

Cycle Bedford

Short History of
CCNB
to celebrate its
20th Anniversary

Peter Blakeman
June 2012



CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE

Founded 1992

The short history of CCNB is taken from CCNB's Newsletter No 63 of June 2012 published to mark the 20th Anniversary of the campaign group.

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Front Cover

20th anniversary drawing by Jack Wood.

CCNB 20th Anniversary Quotes

Dave Hodgson - Mayor of Bedford

“Congratulations to the Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire on its 20th anniversary. Bedford Borough is a great place for cycling, and CCNB are to be congratulated for their work over twenty years in working to protect and enhance the opportunities for people to enjoy cycling locally. This task is ongoing, and I look forward to continuing to work with CCNB to make cycling even more attractive, safe and accessible for residents of all ages, right across Bedford Borough.”

Richard Fuller - MP for Bedford & Kempston

“CCNB are to be congratulated for their efforts over the last 20 years in promoting cycling and campaigning for safer and better routes in and around Bedford and Kempston.

Their work has made a real difference for cyclists in the town and has undoubtedly encouraged people to take up this healthy and environmentally friendly mode of transport.

There remains much to be achieved and I wish CCNB continuing success in the years ahead.”

Patrick Hall - MP for Bedford & Kempston 1997-2010

“I am pleased to congratulate the Cycling Campaign for North Beds in its 20th year for having had the foresight to seek to place the importance of cycling on the local agenda and for sustaining the commitment to keep it there.”

Nigel Brigham - Sustrans Regional Director East of England

“Many thanks for the great work that CCNB has done over the years. Campaigning can seem a thankless task at times, because there is always so much more that can be done and there are frequent disappointments and frustrations, but CCNB has kept going, played a big role in promoting cycling and stayed positive, so well done for that. Sustrans and CCNB have achieved much over recent years and we have really valued the partnership. Keep up the good work – there is a long way to go, but more and more people in North Bedfordshire and elsewhere are starting to realise the important role that cycling can play in keeping our towns moving, vibrant, healthy and attractive places to be. Now we all need to work together to make it happen and without waiting another 20 years!”

Bedford Cycle Infrastructure in 2012

Signalled Crossings - 56

installed over the last two decades in urban area to improve cyclists' safety in crossing busy main roads

Pegasus - 2

Toucan - 54

This is in addition to many underpasses and central reservations and also Puffin/Pelican and Zebra crossings which cyclists can use to safely walk across.

Advanced Stop Line (ASL) sets - 10

installed at junctions

Cycle Parking Spaces - 1775+

'Sheffield' type around Borough

Town Centre - 375

Railway Station - 400

another 148 to arrive shortly

Rest of Borough - 1000+

public and private

Cycle Network - 156 km

based on CCNB's Bedford & Kempston Cycle Map

Off-Road - 71 km

plus 14 km unsurfaced track/bridleway

Quiet Roads - 61 km

On-Road Cycle Lanes - 4 km

plus 6 km one way/bus lane

Within Bedford Borough there are also a total of 350 kilometres of Bridleways and 34 kilometres of Public Byways (BOATS) which can be used by cyclists

Short History of CCNB

Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire (CCNB) has had its successes and disappointments over the last 20 years but we like to think that overall it has helped to put cycling on the map and contributed to the continuing increase in cycling in the Borough seen particularly over the last few years.

CCNB began as Cycling Campaign for Bedfordshire (CCB) in 1992 following a letter in a local paper and a public meeting from which sprang a committee chaired, as it still is today, by Hazel Mitchell.

Two of the aims of the organisation are:

- to encourage consideration of needs of cyclists in all aspects of transport planning and management
- to promote and encourage cycling as a means of transport and recreation

As a result of an Environmental Forum in 1994, CCB was instrumental in setting up the Bedford Cycle Strategy Group, encompassing both Borough and County officer input which had its first meeting in June 1994. Meetings have continued to this day on a bi-monthly basis and fulfill our first aim.

At the CCB AGM held in April 1997, a motion was carried to change the name to Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire (CCNB) to avoid any conflict with a cycling campaign group in the south of the county.

A Cycling Initiatives Group was set up within Bedfordshire County Council in 1997 (by the then Director of Environment, Mike Kenworthy) following pressure from councillors to ensure a consistent approach to cycling strategy, spending and improving liaison across the authority. In 1998 at the request of CCNB/CTC this was opened up to cyclists and a County Cycle Forum established.

