painted cycle routes on the road which vehicles constantly park or stop in which must be stopped.”

The petition can be accessed with link:

<http://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=19&RPID=41355364&HPID=41355364>

Cycle Security Reminder

Residents are asked to be more vigilant and public spirited in reporting crime, in particular if you see bike thieves in the act.

It was reported a few months ago that Avon and Somerset police had set up a test to see how many members of the public responded to crime. A police community police support officer posed as a thief and while he used bolt croppers to cut through bicycle locks in plain view of the public the police secretly filmed people's reactions. Although 50 people looked at him, none of them rang 999 to report the crime in action.

Although it is probably 100% impossible to prevent a cycle theft please take the following precautions to minimise it.

- Always lock your bicycle in well used and properly lit areas where it is visible to passing pedestrians.
- Use a good quality lock that matches the value of your bicycle.
- Thread it through the frame and at least one wheel and secure it to something immovable, such as a cycle rack or railings.
- Remove and take with you quick release valuables such as lights, pumps and panniers.
- Ensure your cycle is easily identifiable. Make a note of the model, frame number, colour and any accessories. Also photograph it and have the underside of the frame marked with a post code.
- Insure your cycle and report it immediately to the police if it is stolen.
- There are a number of websites where you can register your bicycle. Ensure that the site chosen has been endorsed by the police, Home Office and DETR. One recommended free site is www.immobilise.com.

NICE - Walking & Cycling Guidance Issued

NICE, the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, was asked by the Department of Health in March 2011 to assess the cost effectiveness of local measures to promote walking and cycling. After extensive consultation the final guidance document was issued in November 2012 containing ten recommendations:-

- 1 - High-level support from the health sector
- 2 - Ensuring all relevant policies & plans consider walking & cycling
- 3 - Developing programmes
- 4 - Personalised travel planning
- 5 - Cycling programmes
- 6 - Walking: community-wide programmes
- 7 - Walking: individual support, including the use of pedometers
- 8 - Schools
- 9 - Workplaces
- 10 - National Health Service

The full document (PH41) can be downloaded from:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/13975/61629/61629.pdf>

Pot Hole Hit Squad

The Borough's rapid response Pot Hole Hit Squad was two years old in January 2013 and has fixed more than 7,500 holes since it started.

The Council has now invested in new vehicles which are able to keep tar hot on the move enabling a team to carry out a permanent repair within minutes instead of the previous two stage process.

If you see a pot hole on your cycle journey please contact the Highways Helpdesk on 01234 718003 or use the on-line form:

<http://www.eforms.bedford.gov.uk/af3/an/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=gA2J92C5ooj>

Allocations and Designations Plan Update

The Borough's Allocations and Designations Plan, one of the Bedford Development Framework documents went through its Examination stage during December 2012/January 2013. The Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State deliberated on the cycling network and Green Wheel sections on 16 January 2013 and was supportive of the proposals which had been put forward. The document as submitted can be seen on:

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/planning_policy/allocations_and_designations/pre-submission_draft.aspx

Market Stalls versus Cycle Parking

Over the last year there has been an increase in market stalls in the town centre during the week which CCNB applauds as this must be helping to increase the vitality and economy of the town.

The number of elderly residents in the Borough is also increasing and for many the use of a bicycle gives them a mobility and accessibility which they may not have without one - the recent Paralympics has shown how disability is not necessarily a bar to achieving accessibility. However for those with reduced walking mobility and inability to carry heavy loads it is essential that when using a bicycle they are able to park it easily and securely as near as possible to their point of call. This is why cycle parking stands are not just placed all together on mass but are dotted about the town centre in sets.

Unfortunately the increasing number of market stalls has seen a blocking from use of many of the stands available causing some difficulty for cyclists. Apart from the loss in Harpur Square North on market days, the banning of parking on the railings outside the Harpur Suite (used by visitors to the Library) and the partial blocking outside Top Shop in Midland Road we now have those near Costa Coffee in Allhallows not available on some days.



