

CAMCYCLE

SPRING 2020



CYCLING AND HEALTH

HANDCYCLE ADVENTURES
MENTAL HEALTH
CYCLING AFTER CANCER
FITNESS AND ENDURANCE



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RIDE YOUR CITY



Continental 



Why I cycle

Clare Goodhart, GP, from Grantchester

I've always cycled in Cambridge (and prefer cycling to driving for home visits), but I'd increasingly got into the habit of cycling only on nice days and making excuses not to cycle to work in the winter. However, I felt guilty about driving and was getting more and more worried about the climate, traffic congestion and air quality. Then I had the bright idea of trying an electric bike. It's revolutionised my life!

The e-bike takes the edge off the excuse that I don't fancy the slog of cycling; ever since I've had it I've been really enjoying cycling to work. The great thing about my e-bike is that you can choose what mode to have it in – I ride it in 'eco' setting if I want a bit more exercise or 'turbo' if I'm tired or in a hurry. I love the reliability of cycling journey times and the way that you arrive at work having had time to think things through on the ride.

CAM
CYCLE



CAMCYCLE, THE CAMBRIDGE CYCLING CAMPAIGN

works for more, better and safer cycling for all ages and abilities in and around Cambridge. Many of the cycling facilities such as paths, lanes, bridges and cycle parks would not exist without the campaigning of our volunteers, supported by over 1,400 Camcycle members. Our vision is for a city that is healthy, sustainable and vibrant, and a pleasant place for Cambridge's residents, workers and visitors.

SUPPORT
OUR WORK

[camcycle.org.uk/
membership](https://camcycle.org.uk/membership)

Healthy active transport benefits us all



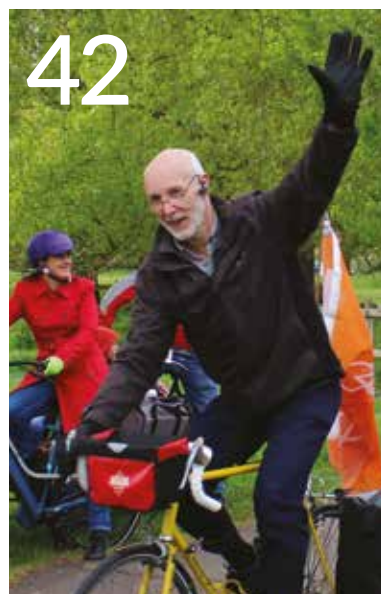
For the umpteenth time, improving health tops the list for most people currently working on new year resolutions. The urge to be more active may be the perfect antidote to the excesses of year end celebrations and, as we approach brighter seasons, looks increasingly attractive. This is our first publication of the year, so we're keen to highlight the easy relationship between cycling and improving health - that of cyclists and those around them, too.

We're mindful of research which shows that around a quarter of us have already given up on our resolutions, so have included inspirational stories and evidence to help you focus on why it's worth committing to active forms of travel for the benefit of all. We hear from people who've overcome significant health barriers and are cycling themselves back to strength. Others share stories of cycling to find solace or socialise in lives which are otherwise too full for these pleasures.

Camcycle's resolution this year is to focus on the theme of 'Cycling for All' - enabling safe and convenient cycling for more people and more types of cycle. To provide ongoing motivation, we look at inspiring examples from around the world and celebrate some of our recent successful actions. A critical part of our work is questioning how local plans will affect people and how they move around the city. We therefore share updates on some of the current processes underway and suggest how you can engage in conversations about them.

As the year progresses, we will be holding ourselves to account, working towards specific, measurable and achievable goals. We'd love you to join us in our resolve by taking part in one of our events, engaging in our discussions or becoming a member, if you haven't already. Whichever you do will help to improve our community's health and optimise our collective chance of sticking to this resolution - so please do read on and get cycling!.

Adam Jenkins & Rosie Humphrey, Camcycle editors



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CELEBRATE!

► The next issue of Camcycle magazine is our birthday issue. We'll be celebrating 25 years of campaigning for more, better and safer cycling - and we want to know your stories. What's made a difference for you? What have you helped achieve? Let us know at contact@camcycle.org.uk

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CALENDAR

CAMCYCLE MEETINGS

All are welcome to our monthly meetings at the Friends Meeting House, Jesus Lane on the first Tuesday of each month. At each meeting there is an opportunity to discuss your own cycling issues and campaigns. **Meetings begin at 7pm, with tea and coffee from 6.30pm.**

Please note that we may take photographs and videos at these meetings. These may be used in our publications, advertisements, media releases, website and social media. The video footage may be live-streamed on Facebook.

3 March Guest speaker Simon Munk

From Waltham Forest success to Notting Hill frustrations with London Cycling Campaign's Infrastructure Campaigner.

7 April Unravelling the cycling city: lessons from Amsterdam

Our own Roxanne De Beaux shares learnings from her course last year in the bicycle capital of the world.

5 May Guest speaker Mark Philpotts

Designing for cycling and thinking 'Beyond the Bicycle' with the engineer also known as 'Ranty Highwayman'.

2 June Volunteer birthday special

A variety of Camcycle volunteers share their stories as we prepare together for our 25th anniversary. Includes cake!

CAMCYCLE MAGAZINE DATES

We welcome members' help with our magazine, including writing articles, taking photos and laying out content. If you'd like to get involved, please follow *Cyclescape* 4264 and 4266 or email contact@camcycle.org.uk.

Copy deadline for the summer issue of the magazine is **Sunday 19 April** (theme: *Celebrate!*).

Magazine distribution will begin on **w/c 26 May**.

Members organise the newsletter distribution, putting them into envelopes and then getting them delivered. More volunteers would be a great help. Please email contact@camcycle.org.uk if you can support this work.

REGULAR CAMBRIDGE CYCLE RIDES

CTC Cambridge holds up to six rides a week in the countryside around Cambridge. All welcome. Find out more at ctccambridge.org.uk.

#CamRideHome rides start at 6pm on the last Friday of the month from outside The Mill pub on Mill Lane, Cambridge. No one takes responsibility for organising it so it just depends on who turns up. Usually a few do and they enjoy a one-hour leisurely tour of the city finishing up at a pub. Follow the hashtag on Twitter and enjoy.

SEE MORE
CAMCYCLE
EVENTS ON
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Contacting the Campaign

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www.camcycle.org.uk
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Twitter: @camcycle
Facebook: CambridgeCyclingCampaign
Instagram: @camcycleuk

Cambridge Cycling Campaign was set up in 1995 to voice the concerns of cyclists. We are not a cycling club, but a voluntary organisation promoting cycling for public benefit and representing the concerns of cyclists in and around Cambridge.

Registered charity number 1138098

THE BIG PICTURE

TOGETHER WE RIDE

A photograph of two women standing with their bicycles in a wooded area. The woman on the left is wearing a black jacket and black leggings, smiling at the camera. She is holding a silver and blue Trek bicycle. The woman on the right is wearing a red jacket, black leggings, a blue helmet, and glasses, also smiling. She is holding a blue bicycle. The background consists of bare trees and a grassy field.

Taking to the saddle can be a daunting prospect, particularly for those who are new to the area, new to cycling or who haven't cycled in a while. Thankfully, there are plenty of groups in the Cambridge region to offer support, from workplace cycling buddy schemes to sport groups and leisure rides. Women on Wheels is a new and friendly group, organising two short rides a week. The emphasis is on the social, rather than the speedy – with an essential café stop halfway through for cake and a cuppa. Find out more on page 32. *Image: Lucinda Price*





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Where are the parking spaces for all those who cycle with disabilities?



I was cycling along the other day. It was cold with a light drizzle. I was getting slightly damp, and chilly. Of course, the remedy for this is to go a little faster, get the heart racing a little faster, and warm up on the inside.

I readily admit that I'm not the fastest cyclist on the planet. There are plenty of people who have more powerful legs, and less weight to propel along. This means that even on the coldest and dampest of days, even when I'm racing along as fast as my little legs will take me, I will get overtaken by others who don't even look like they are trying.

The other day, a young woman cycled past me. She didn't even look like she was trying. Her legs were barely moving. It looked effortless.

She was followed by a young man who didn't even have any legs. Well, OK, he did have legs, but they were strapped into his wheelchair as he hand cranked himself along

after this young woman at a significantly higher speed than I could manage.

Of course, it doesn't surprise me that young people are fit, and don't have knees that have been abused for many decades. It doesn't surprise me either that some people with disabilities can cycle, sometimes with the help of

adapted cycles, sometimes on a typical two-wheeler.

You may just see somebody cycling along, but do you notice the walking stick they are also carrying so that when they reach their destination they are still able to walk the last few metres? What about the person who has an electric



The ground floor area of the Cambridge station Cyclepoint is meant to be dedicated to people who are disabled or have cargo bikes, but is always full to the brim with standard cycles.

bike because their legs are too weak to push very hard any more yet don't want to lose the freedom that cycling has given them over the years? I'm sure you've seen some older folks push their cycle along the road, using it to carry their shopping as an alternative to a walking frame.

Recent data I saw showed that one quarter of all disabled people in Cambridge get around using a cycle of some description. For cars, there are dedicated disabled car parking spaces, but there aren't any disabled cycle parking spaces. Even where such spaces are meant to exist, the people who 'manage' those spaces don't.

Take the central Cambridge station cycle parking. There is a ground floor cycle parking area that is meant to be dedicated to people who are disabled, or who have cargo bikes for ferrying their family around. Yet, it always appears to be full to the brim with the cycles of people who perhaps don't know that fact. Of course, not all disabilities are immediately apparent. Just because someone looks as if they could push a bike up a ramp doesn't mean they actually can.

Where is the disabled cycle parking in the city centre? There is none in the Grand Arcade. None

on any streets. None at Park Street, or the Grafton Centre.

Given that 25% of people with disabilities in Cambridge use cycles to get around, why do we have no disabled cycle parking spaces anywhere? Doesn't that feel wrong to you?

Robin Heydon is Chair of Camcycle. This article was first published on 10 February in the Cambridge News and online at cambridge-news.co.uk, where you can read his column each week.

► If you cycle with a disability, let us know what issues you experience in and around Cambridge? Are there areas where you'd like to see better parking installed for larger cycles or exclusionary barriers removed? Let us know by emailing contact@camcycle.org.uk



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Let's remove barriers to cycling and create a place that benefits us all



2020 is Camcycle's 25th anniversary year and we've chosen to focus on the theme of 'Cycling for All', a goal that has underpinned everything we have done since our formation in June 1995. This isn't about eliminating motor vehicles or forcing everyone to ride; it's clear that cycling isn't suitable for every individual or journey and should be a matter of personal choice. However, it is about enabling cycling for more people and more types of cycle, giving everyone who does choose to cycle safe, attractive and convenient journeys around the areas where they live and work.

Cycling for all is about breaking down the many barriers to cycling – barriers which may be physical, mental, cultural or societal. We had hoped the new year would start to bring increased progress on all these fronts, but so far we've had to use much precious

volunteer time campaigning against new barriers – on the southern Busway cycleway near the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and on King's Parade. Even if there are genuine evidence-based reasons for installing these barriers, we shouldn't be mitigating the risk of one safety issue by introducing a host of new, more likely incidents on routes which are busy each day with thousands of cyclists and pedestrians.

Both of the new barriers highlight the care that must be taken if we are to build a

city suitable for all who wish to cycle. The chicane barriers on the Busway cycleway were almost invisible – even in daylight for those with good vision. Their size and placing required those cycling to slalom through, not easy for anyone to do on an incline and particularly difficult for those with large or heavy cycles such as a cargo bike full of children. The King's Parade barrier involves a small gap of just 1.2m, which includes the kerb and cobbled



If Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo is re-elected in March, she pledges to create a place where everyone can reach their work, home, and any amenity within a 15-minute cycle ride. (Image: Paris en Commun)

gutter. It's uncomfortable for those on recumbent cycles, dangerous for those on tricycles and slippery when wet. Despite the two-way signage, it is impossible for two cycles to pass at this point.

In the previous issue of Camcycle magazine, local handcyclist Phil Carter described his experiences saying: 'Kerbs are not my friend'. Kerbs are hard for him to navigate on a handcycle and have caused damage to his rear crossbar and suspension. In this magazine, we have two stories of cyclists who have been injured by collisions with bollards and

poles in the cycle path. We also heard of similar incidents at the Busway barrier, in addition to cyclists cutting onto the Busway itself to get round or being forced to cycle with children in trailers and on tandems on busy roads because access via this route was impossible.

None of this would be happening if local authorities truly wanted to build a cycle-friendly place, and they should if they are serious about prioritising reductions in congestion, air pollution and carbon emissions, and the continued success of local businesses. Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo wrote recently in *Time* magazine about the changes she has delivered to her city. Thanks to an expanding network of protected cycle lanes, the number of Parisian cyclists rose by a massive 54% between September 2018 and September 2019. The scheme also includes more space for pedestrians, public

squares and a massive programme of tree planting. Hidalgo said: 'My vision for Paris is as a green city where we can all breathe fresh air, share open space and enjoy our lives. That is why we are adapting our city to give more space to pedestrians and bicycles.' This is Camcycle's vision too, for the Greater Cambridge region. When we build a place where all can cycle, everyone benefits even if they don't ride themselves.

Anna Williams is the Communications and Community Officer for Camcycle. This article was originally published on 23 October in the Cambridge Independent, which features a monthly column by a member of the Camcycle team.

► Read more about our vision for Greater Cambridge on page 26 and discover ways you can get involved with our 2020 campaign at camcycle.org.uk/CyclingforAll



Camcycle hits the headlines in campaigns against new barriers

As new barriers appeared around the city earlier in the year, Camcycle staff and volunteers sprang into action, calling for space for cycling for all types of rider and cycle. We spoke to local TV, radio and press about our concerns over the anti-terrorist barrier on King's Parade and the chicane on the Busway cycleway near the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Comments from our blog were also picked up by the local BBC website.

Speaking to the *Cambridge News* as part of the national climate change campaign #Do1Thing, Camcycle trustee Matthew Danish said: '[Public transport and cycling] work together to create a city that is pleasant, pollution free and a nice place to live and work...Recent events have taken place which make you wonder if they're trying to actively reduce cycling in and around Cambridge.'

► [Read more about barrier issues on pages 14-17](#)

Big Give Christmas gifts raise over £11,000 for our work



A huge thank you to all those who donated to Camcycle in the Big Give Christmas Challenge at the end of last year. We asked you to help us give the gift of 'Cycling for All' and together you donated a record-breaking £11,010 in just one week: our most successful fundraising campaign ever!

We'd also like to thank all those who gave generously at other times during the year: your gifts make a huge difference to our work for more, better and safer cycling for all ages and abilities.

► [If you'd like to support the work we do, visit \[camcycle.org.uk/donate\]\(http://camcycle.org.uk/donate\)](#)

Welcome to Rosie, our new Administrative Officer!



We're delighted to announce that the latest addition to the Camcycle staff team is Rosie Humphrey, who joined us in February in the new post of Administrative Officer. As demand for our work continues to grow, Rosie will keep us organised and effective – supporting volunteers, coordinating events, assisting with communications and managing many of our essential administrative tasks.

She's already had a big impact on our charity through editing this magazine and we hope more of you can meet her soon.

► [Find out more about Rosie on page 25 and see page 26 to join our team as an intern.](#)

Four founding members share their Camcycle memories



Our 'Memories and Memorabilia' meeting on 7 January provided an inspiring start to our 25th anniversary year. We were delighted to be joined by four founding members of the organisation – Clare Macrae, David Earl, Jim Chisholm and Debby Banham – who added their stories to those of other volunteers, together creating a fascinating account of our history and successes. This was supported by an impressive display of Camcycle memorabilia, provided by Martin Lucas-Smith and Monica Frisch.

► [Share your Camcycle story in the next issue of our magazine. Find out more on page 4.](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

UK cities reveal bold plans to reduce car use

Car bans, circulation plans and charging zones are becoming increasingly common concepts across the UK, as local governments come to grips with the climate emergency.

