

The Big Track

Your guide to Nottingham's waterside car free route



the big wheel
turning transport around
www.thebigwheel.org.uk

The Big Track



National Cycle Network 6 (NCN6)

- ① Nottingham Canal Wharfs
- ② Trent Bridge & Hethbeth Bridge
- ③ Embankment
- ④ Wilford Toll Bridge
- ⑤ Wilford Church
- ⑥ Clifton Hall
- ⑦ Boots
- ⑧ Nottingham Castle

	Big Track
	Roads/footpaths
	Tram
	Train
	River
	Canal
	Parks
	Pub
	Cafe
	Mile markers (from Trent bridge)
	Ramped access
	Non-ramped access
	Cycle parking
	Car parking

Scale 2 miles (approx)



Welcome to The Big Track



Ten miles of pure walking and cycling pleasure...

You can use the Big Track to get around the city on foot or by bike. It goes all the way from Trent Bridge to Beeston Lock, with the city centre in between, so you can pop up at all sorts of places, like the football clubs and cricket ground, the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham Train Station or Castle Marina.

If you want to de-stress - or maybe lose a few pesky pounds - The Big Track runs past loads of workplaces and is a great way of getting to the office. Or if you just fancy a saunter for a pint or a cuppa, you're definitely on the right track. The Big Track brings some big benefits - making getting fit and feeling good really simple - and, like the best things in life, it's free.

But beware - the Big Track might not just change the way you get around -

it could also change your life! The Big Track will help you unwind and go with the flow. You might also start to appreciate the little things in life - like spotting a heron, chatting to a walker or just enjoying the great outdoors.

If you've used the Big Track before, there have been some improvements to the track itself - see page 30 for details of what's new. We've tried to make the map easy to use, with exit and entrance points marked on the main and smaller maps, along with links to the National Cycle Network's Route 6.

However you use the Big Track - for getting to work, to the shops, or just for a leisurely weekend stroll - you'll be making the most of what's on your doorstep, getting some exercise and doing your bit for the environment by leaving the car at home.

So what are you waiting for?



Your body, Your transport system

You're in charge of the world's best transport system - your body. It doesn't cost anything to get you from A to B and the more you use it, the better it will be.

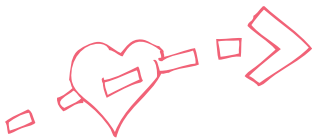
We all look and feel better when we're moving a bit of muscle. The heart is the most important muscle in the human body and it needs exercise so that it can pump blood effectively with each beat. Around a third of people say they would walk more if there were better facilities - and they don't come much better than this. With 7 out of 10 of us not getting enough exercise and nearly half of us overweight the Big Track offers the perfect solution - a ten mile waterside gym right on your doorstep!

Believe it or not, a quarter of all our trips are one mile or less, which for most people can easily be covered on foot. In addition, three quarters of all personal journeys are less than five miles - just half an hour by bike. Those thirty minutes could hardly be better spent. Just half an hour's exercise, five times a week, can

dramatically lower your chances of heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer. And it's good for your brain too, as exercise reduces stress and gives you more energy.

There are other ways that the Big Track could tip the scales in your favour. If you're 60kg, or 9 ½ stones, a brisk 30 minute walk burns up 150 calories and if you're heavier you use up even more.

Cycling gets through lots of calories and if you're worried that the air near roads may be a little stale - don't be. Car drivers breathe in far more traffic fumes than walkers or cyclists - so there's even more reason to get out and about and enjoy the fresh air.





The Big Track time trip the history of the Trent Valley

Written by local historian Chris Matthews

People have always used water to find their way, by boat, on horseback or by foot. The Big Track follows some forgotten routes along the Trent Valley that trace much of Nottingham's history.

The Big Track is a trip through time as well as space. If you start by the canal you can imagine the coal being hauled from boats at Castle Wharf to fuel the swelling town as the Industrial Revolution started. Bleach works, leather tanners and lace factories were built here, all feeding off the water in Tinker's Leen. The canal also borders the Meadows and Eastcroft areas - agricultural names for pasture lands where animals used to graze. This pastoral scene became an industrial landscape after the Midland Counties railway cut through it in 1839.