In recent years we have also permanently lost many cycle parking stands which have not been completely replaced from locations such as Lime Street, Harpur Street (Middle) and St Paul's Square North and today with the increase in residents cycling to the town centre there is need for additional stands but NOT ones tucked away in non-visible/non-secure areas such as St James Street where those installed two/three years ago



Allhallows plus stalls



Allhallows

have never been used on a single occasion.

CCNB believes that there is room for both market stalls and cycle parking stands in the town centre without the latter being blocked and has asked the Borough if a compromise could be reached. One response, due to be actioned over the next few months will be the installation of a further 20 stands.

*James Street
stands - so near
but
so isolated*



Cycling in London from the Thameslink Route

- Hywel Davies

In the previous issue I described the various options for taking cycles, including tandems, to London by train. In this article I will try to describe some of the options for exploring London by bicycle.

With trains running through to Farringdon and Blackfriars, these are ideal starting points for an exploration of the City and the Thames, either via the north or the south bank.

Alighting at Farringdon, the easiest route is to leave the Thameslink station and turn right, and follow Cowcross Street until it emerges in St John's St, opposite Smithfield meat market. From here you can go through the arch at the centre of the market and cross the road the other side. This leads to a shared use track past St Bartholemew's Hospital towards Little Britain, which is a one way emerging at the Museum of London, onto a roundabout which is busy in the week. But at weekends it is much more cycle friendly, with the third exit leading towards St Pauls.

About 75 yards from the roundabout there is a left turning for cycles into Gresham St, which leads to the Guildhall and onwards towards the Bank of England and the City. On a Sunday in particular this area is quiet and cycle friendly, and there are all manner of architectural gems waiting to be discovered, from the mediaeval Guildhall to the modern towers, Heron, Cheesegrater, NatWest, Gherkin, Walkie Talkie and Pinnacle, if it ever gets built. They are all pushing upwards into the City sky, each with its own distinct features. Just now the City of London skyline changes from one week to the next, and it is a fascinating time to visit the City. Once into the Square Mile on a weekend you can explore freely, and there is a labyrinth of smaller streets and byways to follow, as well as the main routes. If you don't know the area, do take a map – the Transport for London maps are ideal, and free and can be ordered from the TfL website.

To get back to the train you can either go back to Smithfield and then walk back down Cowcross St. (it is one way) or else head north to Clerkenwell Road, and then turn left, or west, towards Clerkenwell.



Shortly before the junction with Farringdon Road is a left turn into Tunmill St. to the left, which leads down to Farringdon Station. A word of warning - this road has recently been “traffic calmed”, and there are build outs to the left. They are not obvious and easily ridden over. Beware!

If you choose not to explore the City, keep straight on and avoid Gresham St after the Museum of London roundabout, and you come to a signalled crossroads. To the left is the recently completed New Change, a futuristic design with offices and two floors of retail. It is worth locking the bike up nearby, and taking the lifts in the centre of the building to the roof, which gives excellent views of St Paul’s, the river and surrounding areas. And its free! There is a cafe up there, too, which is not free.

If you keep going between New Change and St Paul's you come to Cannon Street. If you turn right here, then in a few yards you come to a pelican crossing which marks the northern end of the path to the Millennium Bridge. This should not be cycled, but you can push bikes down to and over the bridge, onto the South Bank and outside the Tate Modern (cafes, and toilets here). From here you can turn right, or west, towards Blackfriars (where you can re-join the train) or carry on towards the South Bank arts venues, including the Royal Festival Hall, the old County Hall, London Eye, and Westminster Bridge. From here it is a short trip to Parliament Square, St James’s Park, Cabinet War Rooms, and on to Buckingham Palace, Green Park, Hyde Park Corner, and the expanses of Hyde Park. Hyde Park makes for an enjoyable ride, but only on a few clearly marked paths, as cycling is forbidden on all others.

Again, for the return journey to Thameslink it is wise to have a map. It is also probably wise to aim for Blackfriars or Farringdon, rather than St Pancras, which is not an easy cycling area. It is now part of a huge public transport hub, with two mainlines, and international high speed link plus domestic services, two separate sets of suburban services and six underground lines all passing through the Kings Cross St Pancras complex. Add in the surface movements of buses, taxis, minicabs and cars, and you can imagine the busyness, which knows no day of rest. To cap it all, there is a complex one way system around the area which has a significant impact on where you cycle. So unless you know the area, and feel brave, stick to the quieter and more accessible Farringdon and Blackfriars. It also means that you can grab the cycle space before the crowds get on at St Pancras, which is to be recommended!