York (right) is banning private cars from the medieval city centre from 2023, following recent plans approved by councillors to cut congestion and improve air quality. The city of Birmingham has announced plans to stop cars travelling through the city, following Ghent-style city zoning. Cars will be able to travel within their own zone, but to get to another zone they'll have to use the ring road. Other modes of transport, such as cycling, walking and buses, will be able to cross zones freely.

Other cities in the UK have also been making progress. Bristol recently approved plans to ban diesel cars from parts of the city centre. Brighton and Hove City Council is debating whether to



Andy Falconer, Unsplash

ban private cars from Brighton city centre. Oxford is introducing a Zero Emissions Zone to its city centre by the end of 2020, with polluting vehicles subject to a £10 charge. Oxford City Councillor Tom Hayes says: 'we're listening to Oxford's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change by speeding up our journey to a city-wide Zero Emission Zone. Local government isn't prepared to delay action.'

► [Read more about Birmingham's inspiration - the successful Ghent circulation plan - on page 18.](#)

INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION

New Paris cycle lanes deliver a 54% increase in cycling

According to a road survey conducted by the Paris mayor's office, cycle use has shot up by 54% in just one year. There are now 840,000 bike trips each day in the city, surpassing the number made by motorcycles and scooters.

Françoise Picard, host of *The Debate* on France 24, said 'it's the culmination of years of growing restrictions on cars, the introduction of bike-sharing services and, most recently, the construction of bike lanes across the French capital'.

The impressive results are thanks to Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, who introduced 'Plan Vélo' in 2015. The aim of the plan is to create an integrated cycle network that will be no more than 2km from any Parisian residence. By the end of 2021, there will be 870 more miles of cycle lanes than there were in 2015, and Hidalgo has pledged to make every single street in Paris cycle-friendly by 2024 if she is re-elected this year.

No cyclist or pedestrian killed in Oslo road accidents in 2019

No cyclist, pedestrian or child died in a traffic accident in the Norwegian capital in 2019. Officials say this is a result of the Norwegian Vision Zero policy.

Oslo implemented Vision Zero through a mixture of regulations lowering speeds and barring cars from certain areas of the city. It also expanded its cycle network and added traffic-calming measures around schools.

In 2015, Oslo devised a plan to restrict cars from its city centre, and increase charges for entering and parking. Charges were increased further in 2017 with 700 parking spaces removed and replaced by 37 miles of bike lanes and parks. Cars were banned from the city centre in early 2019. Christoffer Solstad Steen, a spokesman for Norwegian traffic organisation Trygg Trafikk, said: 'The more you separate the different road groups, the less the risk of serious traffic accidents.'

NEWS IN NUMBERS

76%

of people in England believe we need to drive less for the sake of the environment and 43% would be willing to reduce the amount they travel by car to reduce the impact of climate change.*

65,000

air pollution deaths would be prevented by switching just 1.7% of car journeys to walking and cycling.†

*National Travel Attitudes Study (2019) †Green Alliance (January 2020)

BLOG OF THE QUARTER
[theguardian.com/
environment/bike-blog](https://theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog)

Image: John Jackson, Unsplash

'Studies have shown the impact of even a relatively modest regular cycle can have near-miraculous health dividends.'

Curated by Peter Walker, author of *Bike Nation: How Cycling Can Save the World*, the Bike Blog in the *Guardian* covers all things cycling, often focusing on policy and exploding cycling myths. *The 'miracle pill': how cycling could save the NHS* (17 September, 2017) looks at the reasons why cycling has such a positive impact on individual health and asks why it is so rarely prescribed at a population-wide level.

REMOVING THE BARRIERS

As we began the year launching our campaigning theme 'Cycling for All' and our policy volunteers 'Access controls and obstructions in cycleways', suddenly it all started to look very relevant. Here's

Installation of anti-terror barrier raises safety concerns for cyclists on King's Parade



A street with one of the highest cycle flows in the country has been blocked with anti-terrorism barriers leaving cyclists only a single 1.2 metre-wide gap. Last year, we objected to this design and to the lack of consultation with the public and councillors; however, the installation has gone ahead.

On 9 January barriers and a gate were installed just north of the junction with Bene't Street, with just one narrow opening to be used by cyclists in both directions. The 1.2m gap is right against the kerb, with cobbles and a gutter on half its width, leaving an uneven surface for cyclists. After a few false starts, the barrier went into operation on 16 January. It will be closed from 9.30am to 7pm every day for an 18-month trial period. Security 'barges' have also been installed on the pavement, further obstructing pedestrian space.

It seems all too obvious that all the barriers will do is to create exactly the kind of crowds that a terrorist would want to drive into – especially as the Corpus clock (the Chronophage), which already leads to large groups standing in the middle of the road, is outside the closed zone. If one was dead-set on attacking right in that iconic location in front of King's Chapel, one would just have to wait until 7pm.

To add insult to injury, it seems that half the funding has come from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, whose mission is to encourage sustainable transport modes like cycling, not to obstruct them.

Facing criticism on the chaotic nature of the installation, the inappropriate design solution and confusing signage, the city council emphasised that the scheme was temporary and would be

monitored with the intention of designing a permanent arrangement. This would be set into the ground, which should at least be less visually intrusive (in the TLS, Mary Beard called for imaginative bollards like those at the University Library, which are shaped like stacks of books). It's essential that there is proper consultation at this stage, and that at least two wider cycle gaps are provided.

► You can object to these barriers by emailing the council at projectdevelopment@cambridge.gov.uk

► We also suggest you contact your local councillor. You can find their details at writetothem.com

► Join the discussion and get involved in our campaign against the barrier on [Cyclescape thread 4621](#).

TO CYCLING



were busy summarising our position on the latest news on the war against barriers.

Biomedical Campus barriers gone after just 27 days thanks to strong local campaigning



Camcycle members raised the alarm (left), started an energetic poster campaign (centre) and captured the moment the barriers were removed.

On 8 January we started receiving reports of a new barrier appearing on the busy shared-use path beside the Busway which leads to the Biomedical Campus. The photos that emerged confirmed our fears: a narrow and inaccessible guardrail chicane had been installed across one of the most important cycle routes in the area. Shock spread quickly on social media as hundreds of outraged people posted photos, criticism or both. Local councillors revealed that they had not been consulted on the matter, and one of them began a petition that attracted over 1,600 signatures. Numerous people contacted public officials and local employers, and posted the responses online or emailed them to us. From this we gathered that the decision to install the barriers had been instigated by officials at the Biomedical Campus, who convinced the landowner Countryside Properties to install the barriers, with the blessing of one of the county council's Busway officers. However, there was no further consultation, and several highways and cycling team officers confirmed that they would never have countenanced such an action.

The staggered barriers were made of sturdy grey metal and were almost invisible, even on a bright day, but especially at night. We received informal reports of at

least two damage-causing collisions with them. They were of an outdated design incompatible with the Equality Act 2010 as it makes use of the cycleway more difficult for disabled people. They were very difficult to navigate with cargo bikes and trailers. People passing through the barriers needed to resume cycling, up a very steep hill, from a near standstill. They created a dangerous pinch point, further increasing conflict between people walking and cycling on a congested path and raising the risk of people falling onto the Busway while trying to manoeuvre through the barrier.

Camcycle volunteers counted people on the pathway: in one hour on a mid-January morning, we found 516 people cycling and 125 people walking across the bridge. These peak-hour numbers probably correspond to an all-day count of somewhere between 3,500 and 5,000 people cycling and at least 1,000 walking. These numbers are sure to grow as more developments open up on the Biomedical Campus and the city depends more heavily on sustainable transport modes, not to mention that there is a good chance of Cambridge South station being built right next to this bridge.

At the county's Highways and Infrastructure committee, we put forward

the fact that much of the local authorities' plans for transport in Cambridge depend on this key link and others like it. Then we asked: 'are all those plans, with public money behind them, at the mercy of the whims of private developers, with no recourse nor consultation about what's going to happen? For the sake of having a joined-up, inclusive and sustainable transport strategy, we need to find a way to ensure that this doesn't happen again, here or elsewhere'.

In the ten days after the barriers went up, a consensus developed among councillors, officers and the public: the barriers must go. However, it took a further fortnight until they were finally removed by the landowner. We are grateful to all those who played a part in their removal. We need now to begin a conversation about how to deal with the problems at the Francis Crick Avenue junction, which was designed without sufficient thought for the numbers of cyclists and walkers, much less such intensive usage. By improving the extremely poor design here, further conflict and confusion can be avoided and the area can be made safer for all.

► Find out more and get involved on [Cyclescape thread 5077](#).

Local councillors act quickly to remove rogue bollard from the Jane Coston bridge

Near the end of 2019, a very strange thing happened. For the first time in 14 years, a bollard stood in the middle of the Jane Coston bridge cycleway, around the blind corner at the southern end of the bridge.

The bollard was there when the bridge opened; however, a year later, it was removed, presumably for the very sensible reason that it was in a very dangerous location around a blind corner and smack in the path of people cycling downhill who might not see it in time. A serious collision was also reported around this time.

The other bollards are not well placed either, one of the main problems being that the 'cycleway' side was and still is too narrow for people to cycle past each other when travelling in opposite directions, without encroaching on pedestrian space. Had the bridge been built to a decent width, perhaps all these woes and injuries could have been avoided.

However, what could have inspired the return of the third bollard late last year? Was it an outstanding maintenance



Spot the difference: how quickly would you see the new bollard when cycling down the bridge?

request from 14 years ago? Was there a fresh piece of wood that needed a home? Was it the doing of the World Bollard Association (@WorldBollard) in time for World Bollard Day on 11 January?

In this case, we can happily report that local councillors Anna Bradnam and Alex Markham acted very quickly to have the third bollard removed again, on 31 December. In fact, we have learned that this issue was caused by a stray repair request: the empty socket was reported as a slip hazard and a new

highways officer, unaware of its history, thought that a new bollard would be just the thing to fix it. Now that it has been properly sorted out they will look to remove the socket entirely to take away that particular hazard.

► Email us at contact@camcycle.org.uk if you are concerned about unexpectedly appearing bollards or if you or someone you know has been injured by an obstruction in a cycleway.

BOLLARD NEWS IN PICTURES



North pole danger

In November there was a serious injury to a person cycling along the Busway near Cambridge North station because of a pole installed in the middle of the pathway. The pole in question can be hard to see under dark or grey skies, even with a headlight on. Network Rail has admitted 100% liability; it remains to be seen what steps will be taken to remove the hazard.

New bendy bollards celebrated

Exclusionary barriers close to Madingley Road (left) and Bandon Road, Girton were replaced with bendy bollards following campaigning by Camcycle volunteers. Matthew Danish and Daniel Thomas worked together on the University of Cambridge's Cycling and Walking subgroup (now disbanded) on an application for Local Highways Improvement funding. The application was approved and the barriers were replaced early this year.

Bollard needed here!

The removal of a rising bollard at Cambridge Retail Park has led to issues with drivers rat-running between Newmarket Road and the Beehive junction. We have called for the bollard to be reinstated to improve safety for all those walking and cycling near the shops.



CYCLIST'S REPORT

Busway bollard injury sent me to A&E



I live on Royal Way in Trumpington and was doing my usual nursery drop-off with my two children in a trailer behind the bike. I cycled down the ramp to the Foster Road bus stop on the Busway, crossed and turned to use the Busway path towards the station.

I got distracted by the lights being on in the Clay Farm Centre, which reminded me that I had library books to return. The path was empty of people but not of the thin metal bollard near the crossing with Hobson Avenue. I spotted it seconds before I hit it. I probably managed to slow a bit.



The result was a trip to A&E with a gashed-open leg and a very bruised pelvis. I couldn't bend my knee for two weeks which made life awkward and meant I couldn't get to work in London or look after the children easily.

The monetary cost is a pair of jeans, a pair of waterproof trousers, a front fork, a brake set and a frame. The total is looking like £460.

I appreciate they don't want cars travelling down the path but I'm not a fan of those bollards at the best of times. They don't allow in their design for people bumping into them, which is pretty inevitable given their positions.

Charlotte Roberts

► We recognise that bollards are sometimes needed for access control but like any obstruction they pose potential safety hazards in themselves. That's why our upcoming policy on bollards recommends very careful placement to minimise the chance of collision, and the installation of safer, bendy bollards that reduce the harm caused in the event of impact. Find out more on [Cyclescape thread 2961](#).



Fight food waste as a CSF cycling volunteer

According to a report published by WRAP, the UK bins a staggering 10 million tonnes of food every year. This is equivalent to over £20 billion and 25 million tonnes of harmful greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change.

These shocking stats have galvanised a Community Fridge food distribution movement, with community fridges popping up all over the UK. The concept is simple: give, take, share. Businesses and individuals leave surplus food for the community to collect and enjoy.

The benefits are numerous. Aside from stopping perfectly edible food going to landfill, the fridges connect communities and give access to nutritious, affordable food.

Cambridge has benefited from its very own community fridge since 2017, run by The Edge Café on Mill Road in partnership with Cambridge Sustainable Food (CSF). The fridge saved a whopping half tonne of food from being wasted in its first six months. 'It's fulfilling a real need and has given the community a sense of inclusivity and friendliness', according to The Edge Café.

Following its success, CSF is set to open three more fridges in early 2020. These will be at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre in King's Hedges, Brown's Field Youth & Community Centre in East Chesterton and at a new community space in Barnwell. Cambridge Sustainable Food is looking for volunteer cyclists to help collect surplus food from businesses in the city and deliver it to the community fridges. If you're a cycling enthusiast and aspiring food waste warrior, sign up to volunteer at cambridgesustainablefood.org/volunteering.

Camcycle members can also help by encouraging food businesses to donate their surplus food to the scheme. If you know a business that would like to get involved, please ask them to sign up at cambridgesustainablefood.org/business-surplus-food-donation.

Gemma Birley, Cambridge Sustainable Food

Cycling for all: what's the latest on the big plans influencing transport?

Last year, we explained the three processes that are underway which will have huge implications for walking, cycling and urban design in the Greater Cambridge area. We're calling for a commitment to investment in cycling – for now, for the future and for everyone who wants to ride.

City Deal Tranche 2 Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

Meetings of the Greater Cambridge Partnership recommenced in January, following the hiatus over the period of the General Election. Camcycle aims to attend and ask questions at every GCP meeting this year, as there are currently multiple issues of relevance to cycling in the region. Below we highlight a few that we've spoken on so far this year.

CITY ACCESS

GCP officers have gathered a huge amount of evidence on ways to reduce congestion, improve air quality and provide better public transport. This includes public feedback from the Choices for Better Journeys consultation and the GCP Citizens' Assembly. The

latter called for the Partnership's leaders to be bold, brave and take decisive action; at the time of writing we do not know what the Executive Board will conclude, but there was strong support at the Joint Assembly for a programme of access restrictions (see box below for some inspiration!) and an acceptance of the need for a demand management scheme such as a congestion or pollution charge. We called for the GCP to take these steps and welcomed plans for smaller measures such as improved cycle parking and subsidised e-bikes.

GREENWAYS

Initial design work to develop the 12 Greenways routes is now complete and

the Executive Board are asked to approve an outline budget for the Waterbeach and Fulbourn Greenways. We welcomed this, but would like to see faster progress and a guarantee that local expertise on the project will be maintained.

ADAMS ROAD

Despite strong local opposition, the GCP seem intent on keeping the proposed alignment for the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway, which will mean up to 30 buses an hour being routed along one of the city's busiest cycle routes. We have stayed neutral on the Busway proposal, but are gravely concerned about cycling safety along Adams Road. We'll continue to campaign against this route.

'WITH POLITICAL WILL, RADICAL CHANGE IS POSSIBLE' - THE STORY OF GHENT

Ghent (population 262,000; Cambridge 199,000) introduced a zoning scheme in the city centre in 2017. There is a car-free zone in the historic centre, surrounded by six zones which can be accessed by cars from the inner ring road only, with no direct movement from zone to zone. Nothing has changed for cyclists and public transport and if you need to get a car to somewhere in the inner city, you can, but it is harder to move around.

