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# Newsletter

December 2025

As the nights draw in and cycling brings that added sparkle of winter sunshine and chill, welcome to this latest newsletter for members of Cycling UK Bedfordshire. As always it aims to bring you up to date with what is going on in the group. Any members are very welcome on the rides that are planned, and which can be found on the website - just turn up at the advertised start time and venue. If possible, please try and contact the ride leader or a committee member if you intend to come along so that they know who to expect.

Can we take this opportunity to wish members and their families a very merry Christmas and a peaceful 2026, with plenty of new cycling adventures to come!

## New Branch Secretary

After several years of sterling service to the branch, it was with some sadness that we say a big thank you to Terry Goff (pictured left, with Martin Powell and Kam Dhillon) as he steps down from the role of secretary. Chairman Kam Dhillon, reflecting on Terry's long service to the group said, "Terry has been a great Secretary, forward thinking and committed to the role. The fantastic support he has given to the group is really appreciated. Thank you Terry!"



We are pleased to report that Tim Bennett has agreed to take on the role and recognise that as he says, he has "big shoes to fill". We wish Tim all the best and he can be assured that he will receive support from all members of the committee and the group. Martin Powell will continue to help with some aspects of administration.

## 2026 Centenary

As reported last time, 2026 sees the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Bedfordshire CTC. Plans are taking shape for the events to celebrate this with a number of rides such as the circumnavigation of the county, and a tour to visit 100 churches in Bedfordshire progressing well. We expect to have social events and dates will be drawn up and circulated in the New Year.

## Rides programme

The current ride programme can, as always, be found on the website at <https://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/bedfordshire>. The next programme will cover the period from January to March 2026. Here you will find the usual mix of Saturday club rides to a local café and back. These are planned to be around 25 miles and the current programme has seen us visiting a wide range of venues around Bedfordshire and further afield including Castle Ashby, Waresley and Irchester.

In addition there are so-called Classic rides, which tend to be longer both in time and mileage. Normally on a Thursday, once a month, and occasionally on Sundays, these feature a couple of stops at least with the advertised destination being the lunch stop. In November the Thursday classic ride ventured over the border into Milton Keynes with lunch at Woburn Sands Garden Centre.



The ride went out through Marston Moreteyne with a stop at the Marston Beans Café (see below). We then went on to climb up through Millbrook and Steppingley before passing through Woburn deer park on the way to the lunch stop. The return route was through Cranfield and Astwood for around 44 miles in total.

## Café news

Marston Beans. While members have been visiting the Forest Centre at Marston Moreteyne for many years, we were pleased to note that another café has reopened in the village. This is Marston Beans in Garricks Court, part the new housing development just north of the Forest Centre. The new owner, Karen, dedicates the venue to the memory of her late husband, Paul Connolly, who sadly passed away following a brave fight with a brain tumour. Paul was a keen cyclist and completed Ride London twice, raising over £10000 for the Brain Tumour Trust, having previously raised money for other causes close to his heart such as dementia, autism and asthma. It's a lovely spot, the coffee is great, and we wish Karen and her team every success.



Wooden Hill Coffee. Local Fairtrade coffee roasters, Wooden Hill of Ampthill, have long been partners of the Forest of Marston Vale. They have recently opened a new café at Haynes. It can be found in the same complex as Brink, the specialist MTB shop, and the Summerfields Miniature Railway. This is on the A600 at the top of Hammer Hill and just north of the junction for Haynes.

## Cycling in Bedford Town Centre

We are pleased to note that, following the latest consultation, the new Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Bedford Town Centre has removed the ban on “responsible cycling” that had previously prevented riding in the core of the town during the daytime. While the updates to signs were not done in a very timely fashion, nevertheless it is good to be able to pop into a shop (with your bike securely locked outside) rather than having to walk from some distance away.

Coupled with this, the improvements to the cycle lanes at the St Paul's Square and the Harpur Street/Dame Alice Street junction are positive steps for cyclists in the town. There is much more that could be done, it is good to see the council including improved cycling infrastructure in these road schemes. Hopefully the Greyfriars works will continue this trend and help provide a safer route to the station.



## Tim Jarvis

Our congratulations go to Tim Jarvis, for 'completing' the London-Edinburgh-London cycle ride. This did not quite pan out as expected due to exceptionally high winds and poor weather (storm Floris) which forced the ride to be curtailed. Nevertheless, Tim cycled from London to Malton in Yorkshire and back. The support team for the ride (LEL volunteers) worked exceptionally hard to cater for riders who were held at checkpoints for over two days in the hope that the weather would improve. Tim has now relocated to Wiltshire, and we wish him well with his new group and we are sorry to see him move out of our area. He will be greatly missed, and we send our thanks for his contribution to the group.



## Boys on Bicycles, by Bob Hurling

One of our members, Prof. Bob Hurling has published a series of books, one of which reflects on a cycling trip to Hungary that he undertook with friends in 1991. The book is available at <https://mybook.to/BoysonBicycles>.

Bob writes, "Since my student days, way back in 1988, cycling has been more than just a way to get from A to B. Over the years it became the basis for annual adventures, starting with university friends and eventually growing into a wider, resilient network that has somehow kept going now for more than three and a half decades. A first modest outing in Yorkshire already had everything we needed: hills, questionable maps, tired legs, good food, and excellent company. The rest, Ireland, Spain, Scotland, France, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Greece, Belgium, Montenegro and beyond, unfolded from there."

"In the summer of 2025, I stumbled across a dusty old box in the loft from our 1991 tour of Hungary, with faded photos, scribbled route notes, tables recording miles cycled and alcohol consumed, receipts, train tickets, wine labels and crumpled maps. The sort of accidental archive cyclists accumulate without meaning to. Flicking through it brought everything back with unnerving clarity: the landscapes, the smells, the characters, the accidents and most of all the friendship."

"What unfolded in Hungary was part cycling tour, part cultural misunderstanding, and part sitcom. We arrived in Budapest wearing matching homemade shorts and the misplaced confidence of men who thought planning was overrated. Within hours we were chasing a taxi through the city to secure a room, and drinking Pálinka strong enough to clean our chain sets. The journey had trains where the toilets emptied directly onto the tracks, the temporary loss of panniers and dignity, meals where a waiter offered eye contact with a fish before cooking it, and evenings fuelled by Tokaji wine that tasted "like licking a wet stone soaked in lemon juice". There were unforgettable moments: endless vineyards, unexpected kindness from locals, golden September light across the Zemplén hills, and the realisation, somewhere between fatigue and joy, that this was becoming a story we would tell for the rest of our lives.'"



“This rediscovery led to my book, *Boys on Bicycles*. It isn’t about performance cycling, or gear, or athletic achievement. It’s about the camaraderie, the culture clashes, the strange and brilliant people you meet by accident, the quiet joy of moving under your own power, and the feeling that the simple act of pedalling can lift you slightly out of ordinary life. It’s for anyone who knows a bicycle isn’t just transport, it’s a passport, a conversation starter, a time machine, and a way of seeing the world a little more slowly and with far more humour.”

“I hope fellow Bedfordshire cyclists might enjoy it. Maybe it sparks a memory. Maybe it inspires a future ride. Or maybe, like me, it prompts you to rummage in the attic, find an old box, unfold a paper map, and remember that some of the best miles of life are not the fastest ones, but the ones shared.”

***We wish members and their families a very merry Christmas and a peaceful 2026, with plenty of new cycling adventures to come!***