The opportunities are endless. London can be explored as easily by bicycle as any other means, and with a little research, route planning and map reading skill it can be done on cycle trails and quieter roads. If any of these routes appeal, then you just need to get the cycle maps and get planning!

Improving Cycle Safety

The Times Campaign - A year in the life of

Parliamentary Inquiry

Wednesday 23 January 2013 marked the start of a '**Get Britain Cycling**' inquiry organised by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Cycling (APPCG) to examine the aspirations for cycling in the UK. The inquiry, backed by the major cycling organisations including Cyclenation, will seek the views and experiences of organisations and individuals on how the government can help get more people cycling by making it safer and easier. A final report is expected in April 2013.



The Times Campaign

It had all started on 5 November 2011 with the horrifying cycling accident of Mary Bowers, a journalist for The Times close to their offices. The newspaper immediately decided to come up with a plan to improve safety on our street and in February 2012 launched The Times manifesto of eight points under the logo '**Cities fit for cycling**': The points were:

- 1 - Lorries leaving the city centre should be required by law to fit sensors, audible turning alarms, extra mirrors and safety bars to stop cyclists being thrown under the wheels.
- 2 - The 500 most dangerous road junctions must be identified, redesigned or fitted with priority traffic lights for cyclists and Trixi mirrors that allow lorry drivers to see cyclists on their near-side.
- 3 - A national audit of cycling to find out how many people cycle in Britain and how cyclists are killed or injured should be held to underpin effective cycle safety.
- 4 - The Highways Agency should earmark 2 per cent of its budget for next generation cycle routes, providing £100 million a year towards world class cycling infrastructure. Each year cities should be graded on the quality of cycling provision.
- 5 - The training of cyclists and drivers must improve and cycle safety should become a core part of the driving test.
- 6 - The default speed limit in residential areas where there are no cycle lanes should become 20mph.
- 7 - Businesses should be invited to sponsor cycleways and cycling super-highways, mirroring the Barclay backed bicycle hire scheme in London.
- 8 - Every city, even those without an elected mayor, should appoint a cycling commissioner to push home reforms.

Most of these issues had been flagged by cyclists for a number of years but the campaign has given them renewed impetus. More than 35,000 people have so far given their support, contributed over 7,000 stories and as a result of The Times on-line map, identified the 10,000 most dangerous roads, junctions and roundabouts used by cyclists.

Areas identified as dangerous by Bedford respondents included the roundabouts at Kingsway, Union Street/Clapham Road and Bromham Road (minis) and also the Bromham Road railway bridge. 2010 statistics for Bedford Borough had shown 38 slight and 11 serious cyclist injuries.

The latest news on the campaign can be seen on The Times website under:

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/cyclesafety/pledge/>

Parliamentary Debate

Although cyclists had been involved in the Transport Select Committee's review on road safety the Times Campaign prompted a Parliamentary debate in Westminster Hall on 23 February 2012. This was attended by 77 MPs and brought about a cross-party consensus that action must be taken to promote the benefits of cycling while minimizing the risks.

Cycle Stakeholders Forum

In September 2011 the Department for Transport (DfT) had set up a Cycle Stakeholders Forum and following their 19 March 2012 meeting an outline plan was produced for cycling for consideration by the DfT and to support the wider government vision when established.

Funding

A Linking Places fund of £15 million was announced by the DfT in February 2012 for sustainable travel projects and then in June a further boost for cycle safety was made by establishing a £15 million fund to improve safety for cyclists in England (outside London). This was in addition to the £15 million support for cycle safety improvements within London announced by the Government in March 2012. Towards the end of the year this was topped up in November 2012 by an extra £20million to get England cycling.

This brought the total level of funding for 2012 to a similar level to the annual budget previously had by the old Cycling England. This is excellent but still not sufficient to bring about the changes necessary.

Mary Bowers has still not regained full consciousness and will require 24 hour care for the rest of her life. The lorry driver involved was on his mobile phone. He was acquitted of dangerous driving but convicted on the lower charge of careless driving and given an eight month ban.