The scheme was modelled on Groningen and Utrecht with the difference that those cities had changed incrementally. Ghent did it in one go. Thirty months of planning, consultation and preparation were fraught with

passion and disagreement – the Deputy Mayor even received death threats. But when it went live the doom-sayers were disappointed and it is hailed as a great success.

Cycle use before the plan was 22%. It is now 35% and growing. Streets have been landscaped and vehicle entry is monitored by number plate recognition cameras. The main canal through the centre has been restored, having been previously filled in to make a car park.

The city leaders draw the lesson that if there is the political will, well-planned radical change is not only possible but will be welcomed! Be brave, my friends!

Alan Ackroyd



► Watch 'Ghent's Political & Media Obstacles to Implementing the Traffic Circulation Plan' and 'The Innovative Way Ghent, Belgium Removed Cars From The City', both by Streetfilms, available to view on YouTube

Image: Jorge Fernandez Salas, Unsplash.

Local Transport Plan

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)

Following a public consultation last year, to which we submitted a six-page response, the Local Transport Plan was adopted in January at a meeting of the CPCA Board. Several questioners raised criticisms of the plan, with Helen Boothman from the Great Ouse Valley Trust reported as saying: 'Evidence from the Campaign to Protect Rural England and others demonstrates clearly that new roads do not deliver congestion relief, but instead damage the landscape and do nothing to boost the local economy of an area. We simply can't afford to continue addressing 21st century transport issues with 20th century solutions. Any future approach

to transport planning should catalyse a green economy that does not cost the earth environmentally or financially. Where are the travel options which are low or zero carbon, mitigating air pollution and promoting environmental resilience? And will the CPCA build in some flexibility to a transport plan to allow for integration with other plans?'

Cllr Lewis Herbert, leader of Cambridge City Council, said: 'I recall when the authority was set up three years ago we had an ambition that almost all the people in the county would be able to get to and from work within half an hour by public transport, no matter where they lived in Cambridgeshire.

I appreciate the challenges that approach makes upon our planners, especially with this being so rural a county, but I do think that we need to re-state that ambition.'

These comments echo the concerns we had that the report had a lack of concrete recommendations for walking and cycling infrastructure, and a clear emphasis on car use through additional highway capacity. We hope to work with other campaign groups in the area to continue to monitor and respond to transport developments in the CPCA region.

► Read our consultation response at camcycle.org.uk/localtransportplan and join the discussion at [Cyclescape 2485](#).

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

The new Greater Cambridge Local Plan will shape how our area changes over the period to 2040, and possibly beyond. It's a legal document that sets out the future land use and planning policies for the area, identifying the need for new homes and jobs and detailing the services and infrastructure needed to support them. It also guides where growth should happen. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to prepare the plan and the consultation which ended on 24 February was the start of their conversation with the public.

We responded to the consultation and will continue to submit our views as the process continues. Below is a summary of some of the key areas which affect walking and cycling.

HIGHWAYS

One of the biggest problems that the current Local Plan faces is that much of our living environment is dominated by roads, and roads are under the purview of the Highway Authority at the county council. Therefore, attempts to make more liveable streets are quite often squashed at the county level. Unfortunately, this utilitarian view of roads as being like water pipes or sewage lines for cars results in an overwhelming amount of public space being devoted to tarmac, car storage and high-speed car movement. The needs of people walking and cycling are squeezed to nothing, and people are left with estates that socially isolate people,



A new development on River Lane which features a pedestrian-unfriendly wide splay on the side road and no dropped kerb to allow passage by people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

have no nearby shops, jobs or amenities, lack pleasant open spaces, discourage going outside and force people to be dependent on cars to get anything done or go anywhere. This same problem was described by a recent scathing report on the failures of the home-building industry, 'A Housing Design Audit for England' by Matthew Carmona et al. Choice quotes include:

'Highways authorities should take responsibility for their part in creating positive streets and places, not simply roads and infrastructure.'

'Local planning authorities need to have the courage of their convictions and set clear local aspirations by refusing schemes that do not meet their published design standards.'

'Highways authorities should be required to take a "place first" approach when dealing with the design and adoption of highways.'


Therefore, as the new combined Local Plan takes shape, we hope the officers take heed of the recommendations of this housing design audit, and also work to find a way to bring the Highway Authority on-side with walking and cycling priority. Otherwise, the planning system will extend car dominance into the next generation and fail to respond with the urgency required to address the global climate emergency.


CYCLE PARKING



We need a specification for the design of inclusive cycle parking and to quantify the number of inclusive parking spaces that will be needed in a development.

South Cambridgeshire has failed to produce a cycle parking guide while Cambridge has relied upon the Cycle Parking Guide for New Residential Developments since 2010, and the current Local Plan builds on that guide for both residential and non-residential. The document has become dated and needs to be reviewed and revised. Some of the issues are highlighted below.

 We need a specification for the design of inclusive cycle parking, which provides space to park cargo cycles, tricycles, handcycles, tandems, recumbents, adapted cycles and any of the wide and wonderful variety of cycles that help people of all ages and abilities. That same variety makes it exceedingly hard to provide a single design solution that works for all. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges describes cycles that could be up to 1.2m wide and 2.8m long (including trailer). Wheels for Wellbeing, a London-based charity, has a Guide to Inclusive Cycling, which suggests that a variety of securing systems be used, such as ground anchors and half-height Sheffield stands. Yet, sometimes simply ensuring that the spaces at the ends of a row of Sheffield stands are extra-wide can be sufficient, provided that the spaces are clearly marked for larger cycles.

 Then we need to quantify the number of inclusive cycle parking spaces that will be necessary in a development. Wheels for Wellbeing suggests 5% as a general rule; however, here in Cambridge it is quite possible that the

need is much higher, especially given the rising popularity of cargo cycles. Sometimes the demand can be assessed on a case-by-case basis; an existing business can survey its workforce and make some reasonable projections about the future.



The use of two-tier racks needs to be more carefully controlled and specified. Many developers see them as a way to squeeze their cycle parking requirement into a smaller space; however, they can pose a lot of problems for people if not carefully designed, and even then they still are not accessible to many people (especially those with tricycles or cargo cycles, etc). Residential sites in Cambridge are not permitted to use two-tier racks, but some try anyway and get away with it. Non-residential sites using two-tier racks are supposed to provide at least 20% of their cycle parking using Sheffield stands, but some ignore that requirement and get away with it. Other common problems with two-tier racks include: models without lifting-assistance, racks lacking a secure locking hoop, and aisle widths that are too narrow. Racks with moving parts require ongoing maintenance.

CYCLE ROUTE DESIGN

Cycle route and cycleway design is not handled very well by the current Local Plans. The Cambridge Local Plan does say that walking and cycling routes should have priority where there is conflict with cars; however, that is largely a dead letter because the Highway Authority at the county level does not respect that statement. Issues of accessibility and natural surveillance are also parts of the current Local Plan. However, more detailed issues such as visibility splays, preventing blind corners, ensuring cycling-compatible geometry, prohibiting dangerous obstructions and giving separation from pedestrians are not covered. These are issues that we believe should be specified in the upcoming Local Transport Note from DfT, and then the new Local Plans can follow suit. However, we do need to remain vigilant to ensure that the Local Plans protect cycle routes after they get built. It's one thing to have a cycleway in its fresh form on opening day, but then after a few years it can be utterly compromised by third-party developers who come in and dig it up for changes such as dropped kerbs, utilities and new fences. We can easily see how bad it gets with pavements, which are very often sacrificed and ripped up for new driveways, poles, utility cabinets and other assorted detritus that obstruct the public right-of-way or reduce its quality. Driveways and fences, in particular, can create fresh dangers from motor vehicles emerging without warning onto the cycleway. That's why it's important that the protection of cycle routes (whether on or off-highway) be embedded into the Local Plan, so that these problems can be checked whenever there is an application or unpermitted development that might affect one.

For example, we recently had the case in which a landowner suddenly installed a set of illegal and inaccessible barriers into a major cycle route near the Biomedical Campus (see page 15). While this case led to a major outcry, other similar but less busy routes can slip under the radar when people simply give up hope of fixing the problem. Another case is in Whittlesford, where the developer failed to build an accessible cycle route as planned, thus severing National Cycle Route 11 for anyone unable to lift their cycle.

Will the new shared Local Plan lead to improvements for cycling in South Cambridgeshire?

The city of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have recently taken some more steps towards full integration of planning services. They have also been sharing officer resources for quite some time. The new Local Plans are being developed in a joint process, given the recognition that planning issues in each jurisdiction often affect the other authority significantly, and in some cases straddle the boundary.

However, not all is sunshine and roses. Cambridge's current Local Plan explicitly prioritises walking and cycling; South Cambs' Local Plan does not. Cambridge has a detailed cycle parking guide; South Cambs does not. Planning officers and councillors working on Cambridge-based applications tend to give careful consideration to cycling issues; South Cambs has a much more mixed record. While there have been some success stories, such as with the Marleigh/Wing site, there have been some major disappointments where the developers aren't interested in fixing problems and the planning authority doesn't care either.

1) Several planning applications (especially at Northstowe) have insisted on using vertical cycle parking racks. This type of cycle parking rack is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for many people to use because it requires them to lift their bike, and tricycles and cargo bikes are completely excluded. When contacted, some planning officers will either disregard our objections (made under Local Plan policy HQ/1, which requires 'safe, accessible and secure cycle parking') or will respond that 'vertical cycle parking is allowed', without engaging at all with the simple fact that many people can't use such things.

2) Two years ago we commented on a planning application for a site in Whittlesford that contains a section of National Cycle Route 11. The permission was granted on condition that the cycle route would be built using the plans that were approved in the application. Fast-forward to 2019, when we discovered that the developer failed to follow the permitted plans and delivered two car parking spaces instead of the cycle route (see below). This has rendered a portion of the National Cycle Route 11 inaccessible to many people who cannot lift their cycle over a kerb, such as those using adapted cycles or handcycles.



We contacted planning enforcement, and after several months they finally responded that they were not interested in pursuing enforcement. When I pointed out that they needed to meet their public sector equality duty under the Equality Act of 2010, the officer responded that 'it is a balance between different policies and considerations'; it seems that they didn't think it was important enough to pursue their legal duties.

3) A recent reserved matters application dropped a walking and cycling shortcut that was part of its outline application, because the applicant couldn't guarantee that the other side of the shortcut would be built on land outside their control. This is precisely the sort of thing that the planning authority is supposed to sort out. However, South Cambs appeared poised to let it slip due to lack of interest in protecting the future route, until there was a strenuous protest from us and the Parish Council.

4) It is quite common for pavements to be designed and constructed in a very poor fashion, with safety and usability frequently sacrificed for the convenience of uninterrupted motor vehicle movement, and/or pavements to be inappropriately designated as shared-use with cycling instead of making separate and appropriate provision. Unfortunately, South Cambs has no policies to protect or prioritise either pavements or cycleways.

A combined Local Plan could be a good thing if a more considerate approach to cycling is adopted

We're hoping that the new Local Plan process will tackle these issues and add things like inclusive cycle parking, but these are things happening now and affecting developments in ways that will last for decades. A combined Local Plan could be a good thing if the more considerate approach for cycling (and walking) issues is adopted; however, it could make things worse in the city if the county's bad attitude is adopted instead.

The downside of upstands: badly-installed Cambridge Kerbs on Arbury Road cause hazards for cyclists



The *Cambridge News* recently carried a high-profile report of a crash that took place on the renovated section of Arbury Road. We have also received several lower-profile reports of people falling off their bikes while transitioning between carriageway and cycle lane. I became very concerned that people were being seriously injured, especially on brand new infrastructure, and went to take a look at the situation.

The photographs that I took make the situation quite clear: there is an unexpected and undesirable 'upstand': the height difference between the

carriageway and the edge of the Cambridge Kerb. This is not how it is supposed to be installed, as the manufacturer's website says:

'The kerb we designed, named Cambridge Kerb, [...] has a 12.5 degree horizontal profile, creating a gentle and smooth transition between the carriageway and the new cycle lane.'

At Camcycle, we know from long experience dealing with incidents like this that even a 10mm upstand can be enough to throw a person off a bike if approached at an oblique angle, particularly in the wet. That's one of the

reasons we try to identify such problems in the planning application or detailed design phase of developments or schemes. If a cycle route requires people to cycle across a kerb at an oblique angle then it has to be a 'flush' kerb, meaning that the upstand is less than 6mm tall.

We will be asking for this construction error to be fixed, and also note that on some parts of the road where the renovation took place over a year ago, there are places where the drains are starting to collapse, which makes the situation even worse.

Matthew Danish

NEWS IN BRIEF

Safe route to school for new Waterbeach town

We were delighted to see the latest designs for Waterbeach New Town in December that showed that its first primary school would have no road access to the front, providing a safe route for those on foot or by cycle. This was a change to the original plans, influenced by the work of our volunteers and those of Waterbeach Cycling Campaign. Thanks to everyone who had a hand in this change; we'll continue to keep up the pressure on this and other new developments to ensure they prioritise sustainable transport and liveable streets.

The mystery of the slippery streets

Recently, we were contacted by Cllr Ian Manning who was investigating multiple reports of accidents where confident cyclists experienced a sudden loss of control of their cycle, with the wheels slipping on surfaces which were free of frost and ice and had no visible residue. Many of these accidents resulted in a trip to A&E. Members added their stories on Cyclescape: the junction of Silver Street and Trumpington Street was one accident hotspot, as was the corner of Union Lane and High Street Chesterton. Other incidents occurred on Croft Holme Lane, Victoria Avenue, Water Lane and Carlton Way.

► *Has this happened to you? Let us know by email or on [Cyclescape 5062](#)*



Should we resurrect this Camcycle graphic to warn other cyclists of slippery streets?

MEMBER'S REPORT

Daily parking wars make Red Cross Lane dangerous



Last year, after returning from a gap year, I began looking for science-related laboratory work. I have loved Cambridge since I came as a toddler to the University's science and other festivals, and positions were available here. I decided to move to Cambridge with my family, and we found a nice house close to lots of jobs. Then I thought 'ah hah, I may finally be able to learn to cycle!' I had been taught when I was a teenager but I have hypermobility and dyspraxia, which has complicated things so far.

Cambridge has turned out to be the right choice in so many ways, with great neighbours who are now family friends, and a lovely community. Sadly, the only real drawback is anti-social behaviour on the local roads. It's especially difficult when trying to walk or use a wheelchair or mobility scooter safely on the pavements. Biomedical Campus staff wait in their cars with engines running from 6.40 to 7.40am on Red Cross Lane down to Greenlands, covering the pavements and the double yellow lines. The first one in the 'queue' speeds over to any parking space as soon as one becomes available. If an unsuspecting driver comes onto the road and takes that space, then a big row ensues. One week the police had to be called three times. The worst time is usually before 8am, but it can happen at any time of day. It's dangerous for people walking or cycling here, and it especially affects children and people with disabilities.

Red Cross Lane and Greenlands are marked for 20mph and they're very narrow

streets barely two cars wide. In addition, this is supposed to be a main cycle route to the Biomedical Campus, there is a designated footpath to the nature area, and there are plans to increase the number of people cycling here and via Greenlands to Nine Wells. Many children use these roads for cycling to school.

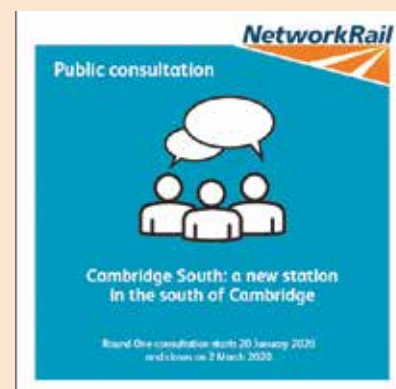
One recent morning I watched as children, young people, and parents with children on their cycles or in buggies, tried to walk or cycle up the road but got stuck. Then they tried to get on the pavement and could not do that safely either. Drivers were queuing, arguing or racing around the road.

I've attempted to help change things. As a result, drivers have tried to run me over, given us abuse, hemmed my mum's car in on the street, put cigarettes out on our house, and thrown rubbish at us. It's a mild hassle at the moment, but we do not want it to get worse. After a year of making police incident reports, we wonder who has the authority to do anything?