The first meeting was held in November 1998 and further meetings have taken place since that time at four monthly intervals at a location on a rotation between North, Mid and South Bedfordshire (Bedford, Ampthill and Dunstable). With the dissolution of the County Council on 31 March 2009 the last meeting held was at County Hall, Bedford on 10 February 2009 with Cllr Peter Hollick in the Chair.

CCNB also attended the Mid-Beds Cycle Forum, a similar group to the Bedford Cycle Strategy Group, which was formed in 2000 and met quarterly in Biggleswade to cover schemes and issues in the Mid-Beds area until the dissolution of the District Council on 31 March 2009.

CCNB also puts forward cyclists interests at meetings of the

Bedfordshire Rural Transport Partnership Forum
Bedford Hospital Bike Users Group

and is a key stakeholder on the preparation and implementation of the
Bedford Stations Travel Plan
Bedford Green Wheel
Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

It was also a member of the past

Bedford Transport Users' and Providers Forum
Local Agenda 21
RSPB Green Travel Group and
Bedfordshire Local Access Forum
Queen's Park Riverside Paths Improvement Project

Numerous meetings on a range of cycling topics have been held over the years with individuals from the Bedfordshire County Council, Bedford Borough Council, Marston Vale Trust, Beds, Herts and Luton Tourism, Sustrans and the Highways Agency.

Over the first few years members organised Bike Maintenance Courses (John Franklin) and summer cycle rides but nowadays leaves the latter to the local Bedfordshire section of the CTC.

CCNB is affiliated to ' **cyclenation**', previously the Cycling Campaign Network (CCN), the umbrella organisation for cycle campaign groups.

Membership

Membership (and the subscription fee) has remained static over the last decade with just under 100 individual members. Each member since the beginning has received a regular newsletter (this one is No 63), which CCNB hopes is found to be a very informative and interesting product.

Each AGM has been preceded by a presentation on a topic relevant to cycling and over the last few years CCNB has had a summer garden party by the riverside as well as a Christmas Dinner.

Presentations

CCNB has given many presentations to various bodies on the benefits and history of cycling in Bedford, 20mph speed limits and benchmarking.

Consultations

Bedfordshire has been at the centre of planning for a significant increase in housing and transport infrastructure over the last two decades and Bedford town centre before the economic downturn was to have a major revamp to maintain its role as a Regional Centre. This has resulted in an abnormal number of consultation documents and meetings, exhibitions and planning applications to which CCNB has responded to ensure that cycling interests are included.

Publications

To carry out our aim of promoting cycling CCNB has published five extremely successful publications over the years on cycle routes in and around North Bedfordshire as well as a **Bedford and Kempston Cycle Map** in 2001 to help existing and potential cyclists to enjoy the town and countryside. The latter is now in its fourth edition with well over 20,000 copies distributed.

CCNB's first publication to promote cycling was '**Easy Cycle Rides around Bedford**', a book of 12 easy cycle rides suitable for families and cyclists of all ages in the local countryside. The book was published in March 1995 with the help of an amenity grant from Bedford Borough Council. It was so successful that it had to be reprinted within two months. Following two further reprints, an updated second edition was published in April 2002. To date 2500 copies have been sold.

CCNB's second publication in 1997 was '**Bunyan's Bedfordshire - A Progress by Bicycle**'. This contained a pleasant 64 mile circular ride picking up the principal places connected with John Bunyan. The route was divided into three easy stages which could be accessed by trains.

Our third publication in 1998 was a more substantial book '**Family Bike Rides in and around Bedford**'. This contained 18 basic rides - 6 in the town and immediate area and 12 in the countryside suitable for all members of the family - from the inexperienced to the more confident.

To coincide with the opening of a bike hire facility in 1999 from the Longholme Lake Café a leaflet '**Bike Rides from Longholme Lake Café and Bike Hire - 1: Eastwards**' was published. It had four easy rides, three suitable for inexperienced riders almost entirely on cycle tracks and paths and a longer ride into the countryside on minor roads. As the bike hire facility has now closed an updated version, '**Bike Rides from Priory Marina**' where there is now a hire facility was published in 2009.

'**Explore route 51 - the university way**' from Milton Keynes to Sandy via Bedford was published in 2005 by the Forest of Marston Vale funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. A simpler 2nd edition was published by CCNB in 2007.

CCNB's other publication published in 2005 and updated annually is '**Easy Bike Rides off the Bedford to Sandy Cycleway**'. It consists of a folder of eight circular rides on quiet roads and off-road tracks off the Bedford to Sandy section of National Cycle Network Routes 51 and 12.