Union Street Roundabout

Cycle Safety Fund Bid

The Department for Transport (DfT) on 28 June 2012 announced a further boost for Cycle Safety by establishing a £15 million fund to improve safety for cyclists in England (outside London). This was in addition to the £15 million support for cycle safety improvements within London announced by the Government in March 2012.

The fund was to provide capital support to improve safety at junctions identified as having a record of road incidents that have resulted in cyclists being killed or seriously injured.

CCNB immediately contacted the Borough requesting them to submit a bid to the DfT when details were announced. They agreed and finally put in a bid just prior to the 31 November 2012 deadline.

The Times national website for problem junctions had highlighted a number within Bedford. The Union Street/Tavistock Street/Clapham Road/Roff Avenue roundabout was selected as it had had the highest level of cyclist accidents over the last 10 years. The roundabout also had one of the highest number of cyclists (550 in a 2012 survey) in the town passing through the junction in addition to 2,500 pedestrians including 200 children. The survey also showed that around 25,000 motor vehicles also used the roundabout over a 12 hour period.

The major issues for cyclists at this roundabout are:

- Relatively fast moving and high volumes of motorized traffic
- Conflicting movements
- No protected space or clear paths for cyclists
- Uphill gradient from Union Street to Roff Avenue.

Many options to improve the roundabout were designed and tested for safety and traffic capacity including designs for a compact roundabout, off-road cycle lanes, annular cycle lanes, circulatory cycle lanes as well as signalization. None of these designs could both improve safety and maintain traffic capacity to avoid queuing.

In the end a decision was taken to put forward a 'turbo-roundabout' combined with Zebra crossings on each arm as the only design to improve safety and at the same time potentially increase traffic capacity at this key roundabout.

A turbo-roundabout is an innovative design widely adopted in the Netherlands over the last 10 years, which combines the proven safety benefits of single lane 'compact' (continental-style) roundabouts whilst catering for much higher traffic flows. In turbo-roundabouts there is a tighter geometry to reduce traffic speeds and promote safety, combined with 2 lane entries and 2 lane circulation to maintain vehicular capacity.

Choice of routes for cyclists.

On-road cyclists, currently 350 per day, will take the centre of the lane at the approach to the roundabout and follow the same paths as drivers around the roundabout. This speed should not feel as intimidating as now as other vehicles will be moving at slower speeds similar to cyclists. Once on the roundabout, they will not have to contend with conflicting movements and will be led off at their chosen exit.

Off-road cyclists, currently 200 per day, will go off-road on the roundabout approaches onto a dedicated shared path and cross much more easily (but with care) at the Zebra on the arms and rejoin the road at cycle lanes down stream from the roundabout.



**Roff Avenue/Tavistock Street/Clapham Road/Union Street Roundabout
Spiral Turbo-roundabout Nov 2012**

If funding is granted for the scheme over the next few months, it must be built during the 2013/14 financial year.

This is an edited version of a paper given to the Bedford Cycling Strategy Group in December 2012 by Patrick Lingwood, BBC Cycling Officer.

Passau to Vienna - a cycle ride along the Danube

- Gerry & Sue Sansom

On a wet June day last year, Sue and I set off to catch the 9.00am train to London St Pancras and onward by Eurostar to Paris and Munich, arriving in the German city a relaxing 12 hours later. We stayed in Munich overnight and in the morning made the final leg of our journey – a short train ride to the city of Passau close to the Austrian border. Here we collected our hired bikes for the start of a 318km cycle ride along the banks of the Danube (locally called the Danau) to Vienna.

We'd decided to minimise the hassle by choosing a “packaged trip” with bike hire, the route and overnight stops already organised for us although we would be travelling alone and not with a group - aiming to complete the trip in a leisurely 7 nights giving plenty of time for exploration en-route.

Passau, the “city of three rivers” and the site of an important monastery in the year 460, has long been regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in Germany. Standing at the confluence of the Danube, the Inn and the river Llz the city, as it is today, was largely built in the 1600's in the wonderful Baroque style although there are buildings dating back to the 13thC and Roman times.