I talk to everyone and I try to resolve things. Sometimes it gets better for a few weeks, sometimes not. It always reverts to the same old bad behaviour, and it is incredibly distressing. My immediate neighbours are wonderful, kind, supportive and just lovely and I need to be here for my great job just two minutes away. It is a place I would like to be able to stay for the long term and I would love to be able to learn to cycle again, if only the roads were not so dangerous.

Imogene Blackburn-Horgan

LATEST CONSULTATIONS

Cambridge South station
CLOSES 2 MARCH

Network Rail is developing plans for a new station in the vicinity of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and is consulting on three possible locations. Excellent cycle access to the station and integration with nearby routes including the Shelford DNA path and Busway cycleway will be essential.

► **Give your feedback on the station locations and access at tinyurl.com/cambridgesouthstation or email your comments to cambridgesouth@networkrail.co.uk**

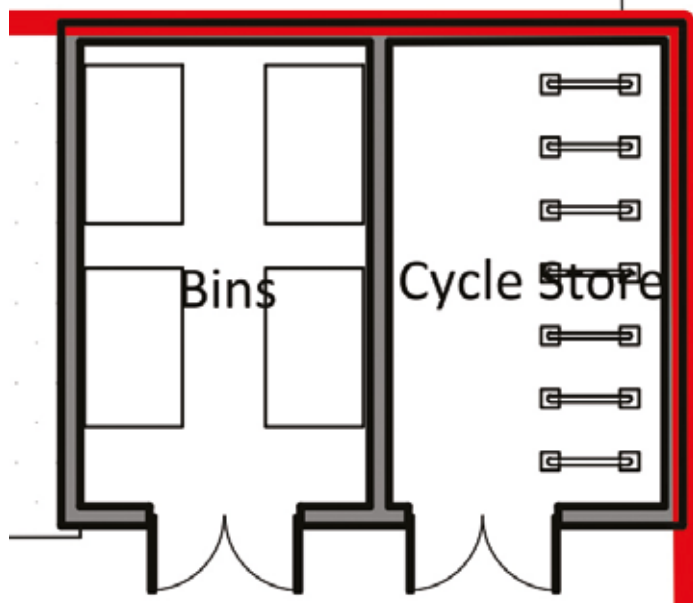
Maddingley Road Cycling
and Walking project
CLOSES 2 MARCH

Following pre-consultation workshops, the GCP has published two options for improvements on Maddingley Road. We strongly support Option 2 on condition that it is revised to give it fully-segregated cycleways and dedicated footways throughout, including at junctions.

► **Complete the online survey at tinyurl.com/maddingleyrd2020**

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

19/1159/FUL - five flats at 138 Brooks Rd



One for our 'planning hall of shame' as the applicant has attempted to propose a cycle parking shed for eight bikes that is only about two metres wide with eight Sheffield stands spaced about half a metre apart from each other. If you did somehow manage to squeeze some bikes into this shelter, good luck extracting them.

► [Read more on Cyclescape thread 5049](#)

19/0512/FUL - Grafton Centre hotel

On 8 January, the city council planning committee approved plans for a new 153-room Premier Inn at The Grafton, to be located on the site of the current bus turning circle. We had objected to the loss of cycle parking for Grafton customers, but welcome improvements for walking and cycling nearby. The plans for a protected cycleway are in need of substantial refinement, but we hope continued discussion can resolve all the issues.

► [Read more on Cyclescape thread 4735](#)

19/1616/FUL 67-97 Campkin Road - redevelopment into 75 affordable homes

We recently withdrew our objection to plans for this development as the applicant had addressed all our concerns around the space given to cycle parking and cycle access.

► [Read more on Cyclescape thread 5048](#)

► If you'd like to get involved by helping us respond to planning applications, email us at contact@camcycle.org.uk or find out more on [Cyclescape thread 4290](#)

CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

We encourage Camcycle members to attend council meetings to find out more about local developments and speak up on behalf of active travel.

Planning Committee and Area Committee meetings often include cycling and walking issues. Development Control Forum and Joint Development Control Committee meetings determine planning applications relating to major housing development proposals.

► You can usually find agendas online about a week in advance at www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy. Please check the website in case meetings have been cancelled, or times or venues changed.

Cambridge City Joint Area Committee

9 June at 4.30pm in the Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP.

Development Control Forum

11 March and 8 April at 10am in Committee Room 1 & 2, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge CB2 3QJ (to be confirmed).

East Area Committee

2 April at 7pm (location tbc).

Joint Development Control Committee – Cambridge Fringes

18 March and 15 April at 10.30am in Committee Room 1 & 2, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge CB2 3QJ.

Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board

25 June at 4pm in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge CB2 3QJ.

Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly

4 June at 2pm in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge CB2 3QJ.

North Area Committee

11 June, 6.30pm (location tbc).

Planning Committee

4 March, 1 April, 22 April at 10am in Committee Room 1 & 2, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge CB2 3QJ.

South Area Committee

9 March at 6.30pm in the Wilkinson Room, St John the Evangelist Church, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8RN.

West Central Area Committee

5 March at 7pm in the Meeting Room, Wesley Methodist Church, Christ's Pieces, Cambridge CB1 1LG.

Introducing Camcycle's new Admin Officer: Rosie Humphrey

My journey into the Camcycle office began in 1981 as the first of a new kind of rear-mounted child bike seat was produced and I followed swiftly, joining a cycling family. I grew up cycling from A-to-B on the south coast and bought myself an adult bike when I first arrived in Cambridge. It was a thrill to live in a city which seemed so accessible by bike: the market square, dancing at the Grad Pad and lazy picnics on Grantchester Meadows were all within a ten-minute cycle. To my young, carefree, cycling self, Cambridge seemed an idyllic place.

After three years, I moved to London with my fiancé. Determined to commute by bike, I lived a short ride from work across Clapham Common. From there, we moved to Cheltenham which has beautiful local rides and allowed me another short cycling commute. When I fell pregnant, cycling continued to be my preferred mode of transport: it made me feel lightweight and enabled me to stay active. We made a last-minute move back to Cambridge and I enjoyed cycling until the day my son was born. Generous friends gave us a child bike seat as a congratulatory present and I looked forward to being free of the buggy. I felt impatient to get back on the bike and regain quick access to the city as well as its peripheral open spaces.

At nine months, my son was big enough to wear a helmet. I surprised myself on our first journey, feeling vulnerable on my bike for the first time. The balance had shifted and my decision-making became very conscious. It was the first time I remember choosing a route according to its cyclability – the presence of cycle lanes, bridges and the volume and speed of traffic. I realised that there were many Cambridge roads which I now didn't want to use despite years of cycling them without a second thought. Fortunately, we live very close to the Cam so have safe, calm access both into and out of the city. As a result, I gained confidence quickly



Rosie, centre, with friends and family and her much-loved e-assist cargo bike.

and within days enjoyed the freedom of cycling again.

Two years later, our daughter arrived. This time, there was no waiting around: I had a toddler whose life needed to go on, we knew our safe routes and I felt confident cycling with little ones. Within three weeks we were back on the bike – him on his seat and her in a sling. After nine months, we bought an e-assisted cargo bike with a rain cover for the children and wondered why we hadn't done it sooner. It meant that, regardless of the weather or how much clobber we carried, family travel by bike was easy. Fairly soon, I realised with pleasure that for our children, cycling was the normal mode of transport: on a journey along Newmarket Road, one of them asked why so many people sat in their cars if they wanted to get somewhere. Why indeed!

When my son started pedalling, a sense of vulnerability returned. Once again, I had to assume the position of a learner, trying to anticipate his thoughts and actions as a newcomer to cycling. In an effort to model for him, I narrated our journeys - keeping left, car coming, traffic lights ahead, gentle braking – and noted

afresh how hazardous our local routes are – large pothole, awkward barriers, sudden end to cycle lane, no space for cyclists. Of course, learning something new is often overwhelming, but I was struck by how many of the risks could be avoided with better cycle infrastructure. Equally, it was wonderful to be able to point to proper cycle paths and green lights specifically for cyclists which help make some of the journey so clear.

Around this time, I became involved with the Camcycle magazine. It provided an opportunity to think about how people of differing ages, cultures and abilities experience cycling in Cambridge and how things might be improved. When Camcycle advertised the new role of Administrative Officer, I jumped at the chance to join the team and commit more of my time to the cause. It's a new role for me, having worked previously as a teacher and Head of Department, and it's the first time Camcycle has appointed someone to the position. I'm delighted to be involved: I love life in Cambridge and want my children to grow up feeling that cycling contributes significantly to it being a happy place for all to live.

2019 annual report sets out 'Cycling for All' vision



CAMCYCLE VALUES:

WE ARE: Inclusive, Informed and Influential

OUR WORK IS: Positive, Practical and Professional

Our 2019 annual review was launched at the Camcycle AGM in January and celebrated our successes over the last year and highlights of our work since the formation of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign in 1995.

The review set out our vision for Greater Cambridge: we want to see a thriving and sustainable region of healthy, happy people where everyone feels able to enjoy the benefits of cycling. Investing in cycling delivers nicer places to live, work and travel for everyone, even those who don't ride themselves, through reduced congestion, improved air quality, people-friendly town centres and strong residential communities.

Over the last two years we've also been working with members and volunteers on our Camcycle values, principles that guide what we do and how we do it. The annual review gives examples of how we applied these values to the work we did in 2019. We'll continue to be guided by them in 2020 as we work towards our vision of cycling for all.

► **Contact us if you would like a printed copy of the annual report or read online at camcycle.org.uk/annualreports/**

We're hiring! Could you be our 2020 paid summer intern?

We're looking for a candidate who is passionate about everyday cycling and keen to work hard and gain a huge amount of experience which will serve them well in their future career.

Our internship is an 8 to 12 week programme working alongside our office staff and our Camcycle volunteers. The successful candidate will spend their time working on a key strategic project, our Cambridge Festival of Cycling and providing general support for our campaigning work. Activities are likely to include project planning and management, reviewing planning applications, market research, event organisation and communications including content creation and social

media. We will work with the candidate to plan activities that focus on the skills they would like to develop for their chosen career.

We're dedicated to providing a high-quality internship programme that is paid, open and accessible. Our intern will be a valuable contributor to our team, and we look forward to their work making a real impact on our goals as well as benefiting their own professional development.

Applicants are asked to include with their application a video of up to two minutes in length explaining why they are interested in working with Camcycle and how they will help us progress our mission for more, better and safer cycling.



Our 2019 interns at our stall in John Lewis.

► Please visit www.camcycle.org.uk/internship for the application form and instructions.

Applications close at 9am on Monday 6 April.

Ride to Reach with Camcycle and friends on Sunday 10 May

Gather your friends, colleagues or family for Camcycle's annual Reach Ride. It's a leisurely ride through beautiful countryside to the historic fair in the village of Reach.

This year, the ride will be held on **Sunday 10 May**. If you're cycling from Cambridge, meet Camcycle at the Guildhall from 9am for a 10am departure. Alternatively, you can join us at the Green Dragon bridge on Stourbridge Common as we cycle past at around 10.15 or Newmarket Road Park & Ride at around 10.30. Those coming from Ely can ride with Ely Cycling Campaign, who will be meeting at Ely railway station from 9am for a 10am departure. Led return rides will depart from the Reach cycle park, to Ely at 2pm and to Cambridge at 2.30pm.

We encourage other local groups to collect in their communities, villages and towns and join us anywhere along the route. Do let us know if you have a meeting point that we can promote.

The route follows National Cycle Network routes NCN51 to Bottisham



then NCN11 via Lode. However, there is likely to be a diversion this year owing to the construction of the Chisholm Trail. We will publish the map on our website once the route is confirmed and we will have printed maps to hand out on the day.

The ride is a leisurely 29 miles return, which children under 10, and some adults, might find challenging. If you would like to try an electric bike or a cargo bike for the ride, please get in touch as we know there are several local bike shops who offer free or affordable trials.

On the day, make sure you bring water,

snacks, weather-suitable clothing (e.g. sunhats, raincoats), a bike lock and cash to buy food (there is no cash machine at Reach). It is also advisable to bring a few bits of basic repair kit including a cycle pump.

At Reach, please park your cycle in the fair's designated area, a field on the left as you approach the village centre. Although there is a fence we suggest you lock bikes together in groups: security is your responsibility.

Thank you to Continental Tyres for sponsoring the 2020 Reach Ride.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Camcycle Spring Social



Tuesday 10 March

Camcycle members and friends are invited to join us in the Garden Room at the Alex pub on Gwydir Street from 6.30pm. Food and drinks can be purchased from the bar.

Camcycle's 25th birthday

Tuesday 16 June

Save the date as we're planning events around our anniversary. We'd particularly like to say thank you and reach out to communities in and around Cambridge so are looking for volunteers to help us on stalls at Strawberry Fair, Arbury Carnival, Chesterton Festival and Fulbourn Feast.

► Email contact@camcycle.org.uk if you can volunteer on our stall and find out more at [Cyclescape 5013](https://www.cyclescape.co.uk/5013).



Call for sponsors and events for the 2020 Cambridge Festival of Cycling

The Cambridge Festival of Cycling is back in September for a third celebration of the city's cycling culture. Our month-long programme of events is already filling up, with our social ride confirmed for Saturday 5 September and the Cargo Carnival returning on Saturday 19 September. CamcycleTech, our event exploring the science and technology of cycling, will also be back at the Cambridge Museum of Technology and we're calling for sponsors and speakers to get involved and inspire the local community.

Cambridge Independent will join us again as media partners, providing coverage of the festival and cycling issues in their September editions.

Cambridge Festival of Cycling aims to showcase and celebrate all aspects of cycling in Cambridge, from everyday cycling, family cycling, inclusive cycling, sports cycling and cycle touring, to

the history, science and art of cycling. Community groups and organisations are invited to submit their own events.

Previous events have included social cycle rides, cycle try-outs, movie nights, photography exhibitions, and guest speakers. We're particularly keen to see events that promote and celebrate the diversity of cycling in Cambridge and events which encourage new people to try cycling. There is no charge to include your event in the festival, but donations to Camcycle are certainly appreciated to help fund the efforts to produce the festival.

► For more information about sponsorship, listing your event or volunteering at the festival, please email contact@camcycle.org.uk

► Find out more about previous events at [cambridgefestivalofcycling.org](https://www.cambridgefestivalofcycling.org)

MARATHON TRAINING BY HAND

On 23 September 2016, Steve Streets was critically injured, resulting in complete spinal paralysis. Here, he talks to us about his journey from hospital bed to wheelchair to serious handcycle training.



I remember the night. I was out on my bike. In those days, I rode a motorbike. My father had been a traffic officer so I was a careful rider, mindful of speed and hazards. There was heavy traffic on the Papworth bypass and I was slowly filtering onto and over a roundabout. Out of nowhere, one of the cars ahead of me executed a sudden sharp turn, swinging left towards the side of the road and my course in order to widen their turning circle. At around 30mph, the impact was enough to throw me skywards and land me with a complete spinal injury, paralysed from the chest down.

There was a lot to come to terms with: life would never be the same again. I couldn't move. I had no stomach muscles, my legs weren't working. Having been active all my life, I was looking at a static future with what they call a 'tetra-tum' - a fat tummy owing to lack of movement. It was devastating.

Over the following months, I learnt to use a wheelchair. Getting around was a huge hurdle to overcome, so I started to feel more hopeful. While still in hospital, I booked myself on an outward bound course in Exmouth. Looking back, it was a crazily ambitious thing to have done. I was nowhere near strong enough for the kayaking, abseiling and other activities we did. But it gave me confidence and motivation to keep challenging myself physically.

Soon after, I considered the challenge of reaching Snowdon's summit. I'd climbed it a number of times before the accident and knew how hard it would be. I asked around, and a team of friends said they'd come. After many hours of pushing, pulling and lifting, they got me to the top. It was a gorgeous day and, yet again, my latest physical challenge spurred me on to get fitter and stronger and to be even more ambitious.