To coincide with Borough Council elections in June 2009 and May 2011, a '**Cyclists Manifesto**' was compiled and given to all prospective candidates at each election to make potential members aware of the benefits of cycling and the actions needed to ensure that Bedford continued to progress as

'A Town of Cyclists' and 'Cycle Friendly Communities'.

Successes

Listed are just some of the successes of CCNB's campaigning:

- Provision of 'Sheffield' type cycle parking stands in town centre, public facilities and shops) to replace life-expired or insecure types (eg old concrete slots) in response to high levels of theft and to improve level of service to cyclists (1994)
- Sign posting of advisory routes (1998)
- Off-road tracks along both Caves Lane and Manton Lane for children cycling to school (2001 & 2002)
- Underpass of Western Bypass along Ridge Road, a regular cycle route for many adults and children from Kempston Rural & Wootton (2010)
- Northern underpass of new A6 at The Wixams (2007)
- Wixams Village One roundabout route (2009)
- Traffic signal changes to allow cyclists to safely cross Harrold and Great Barford Bridges (2009)
- Cutback of shrubbery at the blind bend on the cycle track running through the rear of the Riverfield Drive Tesco store (2008)
- Cycle times improved at a number of Toucan crossings (Various)
- Costin Street/Maitland Street dropped kerbs (2010)
- Cycle stands at Go-Outdoors & Sainsbury's Kempston (2011 & 2012)

Disappointments

Just some of our disappointments to date, most of which we are still continuing to campaign for:

- Town Centre cycling ban even outside core shopping hours
- Cycle/pedestrian bridge across the railway from the Allens site in Queen's Park to the railway station
- Bromham Road railway bridge - Off-road cycle route for children cycling to school
- Bromham River Bridge - One way traffic flow to allow one lane for pedestrians and cyclists
- Local transport sustainable fund first tranche bid rejection (2011)
- Blanket 20mph speed limits in town centre and residential areas

Websites

The domain name www.ccnb.org.uk was taken out in 2000.

The additional domain name www.cyclebedford.org.uk was taken out in 2008 to enable anybody wanting to know about cycling in the Bedford area to pick up our website more easily via website search engines such as Google.

Both websites are being continually updated and expanded with cycling information for the Bedford Borough area.

Events and Exhibitions

CCNB has had numerous stalls at events over the years to get our message over to the public - River Festival, Kite Festival, Bike Week (Market Stall), Spring Greens Festival (1995), Community Fair (1998), Bedfordshire Millennium Festival (1999), Fun. Sun and Cycles (2002/2005/2009), Cycle Fest (2011), Borough Green Fairs (2011/2012), Bedford College Sustainability Days (2011/2012), just to name a few.

Two large cycling exhibitions were organised at the Civic Theatre in Horne Lane; 'Bike to the Future' in 1996 and 'Cycle Celebration' in 2007, both with bike displays, activity, information and the sale and exchange of goods.

In 2011 we exhibited in Bedford and Kempston Libraries and Bedford Town Hall.

To celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2012, displays were put on in Putnoe and Kempston Libraries and during Bike Week also in Bedford Central Library.



*Putnoe
Library
Exhibition
23 April
to 4 May
2012*

Past Members

CCNB has been saddened over the last few years to lose three members who contributed so much to the organisation:

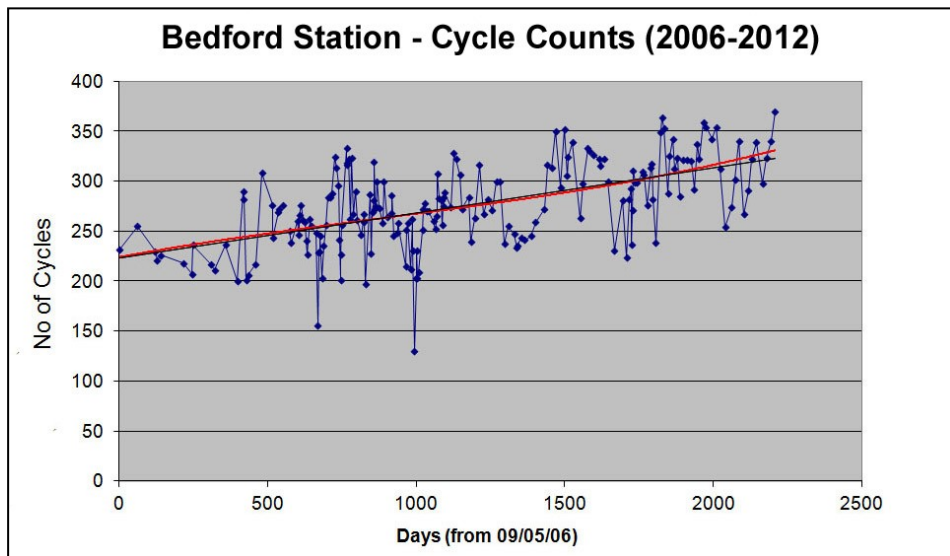
- Louis Fussell (2008)
- Don Perkins (2009)
- Dave Lukes (2012)