As a welcome contrast to the wet English summer we'd left behind us, we started out from Passau in beautiful sunshine - happily the weather continued like this for the remainder of our holiday. The route alongside the Danube follows a mostly tarmac cycle track by the river, sometimes on the northern bank and sometimes on the southern. This involves crossing the river at various points usually by way of some quaint little ferries mostly designed for use by pedestrians and cyclists. On a couple of occasions the river is crossed at the impressive hydro-electric power stations that span the river. The track is well signposted, mostly flat and often departs from the riverbank to the extremes of the valley where it widens and from time to time follows alongside quiet roads for short distances. The route is quite popular but we never felt that it was really busy and at that time of year we were quite often cycling by ourselves for long periods of time.

The journey started in the lovely, steeply wooded valleys of the southern Bavarian Forest and the Bohemian Highlands, passing through the little town of Engelharteszell and its Trappist monastery to the famous “Schlögen Loop”. Here the huge river, blocked by a massive granite ridge, is forced to double back on itself – an amazing geological feature. From this point the river meanders down through some lovely countryside and charming little villages and towns to the beautiful city of Linz. The Danube carries large barges for freight as well as smart

boats for tourist cruises and leisure craft but it was nowhere near as “busy” as the Rhine in this respect – quite tranquil by comparison in fact. Leaving Linz the river valley begins to slowly broaden out and the scenery includes more cultivated green and fertile farmland, typical Austrian farms and towns with old churches and welcome beer gardens by the river. There are a number of historical sites along the way including the Mauthausen concentration camp a remnant of Germany and Austria’s Nazi past. Eventually the river reaches the very popular town of Melk with its world famous and imposing Benedictine Abbey which was rebuilt in the Baroque style in the 18thC. The final stages of the trip from Melk to Vienna took us through The Wachau – one of Austria’s best known wine growing regions – a really lovely area with steep valley sides, terraced vineyards and peppered with pretty little villages.

Finally, we arrived in Vienna – in fact we left our bikes 20km outside the city and took the train in order to avoid cycling through the busy suburbs but there’s nothing to stop one doing that and Vienna is in fact a very bike friendly city. We stayed a further 3 nights exploring the fascinating city of Vienna before returning home by plane. It was a really “easy-going” cycling holiday – and great fun!

Of course if you really want a challenge it’s perfectly possible (and some do it) to cycle on through Hungary and Romania to where the Danube finally finishes - the Black Sea. We met someone along the way who’d started cycling in Norwich and was aiming to finish in Budapest.



The Danube near Schlögen

New National Standard for Cycle Training

A new National Standard for Cycle Training was published by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 2 November 2012. Although it was available for use immediately, schemes to the original standard can still be used until 31 March 2013. After this date all schemes must then teach the new National Standard.

The new standard is a result of a six month review to ensure that the original standard developed in 2005 by over 20 organisations is in line with current best practice.

In England the National Standard is promoted through the flagship Bikeability award scheme and National Standard/Bikeability training may only be delivered by National Standard Instructors (NSIs), who have successfully completed a DfT recognised instructor training course. Since 1 January 2011, Instructor Training Organisations (ITOs) are the only bodies recognised by government as providers of training for National Standard instructor trainers, instructors and assistant instructors.

There are 18 ITs in England and Bedford Borough Council is one of nine local authorities in the East of England making up the East Region Instructor Training Organisation.

Course manuals for the three cycle training levels can be downloaded from

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/delivering-bikeability/course-manuals/>

and the outcomes, together with those for the instructors can be from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standard-for-cycle-training-outcomes?dm_t=0,0,0,0,0

They are worth perusing to bring you up to date with the latest practices, particularly for cycling around roundabouts and across junctions.

The scheme in March 2012 celebrated five years of delivering training for children in schools.

It had started in year 2006/07 with 18 local authorities delivering less than 8,000 training places. The programme has grown considerably with grants in 2010/11 going to 108 local authorities and 66 School Games Organiser Host Schools delivering 200,000 training places. Thus over the five year period some 460,000 children have been trained.