New wheels

Around that time, I met someone else with similar injuries. He had been paralysed a few years before me and was further down the road to strength and fitness and used a handcycle. Inspired, I visited Draft Wheelchairs, a shop in Godmanchester which specialises in active and sports chairs. They have a showroom full of day chairs, handcycles and sports equipment, they talk with customers about requirements and have a full workshop on site where they ensure the required component parts work well together. I was measured up for a Quickie Attitude Hybrid e-cycle attachment which could be connected to and removed from my chair by me.

Learning to cycle my bike has been a process of trial and error. The first thing to get used to is the fact that all my weight is at the back of the bike.



Working with others provides motivation, whether climbing Snowdon, training in the gym or enjoying a social ride along the Busway cycleway.

This means that I can't get traction on the front wheel when cycling uphill or on certain surfaces. Of course, it also means that I'm not evenly balanced so have to be very careful which inclines I attempt. If I start to fall backwards, I'll tip out of the chair and can't get back in unaided.

have been in real trouble, so I always make sure I've got quick access to my mobile phone. Even cycling off-road, I've seen numerous accidents so am vigilant about being visible, choosing to use high-viz and have lights on my helmet.

The road to fitness

Living as healthy a life as I can is really important for me. Every week, I complete four hours of physiotherapy and the team push me hard to keep fit. At home, I have a functional electrical stimulation (FES) machine which moves my legs in a cycling motion, electrically stimulating my muscles and improving blood flow in my lower body. It's critical to ensure that I have good muscular cushioning because I sit in the chair all day and cannot feel discomfort which would indicate a blood flow- or skin-related issue.

I also attend a gym where my personal trainer is an endurance cyclist. This has no doubt spurred me on to keep cycling for fitness and I am out on the bike every week. I avoid roads wherever I can as I don't feel safe on them. Often there isn't

sufficient space for cyclists on the roads and if I were to tip over, I'd be helpless in the path of motor traffic. Because I have to bear routes in mind, I'm nervous about trialling the various cycle routes around Cambridge because I can't always see if they will avoid mounting high kerbs, be wide enough for my chair or be too muddy to push through. I have a regular, safe route along the Busway to Cambridge North or St Ives. Recently, I cycled on to Cherry Hinton, though mounting the Green Dragon bridge was pretty nerve-wracking! I did it in the lowest gear, on low power, ready to put my brakes on and wait for help if necessary. Fortunately, I made it and it felt good to have tried a new route. I always have to factor in where to stop and rest, because it's difficult to keep the hand cycle attachment secure: it can't be locked to things in the same way traditional bikes can.

As well as physical health, cycling brings massive benefits to my mental health. It's easy to get stuck in the house; I can get tired and lazy, at which point I think that I need a change of scenery. Getting out on the bike is critical at these times - having fresh air and just moving quickly. It's really enjoyable - so much easier than training in the chair alone as the cycle has gears so I can choose resistance and assistance depending on what I want to target. It's also faster than pushing so allows me to cover many more miles than I otherwise could - thus is great for improving my base level fitness. Of course, there's a real sense of achievement when I've completed a new route or covered a lot of miles. Cycling out with friends is also beneficial: if one of us starts to tire or show weakness, the other will start to increase pace and encourage us to dig deep.

Marathon training

As with any fitness regime, it's helpful to have goals. Last year, I did the Snetterton half marathon - pushing my chair, not cycling. It was great to take part in such an event and I'm hoping to do the Cambridge half marathon this year. Over the next few months, I'm facing my greatest challenge yet: I'm going to compete in the Roth triathlon in Germany. Sponsored by the Rooprai Spinal Trust, there's a team of us from my

I avoid roads where I can as I don't feel safe on them - often there isn't sufficient space

Over time, I have found ways of overcoming problems. I've fitted panniers over the front of my cycle and fill them with bottles of water to add weight. I've also learnt to be careful about where I go. Around Grafham Water, for example, the cycling terrain is chalky and stony, in places with a slight gradient, which makes me vulnerable on the bike. One time at Rutland, a passing bicyclist stopped and pushed me up a hill I was struggling with. Without help, I could

physio group, each with spinal injuries but differing physical abilities. One's completing the swim, another the cycle (using legs) and I'm doing the marathon run (pushing myself in my chair).

Twenty-six miles on a tough course is going to push me to the extreme. I'm excited as well as nervous: my upper body will do all the work and shoulders are not designed to do this kind of work. I have to be so careful to make sure my shoulders remain in good working condition. I need them to survive the test! Cycling the hand bike will be central to my training.

With cycling, my fitness regime is fast, fun, sociable and an enabler as well as an end in itself

It allows me to cover the miles I need for stamina, it strengthens my upper body and is easier on my hands than pushing. Doing the marathon will undoubtedly take its toll but I'm determined to enjoy it. I've booked a trip to Lanzarote where the paths and warm weather will be conducive to pleasant training - I'm hoping it'll give me a good start to the year!

Living a normal life

Thinking back to the start of my new phase of life, I can't believe how normal an existence I feel I have. I'm mobile and active with serious fitness goals. I'm mentally engaged with my sports, thinking about pace, terrain and gradients and how to optimise my use of technical equipment. There's no doubt that cycling has been key to my path. Before getting my handcycle, I was just doing my physiotherapy training; now, my fitness regime is fast, fun, sociable and an enabler as well as an end in itself.

► Accessible routes, free from exclusionary barriers, are essential for those cycling larger or adapted cycles. We want to know which areas cause problems and which routes are safe for all users. Help us build an inclusive cycling map by emailing your feedback to contact@camcycle.org.uk



Images: DOD news (El Hersom) and New York City Department of Transportation, Flickr

THE RISE OF HANDCYCLING

In 2012, London's successful Olympic and Paralympic Games gave handcycling the exposure it needed to start growing in popularity. It wasn't until 2008 in the Summer Paralympics that handcycling classifications were fully recognised, and four years later the 2012 Paralympics saw over 200 competitors compete in road and track cycling competitions.

For many people, this was the first time that they had seen elite handbikes being used competitively. Part of the Olympic and Paralympic legacy was to encourage Britons to try new sports and to get active doing something new.

Thanks to its similarity to cycling and its accommodating design, handcycling is popular with both fully able-bodied people and less able-bodied people. Handcycles are often built to meet particular requirements, meaning there are many variations in style. The bounds of what is possible on a handcycle are constantly being stretched - from being used as a vehicle for daily commutes through to long-distance touring, off-road adventures and even downhill racing on tarmac, dirt or snow! With the inclusion of hybrid and fully electric standalone or add-on models (which attach to a day wheelchair), there is potential for almost anyone to take part in handcycling.

Handcycling provides very similar health benefits to regular cycling, subject to a few key differences in the major muscle groups being used. Cardiovascular fitness, increased endurance, faster recovery rates and increased strength (especially around core, shoulders and arm muscle groups) are all well reported - as are the social opportunities around the sport.



FIND OUT MORE:

► Handcycling.co.uk is a dedicated website set up to celebrate and promote the leisure side of this sport with information about different handcycle models, testimonials from those enjoying the sport and how to buy.

► You Can Bike Too is a local all-ability cycling project which offers trials and hire of handcycles. Find out more at miltoncountrypark.org/youcanbiketoo

GETTING OUT AND

Ways to enjoy the health benefits of cycling can change at different stages of your life. Three people explain

'WOMEN ON WHEELS' JACKIE LEONARD AND ANGELA PLATT TALK ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THE GROUP AND ANGELA'S CYCLING HISTORY

We are in Angela's kitchen to talk about health, fitness and exercise in relation to women and cycling. I met Angela Platt through 'Women on Wheels', a twice-weekly cycling group, with the emphasis more on the social side than clocking up the miles. As she points out: 'the rides are short [we finish around 12.15 pm], so you have the rest of the day to do things'. Fittingly, we are enjoying tea and cake, a staple of all our Wednesday and Saturday bike rides.

Cycling is a family tradition. Her dad was a cyclist until he was 87 years old and now at 90 enjoys hearing his stories told back to him. She shows me a scrapbook of some of the competitions she has been in and a picture in the local news (1973) of her family cycling, entitled 'Pride and Joy' ('Joy' being Angela's maiden name). Angela is married with three daughters and for both environmental and financial reasons ('we paid off the mortgage'), as a young family they always relied on cycles for their transport.

Angela's love of cycling started when she first learned to cycle properly on a Raleigh bike at 10 years old. She remembers the sense of freedom as she took off. In her early teens she competed against boys, winning her first international race in Holland. There were few races for girls and at 16 she had to race with men.

I ask her how much things have changed for women. Angela remembers one particular competition when she and other female cyclists were referred to as 'prima donnas'. She notes there has been a massive improvement since then, both in terms of sponsorship, races for women and respect for women's cycling generally. 'The cycles are also a lot lighter!', she adds.



Her achievements in competitive cycling have included women's road races and local and national time trials. She has also taken part in the World Masters Championships (2001) at the Manchester velodrome ('the track') and has completed the Etape stage of the Tour de France.

Cycling is good therapy, she says. It feels like meditation when you cycle on your own, or, if you are in a group, it is social

There have been challenges along the way; she had a cycling accident three years ago and was off work for 10 weeks on crutches. This coincided with sleepless nights, as she helped her daughter following a difficult birth. Having suffered depression previously, she lost the motivation and energy to cycle, and even up to a year ago was on medication.

This all changed when last year she offered to be the main driver at the training camp for both the Cambridge Cycling Club and Cambridge Triathlon Club, in Mallorca. There she helped people with mechanical problems and, as a nurse for 25 years, any first aid as

needed. She cited being around other cyclists as reigniting her enthusiasm for cycling once again.

'Cycling is good therapy', she says. 'It feels like meditation when you cycle on your own or, if you are in a group, it is social'. She now feels she has regained the same feeling of freedom and enjoyment experienced as a teenager, citing the benefits of 'all-round good exercise' and the social aspect - 'meeting new people, making friends'. 'For retired people this is particularly important', she adds. She also practices yoga, walks regularly and her social life often involves cycling-related activities.

I ask her what are the main things she enjoys about cycling: 'fresh air, moving, being self-sufficient, and the freedom. The fitter you get, the easier it is'.

► **Women on Wheels meet on Wednesdays at 9.30am at the Red Cross Lane/Nightingale Avenue junction and on Saturdays at 9.30am at Clay Farm Community Gardens Pop-up café.**

► **All are welcome to join their Charity Ride on Sunday 14 June. The sponsored 100-mile ride will be raising money for Caring Together, a local charity that works with the carers of those with Alzheimer's. Find out more by emailing angela.platt@ntlworld.com**

...STAYING IN

how they pedal their way to fitness and wellbeing.

RUSSELL DUNN EXPLAINS WHY, AS A FIT MAN IN HIS 30S WHO LOVES BEING OUTDOORS, HE SPENDS MOST OF HIS PEDALLING HOURS IN HIS GARAGE

For a number of hours each week, I cycle. I go out of my back door, across the lawn, and into my garage. I switch on my three monitors, slip my feet onto the pedals, and cycle.

The set-up is fairly simple. My bike is mounted directly onto a turbo trainer. Connected to this via a wireless dongle, I have a computer and three screens which control the turbo to add realism and difficulty using a number of different software programs. All you actually need, though, is a bike, a turbo trainer and a tablet as some programs work via Bluetooth. There is plenty available on the market to make the system more complex and it's worth doing some research. For example, you can gamify the process using software such as Sufferfest or Zwift, or bring the real world indoors using Road Grand Tours or Fulgaz. Though I keep my set-up fairly simple, I understand why people develop more complex systems: five hours pedalling in the garage could be dull!

Cycling like this is relatively new to me. I've been on two wheels for as long as I can remember, mucking about on a bike as a child and using one to get from A-to-B. In my twenties, I started taking cycling seriously. Throughout university, I was a rower and many of my friends also cycled. Rowing and cycling are complementary sports because some of the same major muscles are engaged. I became interested and, when I got a job, bought myself a fancy bike for the daily commute. I went out cycling in the evenings, too, and did increasingly long rides at the weekends. For ten years, I did 30 miles a day, every day. Since then, I've done well over 150,000 miles and logged more hours than I can count.

Wherever I cycle, the benefits are both physical and mental. Cycling gives me time to switch off my brain and focus meditatively. Most of my life has been rooted around the practice of one thing or another. When I was younger, my existence revolved around a relentless dedication to music, with hours a day spent practising, and I've never really lost the capacity for that mindless persistence. It translates well to repetitive sports and has been a valuable asset as I've grown in strength and fitness through cycling. There are times when I have almost no recollection of training sessions because I've zoned out for the duration! Increased ability has also enabled me to cycle some challenging routes including several of the iconic mountain rides in the Alps that have been really rewarding. I was able to spend hours pounding the tarmac, alone but for my bike and the mountain. There's a special sort of serenity that comes with climbing a mountain.

Wherever I cycle, the benefits are both physical and mental. Cycling gives me time to switch off my brain and focus meditatively

Aside from knowing and understanding the health benefits of staying fit and healthy, cycling is central to my lifestyle and identity. Sadly, opportunities to get outside for long, challenging rides are few and far between now because I have a young family and a full-time job. But it feels really important for me to continue with the sport even as life's pressures increase. I'm very time-poor so the key benefit of my garage set-up is that I can keep fit on the bike when time is limited. Though I miss the outdoor routes it still feels worth it: they say that a mile on the turbo is worth two on the road and

I definitely feel as though I have a good work out.

As well as garage cycling for fitness, the bike continues to be my primary mode of transport. I commute on it - albeit a much shorter distance now and mercifully entirely off road - and carry my son on the back. Perhaps it's the addition of another life on my bike which makes me recognise the safety benefits of doing most of my biking miles indoors. When I commuted on the roads, I experienced many near misses when drivers weren't paying attention or were taking risks to reach their destinations more quickly. Despite being a very confident and experienced cyclist, I'm more risk-averse these days and feel that training regularly on the bike in areas shared closely with motorists simply isn't worth the risk.

I'd like to think that the long-distance, scenery-rich solo rides that gave me so much pleasure could be part of my lifestyle again one day. And there's no doubt that I'm happier when regularly out on my bike. However, provision for the safety of Cambridge cyclists would need to be much more of a local priority for me to consider swapping my garage for the roads any time soon.



Mindful cycling

REGAINING A SENSE OF SCALE

Marion Zalay, a French psychologist and psychotherapist based in Cambridge, explores the ways that cycling connects us to the world and our sense of self-worth

It's easy to see how cycling can improve physical fitness. Less easy to see, but as important, are the mental health benefits of cycling. Self-empowerment, self-reliance, and anxiety relief are all great benefits. One of the most important, however, is regaining a sense of scale and purpose in the world. Why is this the case? Let's think about the sedentary lifestyle that modern society typically encourages. This lifestyle has disconnected us from our fundamental physical need for movement and basic psychological need to adapt to an ever-changing environment. It's disconnected us from the randomness of the world by giving us an illusion of control and predictability; so we can live in our heads, and forget our bodies.

One of the prime examples of this disconnection and its effects is the car. Modern cars are supremely comfortable environments – a bubble that separates you from the world. Windows around you, roof above you, blocking yourself off from the elements. You can choose what music to hear, what temperature you want to feel. The seasons and weather almost don't matter because you're protected from them. The most pressing matters are those of other road users or roadworks – usually 'getting in your way' in a frustrating manner. Likewise, difficult terrain such as hills only mean you have to push slightly harder on the accelerator. You're in control of your environment and as such it's a safe and soothing space for you, until something doesn't work and you become stuck and powerless.

Compare this to a bike. On a bike you are

much more connected and exposed to the world, the weather and the seasons. You are more sensitive to what is going on in the world, and you have to adapt to it. Think of the times when the effort of your pedalling doesn't seem to be matched by your rate of progress. You check different variables – is it me, is it the bike, is it the road, is it the weather? Some factors are in your power to change (stiff chain), and some of them aren't (gale-force winds). When you fix what you can, you get immediate feedback that you made a difference. The things you can't change, you learn to cope with. You do this by creating an encouraging inner self-dialogue, you cheer yourself, you derive pride in having 'survived' the elements thrown your way.

