

# Case Study

**Name:** Cath Rodkoff

**Employed:** LogoBrand

**Location:** Nottingham

**Cycling activity:** Cycles for leisure

This is Cath's story on how the cycle facilities and resources offered in Nottingham through the Nottingham City Councils Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) working with partners such as Ridewise, TravelRight, The Big Wheel and Sustrans has helped Cath and Claudette (her trusty bike) form a forever flourishing relationship and also enabled them to meet their personal goals and aims

Cath wanted to improve fitness, lose weight but also to get out and enjoy the greater outdoors. Cath only started cycling again after 25 years in April 2014 and since then has come a long way in improving not only her cycling competence but also confidence and ability which has taken her further and further afield meeting new people along the way and getting other she meets involved in cycling.

## How long have you been cycling for?

I used to cycle as a child and throughout University however I recently started cycling again in April 2014 after a 25 years gap – people say you never forget how to ride a bike – Well I did! I was terrified of cycling especially the thought of getting onto a road with cars!

## What were your views about cycling before you started?

I was frightened mainly of the on road traffic – there seems to be a lot more traffic on the roads these days, and as a motorist myself I see the treatment cyclists can get on the roads from some car drivers, but I also see some cyclists making dangerous manoeuvres on the roads which can give cyclists a bad reputation.

I wanted to be a competent cyclist on the road that wasn't going to be an obstruction to other road users plus be safe and happy on my bike.

**“I wanted to lose weight, get fit but also get out and about”**

## Why did it take you so long to start cycling?

I had decided that this year (2014) was a year for personal change. I wanted to lose weight, get fit but also get out and about - I am not one to be cooped up– so I joined Slimming World. Then my Managing Director at work sent around an email saying they were taking part in the 'Great Notts Bike Ride' offering to pay our registration fees. So I signed up and had a total of 42 days to buy a bike and become competent before the race started!

So that's what I did, I went off to Halfords and bought a bike and started to train to prepare for the race which involved taking up some free cycle training offered by Ridewise!

## What was your main motivation?

My main motivation was to lose weight and get fit and as I don't like gyms or fitness classes but I love getting outside, so cycling seemed the obvious choice and I must admit since I have been cycling I have found so many new places within Nottingham that I had no idea existed before

**“Being stuck in the car doesn't provide you with an opportunity to see the places in which you live”**

### **Since starting cycling what activities have you taken part in?**

After researching cycling support in Nottingham to my great delight I started to find a wealth of information that was freely available online.

I took part in one-to-one cycle training which was supplied by Ridewise through Nottingham City's LSTF which offers group training session or one to one cycle training sessions. I chose to take up the offer of the one to one cycle training as initially didn't feel confident enough to be in front of others – as I was unsure what my capabilities were after such a long time off the bike.

The training was fantastic! The trainer came to my house and after four hours I had been taught several important lessons, such as how to wear my cycle helmet correctly, how to set off on a cycle and what position on the road I should cycle on (not too close to the kerb). I also became Level 2 Bikeability trained.

**“By the end of the training I felt extremely confident in my cycling abilities and it helped me tremendously to get out on the road on my own”**

I also took a free cycle maintenance class as I was conscious that if I was out on a long ride and a got a puncture or if my chain fell off I would be capable of fixing it and therefore not having to be rescued by anyone or ruining my ride.

I also registered with the free Sky Rides which are took place across Nottingham over the summer. I initially started out on the easy rides to build my confidence and have now progressed to the more steady rides which are a bit longer and on more varied terrain. I

have met lots of people through these rides and have learnt an awful lot from the ride leaders who have a wealth of knowledge on local cycling.

I also took part in Cycle Live this year which again was great fun and a full day of activity plus attended the Car Free Sundays where I joined another led ride.

**“Free cycle training, cycle maintenance classes and the local SkyRides are fabulous for new cyclists!”**

### **Which resource have you found the most useful?**

The resource I have used the most and which I could not leave the house without (other than Claudette) is the Nottingham City Council cycle map – which is free and easily accessible from the tourist centre and other local information points around the city. This is like the cycling bible for me – it shows me all my safe cycle routes, gives me details of cycle routes such as the Big Track and the Erewash Valley trail.

It also helps me understand what all the cycle signage means and what I should be looking out for when on a cycle route.