A report on the number of children cycling to school since 2007 showed that where there was a longer history of delivering cycle training, a higher proportion of children were cycling to secondary school. Those authorities that have received higher levels of Bikeability funding have

seen larger increases in cycling to secondary school.

In September 2011 the DfT announced that from April 2012 the rules governing Bikeability grants, originally only available for year 6 school children (aged 9), would be relaxed to allow a wider range of children from years 6-9 (aged 9-14) to have the opportunity to have training. Grant recipients would then be able to offer the more advanced Level 3 which covers complex road situations to support cycling in busier areas.

Cycle Training in Bedford Borough

Between 1995 and 2007 the County Council trained children to the National Cycling Proficiency Scheme. They then started training to the new Bikeability scheme in 2007 and this was continued by the Borough when it became a Unitary in April 2009.

The current Borough policy is to target all middle/primary schools to deliver a combined Bikeability Level 1 and 2 training to years 5 and 6 free of charge. For Level 2 training which involves riding on the road children taking part have to be 10 years of age by 31 August in any year before they can take part.

In 2010/11, the latest figures available from the DfT, only 520 students went through the combined Level 1/2 course in the Borough which also included the Sharnbrook (79) and Biddenham (107) Games Organiser Host Schools although grants were made available for 1230 places.

In neighbouring authorities Central Bedfordshire trained 745, Luton 1500, Northamptonshire 2090 and Cambridgeshire 2222.

No Level 3 training (on-road in all traffic conditions) has been given to date in the borough.

A survey in 2006 by the old County Council of local schools, mirroring national surveys, showed that cycling to school was the preferred mode of transport for more than 30% of pupils whereas the average normal mode was only 4%. Lack of cycle training was one of top barriers to cycling after lack of cycle route and cycle parking stands and lockers.

At the present time some schools in the borough do not allow cycling to school and therefore do not give their pupils the chance to take up the training. This must be reversed.

Several years ago all schools had to have a school travel plan by 2010 which contained a cycling policy with targets and plans of action to encourage safer cycling to school. Unfortunately, except when a new planning application is made which requires a current travel plan as part of the documentation, a large number of these plans are now gathering dust and are out of date.

CCNB believes that all schools should be encouraged to keep updated travel plans and that the Borough should now offer Level 3 training.

Harpur Suite Railings - Cycle Parking

Sometime ago cycle parking against the railings outside the Harpur Suite was prohibited. However due to the shortage of stands in the area, particularly on market days when the stands in Harpur Square north are covered by market stalls (see page 20) bicycles are still parked there due to its nearest to the Central Library.



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|
Harpur Suite railings

<--Sign

National Cycle-Rail Awards

At the National Cycle-Rail Awards held during November 2012, First Capital Connect received the coveted Station of the Year for work at St Albans station. Over the previous year they had doubled the number of cycle parking stands to more than 1000 with plans for further expansion and improvement.

With the additional cycle stands at Bedford station to be installed by the end of the financial year let's hope that Bedford will be a winner at the next awards.

Although St Albans has the highest number of cycle parking spaces on the Thameslink route, Bedford has the highest percentage of commuters cycling to the station.

Cycle Repair Service

A new service for cyclists has launched at St Albans Station. Cycle Tech UK will be operating a bike clinic beside the car park every Monday and Wednesday from 0630 to 1900. Customers who have damaged bikes or just want their cycle serviced can drop them off at the Cycle Tech UK's mobile repair shop in the morning and collect the repaired or serviced bike in the evening.

The successful launch of the scheme on 13 November 2012 saw representatives from Cycle Tech UK, First Capital Connect and the British Transport Police (BTP) talking to local cyclists about the facilities at St Albans. Members of the BTP also helped several cyclists add their bikes to BikeRegister, the UK's leading online bike security registry.

Cycle Tech also has a wide array of accessories for sale, from

lights and high visibility clothing to spare tires and mud-guards, serving as a one-stop shop for the cycling enthusiast on the go.

The company has been invited to have a similar facility at Bedford railway station from this Spring.

Fully equipped mobile repair service van



European Funds for Cycling

The European Cycling Federation (ECF) of which CCNB is a member via its umbrella organisation **Cyclenation** has earned a major victory in its campaign for more recognition of cycling infrastructure in the EU budget 2014-20.