Self-reliance and freedom

There's a strong relationship between mental health, self-reliance and freedom. On a bike, you can feel freer than in a car because you are more autonomous. You don't need petrol stations, you don't need roads, you only need yourself and basic repair skills. In society, we may think we're independent because we buy things with our hard-earned money, but we forget that society does a lot of work for us, taking the effort out of our daily lives. For example, very few of us grow our own food or make our own clothes. By the same token, it's getting harder and harder to fix cars yourself. You have to relinquish some of your control and independence by going to a garage and trusting that the mechanic knows his job, is reliable, and won't take advantage of your vulnerable position.

On a bike, the relationship between the factors on which you depend and your sense of control and autonomy is simpler: you depend on food, water, warmth, rest. It helps you get back to basics in terms of human needs, those we usually 'farm out' for convenience and speed.

We can also see how your sense of self-worth is connected to your sense of achievement. But if you aim too high, you're more likely to fail, and generalise that until you feel yourself as a failure. If you say to yourself 'I conquered Castle Hill yesterday, so tomorrow I shall sprint up Snowdon', you could fail so badly you injure yourself and set yourself back further than where you started. If, however, you learn to listen to yourself to know what your current level of cycling fitness is and exercise just slightly harder, then you will get fitter. This habit of listening to your own experience leads to a better sense of knowing who you are, what you want, and what you can achieve. This is really important in alleviating the anxiety we might feel when constantly comparing ourselves to others' standards.

Psychologically, this links to patience, determination, perseverance, and tolerance of failure. You come to accept the need to sustain effort over a long period of time to get results. Cycling is a great way to regain a sense of scale, to accept we cannot do everything all at once, and to feel more comfortable living within your limits. By developing this sense of realistic expectation, we rediscover that humility is not failure, but openness to things bigger than ourselves, that enrich us as we get through them.



Cycle therapy

MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Anna Williams shares her experience of depression and how cycling helped her recovery



Riverside has always been one of my favourite places to cycle in Cambridge. It has its flaws (such as terrible surfacing at the Stourbridge Common end), but in general is an uplifting place to ride. It's a rare place where pedestrians and cyclists massively outnumber motor traffic and the majority of car drivers act considerately, as guests, making me entirely comfortable to take all three of my young children from Chesterton to Newmarket Road Tesco, with even the three-year old scooting along the road on her balance bike. Here you will see people of all ages and cycles of all styles: teenagers giving each other 'backies', a young cycle commuter pulling her boyfriend along on a skateboard behind her, people of all races and backgrounds carrying children, shopping and huge musical instruments. The river is full of ducks, the friendly Cambridge heron lurks on the bank and birdsong often fills the air. One day I cycled along here nine months pregnant and felt as if I was flying!

A year earlier though, I passed this way in darkness and didn't feel so uplifted. I looked at the still, black river dotted with the ghostly white shapes of sleeping swans and, as I rose up onto the cycle bridge, I wanted to slide down into those waters. It would be easier than dealing with the struggles of life and the endless loops my brain was traversing to try and help me untangle them. My thoughts had never wandered this way before and it was scary to feel them go there.

How had I got to this place? Sleep deprivation mainly. Sleep deprivation combined with work anxiety, a tight deadline, a difficult baby and a knotty problem in the project I was working on. Each week was like Groundhog Day as my colleagues and I tried different ways to solve it and the time ticked on while

we all got increasingly grumpy with one another.

When I look back, it was obvious. My work days started early and finished late with child-rearing and breastfeeding absorbing my time before and after work. My clingy, windy baby would wake me every night, often multiple times, and if we couldn't get to sleep together I might be out on the streets of East Chesterton at 3am or 5am, smiling at the people who were going to or returning from work at this time and pushing the buggy past the huge building site opposite the chip shop. Even when I was in bed, though, my brain was whirring with anxiety; I hadn't suffered from insomnia before, but my mind was on a problem-solving treadmill – how to finish the project and get the baby to sleep? – and had been infected by the horrible lingering atmosphere of redundancies at work.

Cherishing the daily pedal

It's not the single nights of sleep deprivation that get you, it's the long, endless strings of them, stretching out so far you can't see or even imagine the end. It's the randomness of wakings and sleepings, the torture of night parenthood where every bone in your body wants to ignore the cries of your child, but every piece of your heart would go immediately to their bedside. I knew there was light somewhere at the end of this tunnel and I tried desperately to cling to that as I struggled. There would be light at the end of the work one too – the deadline would appear and we'd have to resolve our differences and cobble together some sort of creation to put out into the world.

But logic can only get you so far. The things that got me out the other side were family, friends, faith and cycling. I

had never been a big fan of routine but the daily pedal to work was a precious tonic. I may have been cycling when I first thought those dark thoughts, but it was cycling that would remind me of the light. Some days all you can do is show up. Climb on the saddle, feet on the pedals, just do it. Round and round for half an hour, waking me up for the day and sending healing endorphins around my bloodstream. Then, home at the end of the working day: saddle, pedals, off again. Pushing round and round, winding down and processing thoughts before they got too big and overwhelming. Cows on Coldham's Common, rowers on the river, people and beauty and glimpses of things I would care about again soon. The deadline passed, the fog started to clear, I didn't lose my job. The baby would be challenging for a while, but she was worth it. One day she'd scoot herself along beside the river and make my heart leap. One day her big sister would be cycling in her merry, distracted way and I'd capture it in a haiku (poetry and pictures for Instagram being two other valuable contributions to my healing). It said:

*Five-year-old cyclists
Know what's important in life:
Enjoying the view.*

When I look at the river now, I don't see the darkness, just a reflection of what's been and gone. When my children fall off their bikes, I tell them the scrapes and scratches are part of their story. This is my scar. I hope whatever each day brings that I'll be able to climb on the saddle again. Pedal and go. Round and round and round.

A TRAIL OF TWO CITIES

Steve Fagg and Alan Ackroyd cycled out the other side of cancer treatment and set off to achieve new goals and raise money for Maggie's Centres, a cancer charity.



Cambridge is the destination of the annual London to Cambridge Bike Ride organised by Bike Events, one of several that use a similar route. It has been bigger but continues to draw a healthy number of riders confronting personal challenges or just enjoying a day out riding 62 miles (or 124 for the round trip). Steve and Lisa Fagg and Alan Ackroyd did the ride in 2019.

STEVE'S STORY:

Although Lisa and I had prepared as much as possible the evening before, we set our alarms for 4.30am on the morning of the ride to ensure we could get to Midsummer Common in time for the organised transport at 5.45am. This was a sight to see: hundreds of bikes being packed into removal vans and as many cyclists into coaches for the journey down to Pickett's Lock.

On arrival at an industrial estate near the start, we disembarked. When the vans arrived, we queued up behind the one our bikes had disappeared into and were glad that ours were two of the first to emerge. We clipped on our bags and clipped in ourselves and slowly cycled to the official start point at the leisure centre. After getting a starting photo taken we approached the start line with a mixture of trepidation and eagerness

to be on our way with more than 60 miles ahead of us.

We set off at a reasonable pace, through the already heavy London traffic, and started to feel settled into the ride. So far everything was familiar from our previous time doing the ride three years before although the volume of riders around us seemed smaller, possibly due to our later start time. But then the hills appeared!

We'd seen a preview of the route profile so we knew what to expect, but the reality turned out to be more challenging than we'd anticipated. Still feeling fatigued from a week's cycling holiday in Holland (we got back the day before the ride) we struggled over the climbs and the effort took a lot out of us. By the time we reached the first feed stop at Roydon, eighteen miles in, we were feeling tired. Knowing that the worst of the hills were now behind us helped lift us but we still had a long way to go.

Fed and watered, we continued in good spirits. Just as we approached the half-way point, we got a message from Alan to say he was already at Duxford (the final feed stop), barely twelve miles from Cambridge! Envious of his rapid progress, we pressed on until, with twenty-four miles to go, we reached the penultimate food stop. As that started to close up around us, we headed for the last burst of hills, to the west of Saffron

Walden. These seemed to go on for ever and it was only sheer determination that got us to the top of the last one. The long downhill towards Duxford was a huge relief as we knew by now we'd surely finish the ride.

Raising almost £700 for the charity Maggie's Centres whose Cambridge branch had been such a help to us made the aching limbs worthwhile!

The final twelve miles, now on familiar roads, passed in something of a daze and we wobbled our way onto Jesus Green nine hours after setting out from Pickett's Lock. We were glad the finish hadn't closed even though we overshot the 5pm 'finishing time' of the ride. We were presented with our finishing medals, posed for a finish line photo and collapsed on the grass. Many, perhaps most, of the riders on the ride were raising money for charity by their efforts and we raised almost £700 for the charity Maggie's Centres whose Cambridge branch had been such a help to us when I had cancer a few years ago. Certainly that made the aching limbs worthwhile!



ALAN'S STORY:

When cancer struck I knew there were going to be big changes in my life. After treatment I was determined to put it as far behind me as possible and do all I could not to revisit the experience of serious illness by getting as fit and healthy as I could.

Part of the new lifestyle was getting back on a bike, so the old machines came out of storage and I got down to some serious restoration. Owl Bikes was a great resource and one day when I was there I commented on a rather racy recumbent parked by the door. 'Someone has given it to us and we don't know what to do with it – none of us can even ride it!' There's something about comments like that which affects me and I was soon wobbling round the car park!

I had set a target of the London-Cambridge ride as a step in my recovery plans and with my weakness for 'funny bikes' I was off. I acquired the beast, did a few minor repairs and set out to learn how to ride it for more than 10 feet at a time. I have got to know the Busway to St Ives quite well and seem to have dusted quite a lot of it with the seat of my pants! I wanted to give something back to Addenbrooke's and now I had a challenge to go for – master the beast and raise some money.

I didn't fancy the chances of something as unusual/vulnerable as the beast in a van full of bikes so Sarah took us down to Pickett's Lock. I was very nervous about riding in traffic, but being able to ride with other cyclists would give me a feeling of safety. I wobbled through the starting gate and out onto the road – into traffic! But Sunday morning at 8.30am was relatively quiet and after a few miles (and some thankfully deserted roundabouts)

we were out in country lanes. I quickly remembered reading that the only way to tackle hills on a recumbent is to drop down the gears and be patient, but I still thought my lungs would burst before the top! I didn't check the route beforehand, just relied on the signs at the junctions and took it as it came. What came was a beautiful day with a helpful breeze as we meandered through some really attractive landscape. It brought back the feelings of my previous cycling over 20 years ago – the freedom of the countryside with an ever-changing panorama of this green and pleasant land opening up around me. There was the added bonus of being surrounded by lots of people enjoying different aspects of the same thing. There were around 1,500 riders of all shapes and sizes and I picked up snatches of some fascinating conversations (and joined in a few) as different groups came up behind me, assessed the situation and passed me by!

I had set a target of the London to Cambridge ride as a step in my recovery plans and with my weakness for 'funny bikes' I was off

I paused by the roadside several times to keep the liquid intake going and once for a minor mechanical repair for which my old but trusty tool-kit was more than adequate. I'm afraid the rest stops just didn't look attractive so I didn't sample the tea and what I'm sure were wonderful cakes.

As we approached Cambridge it was clearly getting to the end of the ride – they seemed occasionally to be running short of signs – but we circled round

from Whittlesford through Harston to come into Cambridge along the Barton Road. Traffic or what! I don't think I could have planned a more cycle-unfriendly route to Jesus Green but thankfully I was feeling a lot more confident now and the last miles at exhaust-pipe level passed without incident. I was soon rolling onto Jesus Green where my wonderful wife was waiting to greet me with a very welcome picnic and an ice cream!

I had a great day out, some pleasant chats on the road, achieved my goals and was able to raise – thanks to some very generous friends – a pleasing wad of cash for a worthy cause. And twelve months earlier I could barely walk 500 yards, and that very slowly with a stick. Thank you Addenbrooke's!

There are many opinions of organised cycle rides. One-way events like the London to Cambridge raise the question of what to do with the non-cycled leg – although not a few riders did the round trip by bike. And there's always the issue of people inviting sponsorship for doing something they enjoy or would do irrespective of the financials. And, of course, it isn't actually London where it starts (and I wouldn't have done it if it was!). But for many people this ride puts in place a series of challenges which may be addressed from a variety of perspectives and an opportunity to encourage support for worthy causes. Or it's just a great day out in the company of like-minded people enjoying their bikes together. In a world where nothing is perfect, that must rate pretty well – and I, for one, am thinking seriously about doing it again. Come and join me!

► *The 2020 London to Cambridge ride takes place on Sunday 26 July. Find out more at bike-events.co.uk*



Breathing space: the facts behind cycling and air pollution in Cambridge

Air pollution is an issue that is receiving increased media coverage and is becoming a greater part of the public consciousness. But how bad is it in Cambridge, what should we be doing about it, and how does cycling fit in?

What is air pollution?

The main pollutants of concern in urban areas in the UK are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). PM₁₀ refers to particulates with a diameter of less than 10µm and PM_{2.5} refers to particles with a diameter of less than 2.5µm. Particulate matter is made up of a mixture of substances including elemental and organic carbon, metals, mineral compounds, sulphates, nitrates and salt.

Where does air pollution come from?

The major sources of NO₂ are combustion processes including road traffic, domestic heating, industrial processes and power generation.

PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are generated by combustion processes, but also come from a wide range of other sources including vehicle brake- and tyre-wear, road-wear, construction activities, natural sources and the formation of sulphate and nitrate particles by chemical processes in the atmosphere.

Levels of pollution in the air we breathe depend not only on the quantity of the pollutants that are released, but also on the dispersion of the pollutants between the source and us. This is influenced by the nature of the release, the meteorological conditions and the physical environment.

Emissions from road traffic are particularly significant because they are released close to the point of exposure and street canyons – where roads are lined by buildings on both sides – can

trap pollutants and significantly worsen air quality.

What are the health impacts?

Public Health England states that poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK.¹

NO₂ has long and short-term health impacts. High levels can inflame the airways in the lungs and affect how well the lungs work. People with asthma are particularly affected.

Exposure to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) can lead to increased admissions to hospital and mortality of people suffering from heart disease (attacks and strokes) and lung disease such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), bronchitis and asthma.² It is recognised that there are no absolutely safe levels of particulate matter. Evidence suggests that health effects can still occur within the legal limits and that any improvement in air quality will have positive health consequences.³

Children, the elderly and people with respiratory and cardiovascular disease are known to be more susceptible to the health impacts of air quality. Children are especially vulnerable because they

breathe more air relative to their body weight than adults, are more physically active and tend to be outdoors at times of higher air pollution levels.

How bad is air pollution in Cambridge?

The good news is that air quality throughout the UK has improved considerably over recent decades, but concentrations of NO₂ remain above the air quality objectives in many urban areas. The environmental law charity Client Earth has successfully taken the UK government to court three times over its failure to improve air quality quickly enough.

It is recognised that there are no absolutely safe levels of particulate matter

Air quality varies considerably throughout Cambridge. In suburban areas and away from busy roads, concentrations of NO₂ are well below the National Air Quality Objectives, but annual average concentrations are likely to exceed the National Air Quality Objective along some of the busiest roads in the city.

Particulate matter levels are below the National Air Quality Objectives throughout the city, but in parts of the city they are above the WHO guideline values.

Measured levels of NO₂ in Cambridge in 2018 were, overall, slightly lower than in 2017. Measured levels of particulate matter in 2018 had risen slightly (PM₁₀) or remained the same (PM_{2.5}).⁴

In Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, 106 deaths per year can be attributed to poor air quality.⁵

Air quality limits and objectives

The EU has set legally binding limit values for concentrations of NO₂ and PM₁₀ and a target value for concentrations of PM_{2.5}. These are incorporated into the UK National Air Quality Objectives.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) sets global guideline values for pollutant concentrations. The guideline values for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are more ambitious than the UK National Air Quality Objectives.

What is being done to improve air quality?

Air quality in Cambridge is the responsibility of the city council. In 2004, it declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) covering the centre of the city, owing to levels of NO₂ exceeding the National Air Quality Objective. The council measures NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} at a set of fixed monitoring sites to test compliance with the air quality objectives and to provide information about how air quality is changing over time.