**“I would recommend everyone getting one of the City Council cycle maps, I love it...it's just so useful!”**

### **How did you find out about the cycling facilities/ activities on offer?**

I am a researcher by trade, so I got online and started researching but it didn't take me long to find out a vast array of information on the

facilities and resources available with the added bonus of a lot of it being free – I was surprised at how much I was eligible for.

I also found out a lot about that was happening through word of mouth – going along to the led rides has opened up a wealth of new information so I feel far better informed and also know the best activities to go for to meet my needs.

**Do you think without the free cycle facilities and activities on offer in Nottingham you would have taken forward cycling as an option?**

No way! I was too frightened of the roads plus I didn't have enough skill to take cycling forward as an option on my own. I had no idea how the gears worked when I first started out, plus didn't understand the safest way to cycle on the roads, therefore the training I received and continue to get through the led rides has given me the confidence to take charge on the road as I know my rights plus I am a stronger rider.

**How often do you cycle now?**

Currently I cycle at least three times a week totalling around 40-50 miles. I also take longer rides at the weekends up to around 20 miles.

I have already managed to get two friends from Slimming World to get a bike and take part in the activities available plus the other day I took my friend's twelve year old daughter out on her bike to get her out and about and she loved it.

**“I really love cycling – I try to get everyone I know to take part”**



**What benefits has cycling brought to your life?**

My fitness has increased a huge amount, not only have I lost over three stone since April through Slimming World and by increasing my activity through cycling – but I can feel how much fitter I am I no longer get out of breath by walking up a flight of stairs!. Plus through a mobile app I can follow and track my ride progress and I can see that since I did the Great Notts Bike Ride my speed has increased and the routes I now take are becoming more challenging – as before I would not have felt fit enough to bike up hills or over ridges but now I feel I can push myself even more.

**What were the main barriers to you not cycling before?**

The main barriers were the road risks – I do not want to become on road cyclists as I just don't enjoy it and it's not what I cycle for. My aim is to find routes to destinations by using off road routes – which are growing by the day!

Another barrier is not having facilities at work to shower as I live 7 miles away from work and I am client facing I can't cycle to work and then sit in the office feeling hot and sweaty –

my organisation is only small plus we are located in a listed building therefore it isn't feasible for my workplace to install these types of facilities – plus there is no storage at my office so have to bring 'Claudette' inside with me which isn't ideal.

I also think that on some of the routes cycle signage could be better – some are really worn and hard to see others are no longer being used so can be confusing.

**You work for Logobrand – they took part in the national cycling to work day – how did that come about? Are there a lot of cyclists in your company?**

My organisation is managed by people who are very physically active therefore they are very proactive in the wellbeing of their staff – so are continuously involved in local activities whether it's the London to Paris bike ride, The Great Notts Ride and marathon running alongside offering a cycle loan scheme which provides an ideal way to buy a bike in manageable payments. They are always asking if the staff would like to take part, which is great as they really support you in getting involved and it is what ultimately got me up and out into a saddle without this initial support I don't think it would have happened.

We took part in the Cycle to work day on 4<sup>th</sup> September and we all worked together to plan routes into the city. My organisation also offers a bike purchase scheme which I would have taken up if I had known more about it at the time – as I feel this is the most affordable way to get a bicycle – as you get the loan from the company and pay it back steadily over time each month.

All the activities are really easy for anyone or organisation to get involved with I would highly recommend it to anyone looking for something to do with their staff.



**What are your aims for the future?**

My aims for the following year are to cycle the Erewash Valley trial cycle route; it's near where I live and is a total of around 30 miles so will be a real challenge for me.

I want to keep enjoying cycling and take part in events such as Cycle Live which I have already joined up to partake in next year. When I did it this year it was a real challenge for me and I was glad when it was over however this year I want to fully enjoy the experience, which I will do if I keep my fitness levels up.

I also want to be able to take part in the challenging Sky Rides next year as currently only at steady plus I may also peruse the Bikeability Training Level 3 which will give me greater confidence on the road.

These projects/activities are being delivered as part of the Nottingham Urban Area's successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme helping to establish Nottingham as an exemplar for integrated sustainable transport. For further details visit [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/LSTFProjects](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/LSTFProjects)



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