The European Parliament's Tourism and Transport Committee voted for amendments that give cycling its proper place within European strategic transport planning. Now for the first time, MEPs have decided to include cycling within the Trans-European Transport Network ('TEN-T') guidelines, opening the door for billions of Euro in cycling investments. In terms of funding the demands of cycling are likely to be smaller than those of the European haulage industry and rail sector, but it's vital the interests of cyclists aren't ignored.

Chair of London Cycle Campaign's board of trustees Ann Kenrick said, "It's great we've succeeded in getting cycling into EU policy documents, because this makes it easier to get money and infrastructure moving at the national level too, keeping the potential for billions of euros for cycling on the table."

The European Parliament listened to the voices of millions of cyclists across Europe, including Great Britain, and is now including cycling in vital infrastructure guidelines. Cyclists lobbied the EU because for 2007-13, cycling was only allocated 0.7% of the EU funding available for transport. For the next financial period (2014-2020), €6 billion (10% of EU funding) has been identified that should be dedicated to cycling.

Unlocking these funds will still require sustained pressure on the European institutions from the European Cycling Federation and European citizens who cycle but the scene has been set, political contacts made and cycling is now firmly on the agenda.

Cycle Bedford Website Update

New pages have been added to CCNBs, cyclebedford website

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

giving details at a click on how you can take your bike on the train network from Bedford throughout the UK, on Eurostar to Europe and further afield.

The only bus from Bedford which allows two bicycles to be carried is the Stagecoach X5 service to all towns between Oxford and Cambridge.

From the Newport Pagnell service station on the M1 it is possible to access France and other neighbouring countries using the European Bike Express bus.

Richard Hutchins Cyclist Extraordinaire

Richard (Dick) Hutchins, CCNB's oldest member, died at his daughter's home in Surrey on 19 January 2013, aged 97.

Hazel Mitchell, CCNB's Chair, gives her memories of him:

I met Dick in 1992 when the idea for a Cycling Campaign was being thought about, and he invited me and Veronica Brown of the CTC to meet each other in his delightful garden at Clapham Road. He was extremely encouraging and felt two groups could work well together, each providing a different emphasis on cycling.

Dick's garden became the venue for our very enjoyable annual summer CCNB socials, where we enjoyed cream teas and boat trips on the river. At that event he also organised trips up the tower of Clapham Parish Church so we could see the view and appreciate the history of the building. When he decided in 2006 to return to his roots in Ireland he arranged for a friendly neighbour to allow us to continue our summer social event in their very large riverside garden. We have continued there ever since. What another example of thought for others!

Dick published a book 'Easy Cycling in Britain' on cycle routes round the country, with associated train journeys and generously donated a large number of these to help raise funds for the Campaign.

Dick campaigned to get the public footpath running from Hawk Drive, Brickhill through to Green Lane in Clapham converted into a bridleway to enable cyclists to legally use it - still not allowed. But his legacy will be that we will continue to press for it.

In 2004 he generously organised certificates (beautifully framed) to thank Veronica and myself for work done to promote cycling. Mine specifically mentioned the work I tried to do when I was Mayor of Bedford in 2000-2001. I keep this with gratitude and pride.

Many of us attended his open house 90th party and were fascinated to see, through his amazing display of photos and articles, what a full life he had led with a vast range of interests. He was a most charming host and we will always have most grateful, affectionate and encouraging memories of all that Dick did for the Cycling Campaign.



Diary

Tuesday 5 March 2013 - Bedford College Sustainability Day
15 - 23 June 2013 - National Bike Week
Saturday 7 September 2013 - Bike 'n Hike
16 - 22 September 2013 - European Mobility Week

See <http://www.ccnb.org.uk/diary.htm> for other events

Local Cycle Rides Contact:

CTC - North Beds Section - (01234) 219148

Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire



Our Vision

To see Bedford as a
'Town of Cyclists' & 'Cycle Friendly Communities'

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

Please contact us if you have any cycling issues or better still, consider becoming a member to give us added weight in our discussions with the relevant authorities. Write to:

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

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

Single £3.00 (£13 for 5yr); Family £5.00 (£22 for 5yr)