Bedford Station Cycle Counts

The need for cycle parking to make the bike to station journey more attractive has been shown on many occasions to increase cycle trips for this specific purpose by a significant percentage. During October 2003 CTC had a project funded by the Department for Transport and supported by the devolved administrations to survey all official and informal cycle parking at each of the 2500 UK stations.

CCNB carried out the survey of the two Bedford stations on 21 October 2003. At the main Bedford station 262 cycle stands were available and 229 cycles counted. During June 2003 a count of 241 cycles had been obtained. At the St Johns station no stands are available and there were no cycles to be counted.

Since this time CCNB has continued to monitor the number of cycles parked at the station. The figure below shows the continuing increase seen since May 2006 to the present time; a rise of 47.6% over the six years, that is, 7.9% per year.



Number of cycle parking spaces available at Bedford Station:

Before 2002	208
2002	262
2005	320
2007	360
2009	454
2010	400
Expected late Summer 2012	548

The Future

What of the future?

There is the growing problem of inactivity and obesity of the population, particularly of young children. Cycling can help reduce this as well as giving a host of other health benefits.

There is also the threat of global warming and the need to reduce emissions of which transport is a major contributor. The use of vehicles powered by sustainable sources can only go so far in reducing emissions. It will not reduce the increasing congestion seen in our town. People will have to start to use more sustainable modes of transport; walking and cycling for short distances and buses and trains for medium to long distances.

Our use of motor vehicles will soon reach a critical point as oil and other resources become scarcer. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently stated that there could be a permanent doubling of oil prices over the next decade. It has also been reported that if China reaches the level of car ownership as it is in the USA then they would have to import more oil than is currently produced in the rest of the world.

As has been said earlier, Bedford is already a cycling town and it is estimated that within the Borough 7% of residents already cycling to the shops, work, school, railway station or leisure facilities on a daily basis and 33% at least once per month.

The level of cycling has been increasing by approximately 8% per year over the last few years and this has been helped by the installation over the past two decades of more than 76 signalled crossings within the Bedford/Kempston urban area to make cycling (and walking) safer.

However to encourage Bedford borough residents to consider cycling or cycling more often the cycle network has to be of high quality and based on best practice. Unfortunately this has not always been the case.

CCNB would expect to see in the future:

Completion of the urban cycle network with more cycle friendly junctions and roundabouts including links to all the new and future housing and business developments. In particular:

- 20mph limits in all residential areas and the town centre
- Out of hours cycling north/south and east/west through the town centre
- Improved access over the main railway line south and north of the station
- Completion of the Bedford Green Wheel with links to rural villages
- Cycle training for all school children.

Cycling, cycling

*Cycling, cycling - just amazing,
Get on your bike and don't be lazy.
Cycling to work or school is very quick,
Do you see why cycling is so fantastic?*

*Cycling, cycling - just the best!
Get on your bike - don't have a rest.
Cycling has no carbon footprint -
Do you see why cycling's so brilliant?*

*Cycling, cycling - just magnificent,
Get on your bike - don't be indolent!
Cycling's good exercise and good for healthiness,
Do you see why cycling is all awesomeness?*

*So now you know cycling is amazing,
You can probably see why CCNB have been campaigning
For many years - twenty in fact -
A very long time to be doing that!*

*1992 - CCNB first started,
And just look how long it has lasted!
So much work they've been doing since that time
And that is the end of my commemorative rhyme!*

Emma Wood

FREE to Good Home

**2-wheel cargo trailer for seat-post mounting
Metal frame with plastic box size 24" x 12" x 12".**

Contact Joanna on 01234 353638

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.

E-mail: ccnb@ccnb.org.uk

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

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