The city council developed a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in 2017, which sets out the council's priorities for improving areas of poor air quality, and maintaining areas of good air quality. It includes a list of actions with timescales and the expected improvement in air quality that the action would deliver. The proposed actions fall into three main categories:

- 1) Reducing local traffic emissions as quickly as possible to meet national air quality objectives,
- 2) Maintaining levels of pollutants below national air quality objectives,
- 3) Improving public health.

How can cycling help?

Cycling can play an important role in all three of the categories set out in the Air Quality Action Plan.

- 1) The most effective way of reducing local traffic emissions is to remove vehicles from the road. The AQAP includes a number of measures which aim to encourage modal shift for both personal travel and business journeys. These include new and improved cycle routes, potential incentives for cycle deliveries and travel planning. A workplace parking levy and road-user charging are also currently being discussed (see page 18).
- 2) Where pollutants are already below national air quality objectives, the AQAP aims to maintain these levels by using planning policies to ensure new communities are designed to make it easy for people to use sustainable modes of transport.



Pollution trap: Great Northern Road is an example of a 'street canyon'.

- 3) Swapping car journeys for cycling can improve public health for all city residents by reducing levels of pollution. It also has health benefits for the cyclist through increased physical activity.

What about electric cars?

Swapping conventional vehicles for electric vehicles can help to significantly reduce concentrations of NO₂. The impact on particulate concentrations is likely to be much smaller, as electric vehicles will continue to generate significant emissions of particulates from brake, tyre and road wear. Switching to electric vehicles will also not have any of the other benefits of cycling such as reducing congestion, increasing physical activity and improving safety.

Should I be worried about air quality when cycling?

A study carried out by the Centre for Diet and Activity Research (CEDAR) and Medical Research Council Epidemiology Unit at the University of Cambridge found that, for most people, the health benefits of walking and cycling outweigh the negative health effects of air pollution, even in cities with high levels of air pollution. In fact, car drivers can be exposed to more air pollution than cyclists⁶. Exposure to air pollution can be reduced by planning your route to avoid busy roads, where possible.

Matt Williams
Member of the Institute of Air Quality Management

¹ Public Health England, 2018. ² Environmental Protection UK. ³ Air Quality: A briefing for directors of public health, Local Government Association, 2017. ⁴ Cambridge City Council Air Quality Status Report 2019. ⁵ Cambridge City Council Clean Air Zone Feasibility Study ⁶ Levels of ambient air pollution according to mode of transport: a systematic review, The Lancet, 2016.



THE LONGEST RIDE

Huw Jenkins shares
his journey from unfit rider
(with a hangover) to
successful endurance cyclist

In 2013 I knew I was unfit and needed motivation to start fitness training so I signed up to the Nightrider - a 100km cycle ride around London at midnight. My first training rides didn't last more than 15 minutes because I was so out of breath. I was worried as I had only three months before the event. I kept riding, slowly increasing time and distance, and I'm glad I did as the fitness did come. I cycled the Nightrider itself in six hours and still felt OK the next day.

I wanted to keep this hard-won fitness so I kept cycling two or three times a week for a couple of years. However, 40 was soon approaching and my programming job, requiring umpteen hours in front of a computer each day, wasn't helping to stop the middle-age spread. So I decided to sign up for a cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats. This would involve cycling 100 miles on nine consecutive days. I had a year to train for this ride, which was just as well as it started badly.

I cycled a hilly 75-mile route - the longest I'd ever cycled - with a single 500ml bottle of water and a hangover. If you've ever cycled that far, you'll know how ridiculous this was. It took me 7 hours to cycle 75 miles and the last 10 miles were the worst I have ever known. Pro tip: carry lots of water and don't cycle with a hangover. I needed to get a lot fitter and faster and to learn how to sustain my energy levels. I needed a plan.

I was using Strava Premium, mainly because I had a free trial (new cycle computer!) but also so I could record my progress. It turned out they also had a training plan so I started following that. The plan involved two 90-minute interval sessions in the week, alternating between fast cycling and hill climbing, and a longer ride at weekends. There was one 'rest week' of slower-paced cycling every month. The best way to recover from cycling is more cycling, apparently. My fitness did improve remarkably quickly. It improved further when I learnt the difference between high-cadence and low-cadence cycling.

Cadence is the rate at which you turn your pedals, measured in Revolutions Per Minute (RPM). High cadence is anything above 80 RPM, with 90 RPM the target for training. Lower cadences put more stress on muscles and joints, higher cadences put more stress on the cardiovascular system. Your cardiovascular



system recovers much quicker than your muscular system, so using high cadence means you can cycle fast day after day.

High cadence has another benefit. The act of bending the legs during the revolution of the pedal helps to push the blood back towards the heart which in turn helps to clear the body of the metabolites and lactic acid that are generated during cycling. So, the faster you pedal, the quicker the legs clear themselves of the things that cause muscle fatigue. When you crest a hill from a low-cadence slog, don't stop, keep the gear low and get that cadence back up as soon as possible. This will help to clear your legs of muscle fatigue-inducing nasties and mean, hopefully, less cramp. It's another instance of more cycling helping recovery from cycling.

Even armed with this training and technical knowledge, the ride remains one of the hardest things I have ever done. The hills and mountains of northern England and Scotland just seem to go on and on. Gale-force winds sap energy and hours of rain sap spirit. I was tired after three days, and there were still six days to go. By the same token, though, it was one of the most satisfying things I've done - being faced with such bad weather and huge distance, yet still being able to complete it. I also learned to appreciate the fleeting moments when everything went well - coasting downhill, sun poking through the clouds or catching up with a group and working together as a team to make it through the day.

RIDE LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS

1) Decide whether to do a supported or unsupported ride

The first thing to decide is whether you want to do it supported or unsupported. On a supported ride your belongings are carried for you and food and drink stations are provided along the route.

You also need to decide how long you want to take. The company I used (rideacrossbritain.com) did the route in 9 days, so I was cycling over 100 miles each day. There are other companies which have routes that take 2 or 3 weeks so your daily distance will be reduced.

2) Build up your fitness

You do need to train for it, but don't get bogged down in the technicalities. Just start slowly and each week increase how much you are doing. I highly recommend following a high-intensity interval session training plan. Start with one long ride at the weekend and build up to doing two as you get closer to riding across Britain.

Sign up for at least one multi-day sportive, like the Dragon Ride in Wales. That way you know what it's like going to sleep tired, not feeling much better in the morning, and still getting back on the bike

3) Practice mental endurance

Note that cycling long distances is as much mental as it is physical. When setting out on 50+ mile rides, the voices in my head would shout about what a stupid idea this was. I would plead with myself: 'just another mile then you can rest'. As I got fitter, it took longer for those voices to start.

However, even now those thoughts still raise their voices occasionally, particularly on steep hills. Let them have their say and they'll quieten down soon enough.



CYCLING WITH YEARS

Alan Ackroyd shares tips for cycling as you age

I do not accept that I am old – merely enjoying the second flush of youth! But let me offer a few thoughts on cycling from the perspective of someone with slightly more life-experience. These issues normally creep up on us gradually. I had almost 15 years without cycling before I started again when I was just over 60, so a lot had changed in the meantime and I noticed some of the changes, perhaps more than most.

1 It seems that younger people tend to cycle a lot faster these days – but experience says there is a lot to be said for enjoying the journey, not just getting to the destination. However, cycling still moves you along with ease and freedom that is truly exhilarating compared with walking or urban driving!

2 The bike in the shed that you used in your 20s may no longer be fit for purpose. My back doesn't bend over as easily as it used to and my lungs appreciate more space to inflate than the racing cyclist's 'full tuck' permits. Not to mention that something that I simply don't recognise obscures my belt buckle when I bend forward! Forget about racing – unless that's what you are doing – and adopt a more relaxed riding position. That may mean just altering the positions of saddle and handlebars. Or it may be good to choose a different bike – which needn't cost the earth. There are lots of good used bikes for sale around Cambridge – try Owl Bikes or any other good bike shop. I have used University Cycles and Kingsway Cycles, but wherever you go, it is easy to find cycle purchase intimidating. If you have a knowledgeable friend, ask them to help, and don't be rushed. I would always visit a couple of shops to see what is on offer and compare prices. And I would buy from a shop – if there's a problem you can take it back!

3 The first time I rode into town last year, I rode up the hill to Coleridge Rec and had to stop for a breather before tackling the station cycle bridge. I do it without a hint of breathlessness now but I notice that if I get out of puff, it takes me longer than before to recover. A lot of people of experience find that an e-bike takes the hard work – and recovery time – out of hill-climbing. People who have used them talk about how they feel confident to cycle greater distances with an e-bike than they did with a conventional bike. That has to be good. When I get one I'll tell you what I think of it.

4 I was a bit nervous of getting back out on the road on a bike. Everyone seems to go faster these days and I didn't want to fall off or make a fool of myself. For my first ride I walked my bike round the corner to Cherry Hinton Hall during school time. No cars and no kids. Within five minutes I felt as if it had all come back to me and I was enjoying sunshine, birdsong and breeze, leaving only tyre-tracks behind me. Once you have learned to ride a bike, you really don't forget! Cambridge has such a network of cycleways that you can get to many places with few encounters with traffic. The council produces a free cycle map which you can pick up at the Guildhall or from our Camcycle stall at events.

5 Garden centres and cafés seem to live on the grey pound. Once you're back in the saddle, treat them to a grey cyclist. The cake tastes better if you've cycled there – I know!

6 Several groups around Cambridge organise gentle rides. Try the #CamRide Home or CTC Cambridge rides (see page 5). The U3A in Cambridge has a cycling group which organises rides from March to July and October to November. It's a funny thing, but every organised cycle ride that I've been on seems to involve refreshments to a greater or lesser extent!

7 Cycling is great for general fitness and develops a healthy appetite. But if you have not been physically active for a while, do start slowly and listen to your body. Remember to use your gears to turn the pedals a bit faster with a lighter load to preserve your knees and don't be afraid to pull into the kerb for a breather – remember the hare and the tortoise!

THE PERFECT FIT



Tim Williams makes fitting bikes to their riders his business. Having worked with cyclists for over 30 years, his service is designed to optimise the riding experience. We asked him why cyclists of all levels might consider bike fitting an important part of staying healthy on their bikes.

Why is bike fitting important?

Cycling is a broad church (to say the least), but if there is a common theme it's that a good bike fit gets rid of as much unnecessary tension as possible. I think that tension is the enemy whatever type of cycling you do. It makes you stiff and sore on long rides, limits your ability to clear lactic acid during intense rides, and prevents you feeling comfortable and in control on any ride.

Tension can come from trying to hold yourself still on the saddle or trying to keep the pressure off parts of your body that don't like it - normally your hands, your perineum, your knees or your back. A good bike fit eliminates this unnecessary tension and leaves you to get on with the riding. You're also likely to be tense if you don't quite feel in control of your bike, for instance if you're uncomfortable taking one hand off the handlebars or looking behind. They're essential skills for riding safely and are much easier with a good set-up.

If you want to cover long distances or go fast, it's important that you are able to use the big muscles in your legs and backside effectively, and to save energy by staying low and being aerodynamic. A good bike fit enables all of this.

What's the process?

There are three contact points between the bike and rider (five if you count your hands and feet separately). In a nutshell the fitting process involves

adjusting the position of the feet on the pedals, and the positions of the saddle and handlebars. However, it's not quite that simple: everyone is unique, every bike is different, and everyone's starting position is different. The first part of the process is for me to watch my client ride and understand their issues. I normally know in which direction the adjustments need to go and sometimes they're quite straightforward. However, most bike frames are made for an averagely shaped person and sold with components that offer a fairly narrow range of adjustment. DIY bike fitting is often limited by this range of adjustment. I have a collection of components that extend the range in every direction. The process is iterative, with the client riding, feeling and understanding the effect of each change.

Because everyone is different the adjustments and effects are unique to each fitting, but typically people feel the points at which different muscles switch off (relax) and others engage, and the points where the pressure comes off their hands and where they feel the saddle under their sit bones.

Who is it for?

I would say *everyone who rides a bike* but that's not really true, as plenty of people find a set-up that's adequate for their needs by themselves, either by accident or design. However, I see racers, tourists, leisure riders, commuters, veterans and novices. I see expensive bikes, cheap bikes, town bikes, mountain bikes,

carbon bikes, metal bikes, light bikes, heavy bikes. I see fit people, fat people, tall people and short people. I see people of all ages and all abilities.

Because bikes are normally sold to people on the basis of their height, and the length of their legs, I see a lot of people whose bodies and arms are slightly longer or shorter than normal (i.e. what bike manufacturers think is normal).

Are there common signs which might indicate the need for bike fitting?

If you don't feel confident or comfortable, or if you feel that even the shortest ride is hard work, it could well be that your bike set-up is a big factor.

If you're a regular cyclist and you enjoy the first hour, but then find that your bike's getting uncomfortable and that you've had enough, it could well be that your set-up is the cause.

If your cycling is spoiled by pains in your hands, wrists, arms, neck, back, undercarriage, hips, knees, ankles or feet, then you would almost definitely benefit from a fitting.

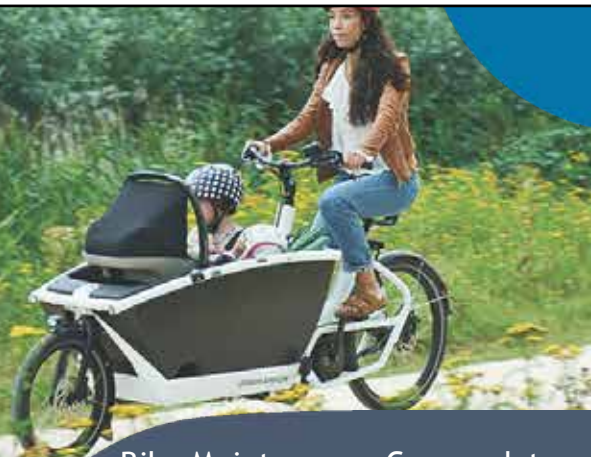
If your quads burn when you're riding uphill or if you're nervous descending fast or riding close to others in a group, your set-up could be preventing you from finding a solution.

► For more information on bike fitting visit perfectcondition.co.uk

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IN FITNESS AND GOOD HEALTH

How can we stay fit and injury-free for cycling?
Roxanne De Beaux asked her sports therapist, Craig Hardingham, for some tips to keep everyone pedalling.

'The best thing to keep us conditioned for cycling is to be consistent with the activity. Little trips add up our weekly mileage and keep us going.'

Tell us about your background and qualifications

I'm Craig and I'm the owner of Injury Active Clinic. It's a sports injury and wellbeing clinic based in Cambridge, where I've spent 23 of my 33 years. I grew up close to the city centre so riding my bike was always the best way to travel around. Even when I ventured out to Hertfordshire to study Sports Therapy for three years, cycling was my preferred way to get around.

What is the best thing to do to make sure our bodies are in good condition to keep on cycling into advanced years?

The great thing about cycling is that it is very low on impact which serves us very well as we age. Naturally the body will show degenerative changes the older we get and sometimes these can lead to problems. However, cycling is a great way to continue exercising. The best thing to keep us conditioned for this is to be consistent with the activity. Getting back into your daily commute to work after six months of no cycling can be tricky. Try and make good decisions. Instead of driving to the shops, can you use your bike? It's these little trips that also add up our weekly mileage and keep us going.

What kind of injuries do you see that have been caused by or affect people's ability to cycle?

Often, it's cycling I prescribe to my clients who are injured. As mentioned before, it's a low-impact exercise which can keep people exercising whilst an injury heals. However, we can't always get away with cycling. A lot of knee injuries stop people cycling because of the nature of the activity. The power to move the bike is driven predominantly through the hips and the knees. If we can't load the knee then cycling can be tricky.

What should we do to prevent injury?

I could provide a lot of answers here. Good sleep, resistance training, low stress, track your training load etc. But it's all on an individual basis. For the average person cycling to and from work: be consistent. This can help with avoiding spikes in load. It's the spikes in load that can cause our most common problem: tendon pain.

What exercises do you recommend to keep us in good shape for cycling?

As cycling is predominantly lower limb, it makes sense to get stronger in our legs and increasing the soft tissue's ability to tolerate load. Lunges (see picture) would be a great exercise with a fantastic carry-over to squatting. Building up from body weight lunges to weighted lunges would probably improve your muscular endurance and resilience so you can cycle faster, for longer and with less chance of injury.

Any other tips for a long, happy and comfortable life of cycling?

Have your bike set-up checked. It's important to make sure this is correct to help avoid injury too. Finally as mentioned above, I always recommend strength training. This improves soft tissue health, increases bone density and makes you more resilient.

CYCLING APPS & TECH

Route-finding



CycleStreets

Description: Born from a Cambridge-only journey planner and photomap launched by Camcycle in 2006, CycleStreets is now an extensive cycle route planner using the OpenStreetMap data. It can route journeys to suit a range of cyclists from beginner through regular commuter to enthusiast, finding faster or quieter routes as preferred. It can also take hills into account, looking for the descents and avoiding ascents where possible, balancing them against the available road types. The Photomap lets you view and submit photos of routes around the UK, including examples of good practice or infrastructure problems.

Platform: Website cyclestreets.net, and iOS / Android apps

Price: Free

Komoot

Description: While you can use Google Maps for navigating on bike rides, you can find it wanting to take you down muddy bridleways when you're on slick tyres. Komoot, however, shows you the surface types and elevation of your route so you can plan road, mountain, touring or gravel bike rides to suit you. Enter start and end points for your journey, and it will tell you the difficulty, elevation changes, fitness required and the type of road surfaces you'll encounter on it. You'll get turn-by-turn navigation tailored for bike journeys, rather than cars. You can find and share routes, and the Komoot community also provides points of interest - peaks, parks, cafés and so on that are worth a visit.

Platform: iOS / Android

Price: First region is free when you sign-up; additional regions £8.99 each; worldwide coverage is £29.99.

Map my ride

Description: This combines data tracking of any rides you do with route planning, training plans and live tracking. Real-time audio coaching on GPS-tracked rides is available, with customisable voice announcements for information like pace, distance, and elevation. The route functionality allows you to find nearby places to ride, save your favourite tracks, add new ones, and share with others. Paid-for features include Live Tracking to share real-time location and give loved ones peace of mind.

Platform: iOS / Android

Price: Ad-supported version is free, premium version monthly subscription costs \$5.99 per month.



Viewranger

Description: For those who really want to get out and explore. It has routes for all types of activities, not just cycling, including hiking, running, canoeing, sailing and more. Download routes to your phone to explore with GPS, even if there is no mobile reception. Its Skyline feature uses your smartphone camera and overlays the name of peaks, points of interest or even directional arrows to help you navigate. Maps are included in the app, with premium large-scale maps available for a fee. Routes are created by members of the Viewranger community, some free and some paid, and you can create and share your own.

Platform: iOS / Android

Price: Free to download with basic maps included, premium maps and routes priced individually.

fitness & training

Strava

Description: A bike computer, ride logger, leaderboard and social network rolled into one. By starting Strava before a bike ride, you can record your route and performance stats, and share them with others (although this is not compulsory). The sharing aspect means you can compare your performance along popular stretches of road or trail marked in Strava as Segments. There are Segment Leaderboards so you have extra motivation to get fitter and climb them. Users also share routes so you can always find somewhere new to explore.

Platform: iOS / Android

Price: Free for the app, extra features available for a monthly subscription in Strava Summit.

Cyclemeter

Description: Intended to be a replacement for your cycle computer, Cyclemeter shows and records all kinds of performance data, from speed, time and distance to elevation, heart rate, cadence and power (with sensors). Set up interval training, zones and targets, or even race against yourself and your previous times along a route. Maps, graphs, split intervals, laps, You can also set it up so you can hear your data, or that of your friends and followers on social media, as you're cycling along.

Platform: iOS / Android

Price: Free, with in-app purchases for certain features.

TrainingPeaks

Description: As the name might suggest, this app is very tightly focused on training. It offers personalised training plans created by professionals, as well as direct access to accredited coaches and detailed feedback after every workout. If you're serious about getting fit, and have a goal in mind, such as a 50-mile race, a boost to your power output, or training so you can tackle Land's End to John O'Groats, then this will have something for you.

Platform: iOS / Android

Price: Free version has basic features, full version is approx £7 per month, training plans and coaches are priced individually.

Modern indoor cycle training

Do you want to get serious about cycle training all year round? Perhaps you want to experience mountains, or even just hills, without having to leave Cambridgeshire? If so, you could try indoor cycle training and the current breed of apps that make it more interesting. Fun, even. It may not be cheap to get started, though, as you need the right equipment, both hardware and software.

If you have a gym membership, you may already have access to the right hardware. Modern exercise bikes can be paired with your smartphone. The bikes send performance data as you cycle to an app which can control the resistance of the bike. You can get this ability without a gym membership by buying a smart trainer that connects to your bike and phone, but this is an expensive option. You can use your own bike and some rollers, so long as you have a power meter that can connect to your smartphone.

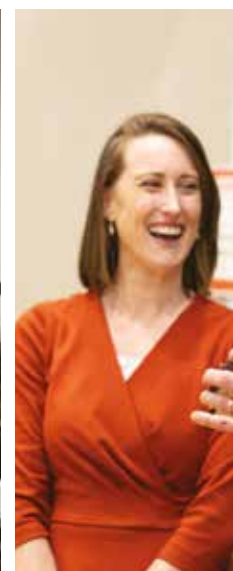


Zwift cycle racing game at our CamcycleTech event last year.

The most popular apps for indoor cycle training include Zwift, TheSufferfest and Rouvy. Zwift's aim is to turn cycle training into a game, allowing you to cycle with riders from all over the world without leaving home. TheSufferfest combines tailored training plans with footage from pro races, storylines and music. Rouvy takes high-quality footage of various well-known bike routes, such as the Stelvio Pass in northern Italy, and augments it with computer graphics, placing you in your own virtual race.

Indoor cycling may initially sound like a lonely pursuit, but these apps have huge communities of all abilities waiting for you to join. It may just be enough to keep you fit all year round.





AGM 2020

CYCLING FOR ALL

Celebrating 25 years of Camcycle and sharing a vision for the future

There was an excellent turnout for the 2020 AGM in the Clay Farm Centre. Dr Rachel Aldred, reader in transport at the University of Westminster, spoke on Cycling for All, our campaigning theme for 2020, looking at which groups in society cycle more and which are deterred from cycling.

Studying mainly census data, she showed that far more men than women cycle in the UK and cycling levels fall with age – the opposite of the Netherlands, where older women are in fact the group most likely to cycle. As for cycling by those with disabilities, levels are higher where there are higher levels of women cycling, and where conditions are better for cycling; in Cambridge 1 in 4 disabled commuters (25.9%) cycle, against 32.5% for the city's population as a whole.

There's a dominant 'deficit approach', i.e. a focus on what people cannot do rather than what they can do and, essentially, the people with the most to gain from cycling are losing out. We need to concentrate on structural barriers such as policy narratives, enforcement and, of course, infrastructure. Planning is distorted by its emphasis on the commute – a journey dominated (in all modes) by men in their twenties, while the school run is dominated by women. These trips are shorter than the average commute, and are often combined with shopping

and other short journeys, making them potentially ideal for cycling, but we need to tackle obstructions, harassment, and the lack of cycle parking, in addition to the cost of cargo bikes, e-bikes and kids' bikes (which need replacing regularly).

Participatory planning is needed, and perhaps equality auditing. Women are more in favour of segregation from traffic than men, and people (of any gender) cycling with children are unwilling to mix with traffic, even in bus lanes.

Language and image are important: often cycling, walking and car-sharing are lumped together as 'alternative ways' (included but marginalised), while references to travel by the disabled see them as pedestrians and public transport users, with little understanding that a cycle can actually be a crucial mobility aid.

Rachel finished with the encouraging example of Royal College Street in London, where protected cycle lanes see higher levels of cycling by women (1 in 3, as against 1 in 4 on parallel routes).

The talk was followed by questions to a panel consisting of Rachel, our trustee Matthew Danish, and Mark Philpotts, known online as the Ranty Highwayman. Asked about councillors' obsession with barriers to stop mopeds using cycleways, it was agreed that a different approach was needed. Referring to planners' emphasis on the commute and how to find gender-

disaggregated data, Rachel said that the census only asked for information on commuting; school travel data should also be made available. She also said that more cycle counters were needed; it's surprising how rarely before and after counts are conducted when new infrastructure is built.

Staff and trustee reports

After a tea-break, the formal AGM was held. The 2019 minutes were approved without objection. The Chair's report from Robin highlighted another successful year for the charity, with vital new policies on financial reserves and major donors written alongside a significant amount of campaigning. The Local Plan consultation will be a key focus for the early part of 2020. Chris's treasurer's report noted substantial growth in income, activity and impact, alongside the need to diversify our income sources for long-term stability. The staff team shared work on Camcycle's future; our vision is for all kinds of people to use all kinds of cycles, also benefiting those who don't cycle themselves. After 25 years of spreading the joy of cycling, we can look forward to an anniversary celebration on 16 June.

► SAVE THE DATE:

The next Camcycle AGM will be held on Saturday 23 January, 2021.



Photos: Lucinda Price Photography

CAMCYCLE AWARDS 2020



Campaigner of the Year: Bev Nicolson

For year-round campaign work online and at local meetings.

Newcomer of the Year: Alan Ackroyd

For throwing himself into every part of our work from campaigning and article-writing to delivery and events.

Volunteer of the Year: Sue Edwards

For tireless work on membership and magazine distribution.

Lifetime Achievement Award: David Earl

For 25 years of dedication to the organisation.

Public Officer of the Year: Mike Davies

For transformative work around the city.

Campaign of the Year: Martin Lucas-Smith

For spreading an inspiring 'Vision for Mill Road'.

Magazine article of the year: Daniel Thomas

For 'New ideas for safer streets'

Magazine photo of the year: Lucinda Price

For the cover of the Summer 2019 issue.

Partner of the year: Tees Law

For their enthusiastic support of CamcycleQuest.

CAMCYCLE TRUSTEES 2020

All those who stood for election in 2020 were elected. We're pleased to welcome two new members to the Board of Trustees – Finlay Knops-Mckim (who joined Camcycle as a member at last year's AGM) and Alec Seaman (far right), who brings a wealth of cycling experience from his professional roles. We welcome back Robin Heydon as Chair, Willa McDonald as Vice-Chair and Chris Howell as Treasurer, plus Tom McKeown, Matthew Danish, Sue Edwards and Martin Lucas-Smith.



Newsletters spread message of cycling health and sustainability



From Newsletter 29 (April – May 2000)

If it's the first time you've seen this Newsletter...

... it may be because it is being distributed as part of a 'Cambridge Sustainable City' initiative.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign has been granted money to enable us both to improve the Newsletter and to distribute it to new locations and organisations in the local area, for a period of one year. The objective is to enable us to spread information about the environmental and health benefits of cycling for those living and working in the city.

Under the scheme this Newsletter will be distributed to secondary schools, tertiary colleges, and public libraries in the area. It will also go to many major employers in the city. We hope the Newsletter will be displayed for all to read in these places. For those who don't currently cycle, we hope the information it contains will encourage some to start, and for those who stick with your cars, we hope it will enable you to see the benefits of having more cyclists and fewer

cars in the city and its environs. For those who already cycle, please feel proud of the bit you are doing to help save the planet. Remember, due to the health benefits of exercise, regular cyclists have a greater life expectancy than non-cyclists. There's also safety in numbers, making Cambridge a safer place in which to cycle.

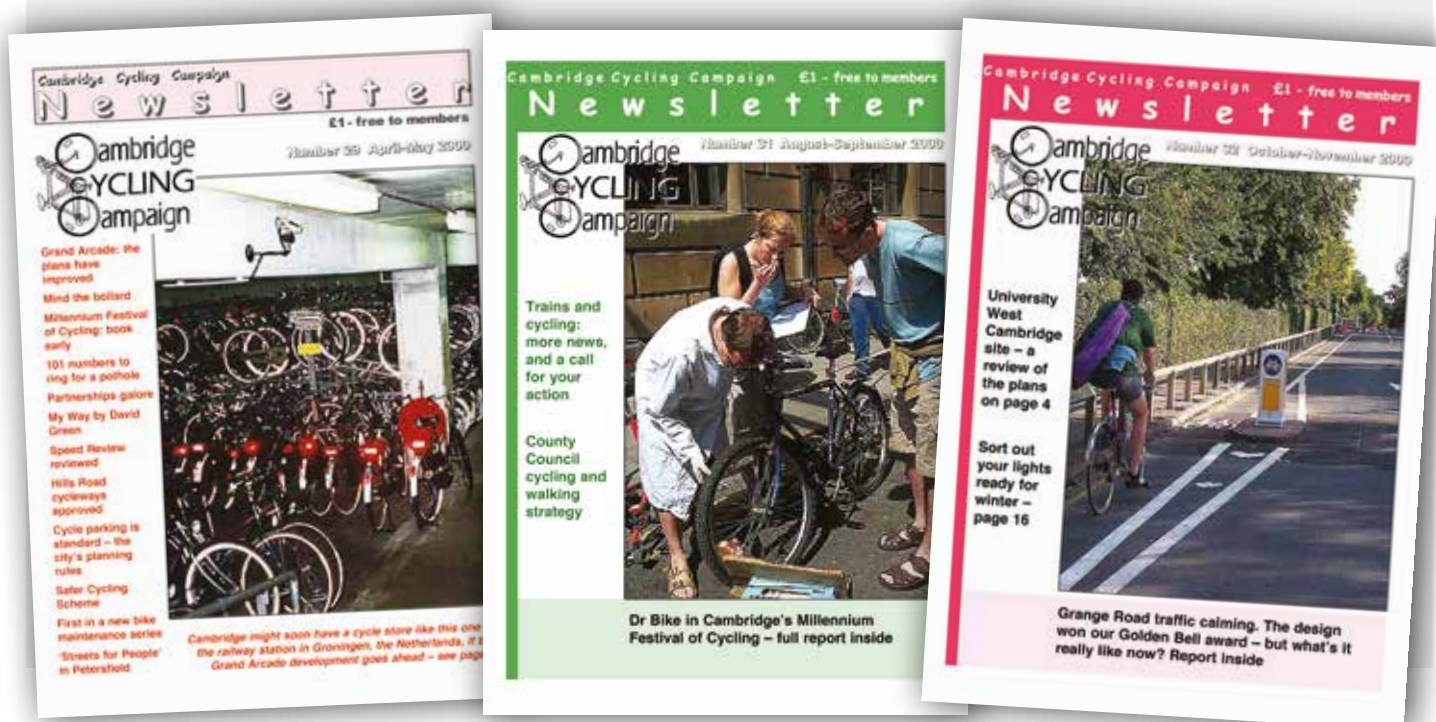
What on earth is a Sustainable City?

At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, world leaders drew up a plan to protect the global environment in the present century and called it 'Agenda 21'. Local Agenda 21 is a part of this global plan, and 'Sustainable City' grants are part of Cambridge's contribution. Cambridge Local Agenda 21 Strategy has five sustainability objectives:



- Increasing social equity: a fairer society
- Participation: a chance for everyone to have their say
- Improving our living space
- Maintaining our surroundings and health
- Conserving natural resources

Cycling and this Newsletter play a part in all these.



Newsletters 29-31 covered topics including cycle parking, the Millennium Festival of Cycling and development in West Cambridge.

Help us promote safe and considerate cycling in Cambridge



Our 'Welcome to Cycling' leaflet is a clear and accessible guide to safe and happy cycling in Cambridge. Order some for your organisation today.

**Video
and pdf
versions also
available**

Find out more at: camcycle.org.uk/welcometocycling

The Reach Ride

Sunday
10 May



Join a free, fun and friendly cycle ride for all ages through scenic countryside to the historic Reach Fair.

Meet Camcycle in Cambridge Market Square from 9am for a 10am departure or join at other points along the route. Led ride returns at 2.30pm. Guided ride from Ely also available.