To the south you can still see the remains of the medieval Hethbeth Bridge - low, narrow and no doubt terrifying to cross when the river ran high. Along the Embankment you enter the later years of Queen Victoria's reign when prosperity brought new pleasures for the middle classes who built wide promenades

for summer strolling - perfect for ladies holding parasols!

Further west, tall reeds and shallow pools remind us of how the Meadows would once have looked. There are more macabre reminders of the river's power, too. Within St Wilfred's churchyard there is an 18th century mortuary, used for bodies washed up by the Trent's fearsome currents.

Following the river, as invaders once did, you reach a Saxon landscape. Around 730 AD a Germanic tribe sailed down the Trent and settled on a high place they called Clifton, or Cliff Farm.

As you turn back towards Nottingham along the canal, local industry becomes global in the 20th century with international modernist architecture at Boots and nearby Players. Coming back to the Castle the canal flows with you - a watercourse which has long served the needs of humans, it was diverted from Lenton by William the Conqueror to defend, equip and drive the mills of his forbidding cliff top fortress.

1

Nottingham canal wharfs, warehouses & Tinkers Leen

Started in 1796, the canal was built to link Nottingham to the coal mines of the Erewash valley to the north and the markets of Grantham to the south. The warehouse of carriers Fellows, Morton and Clayton, now a pub (see Waterfront bars), still has a crane for lifting goods from the boats.

Heading south along London Road, the former lace factory, Hicking Ltd, is now an apartment block. Turneys Quay, just before Trent Bridge, has been turned into apartments too. It was a huge leather dressing works that you could get to by canal, river and road, although only the roadside building still survives. You can see the oldest bridge on the canal next to Iremonger Road.

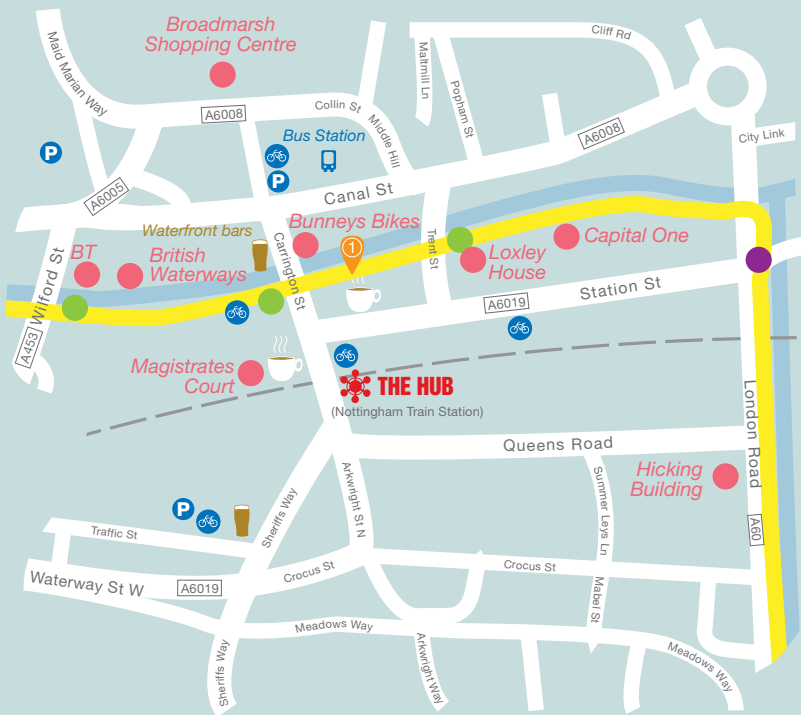


Fellows Morton & Clayton canal carriers depot, now the Canal House pub

“At its time the canal provided a great outlet for the colliery owners. When the railways came they saw an opportunity and that’s why they came to the same point in Nottingham as the canal”

Andy Smart,
Bygones Editor





-  Mile markers (from Trent Bridge)
-  Ramped access
-  Non-ramped access
-  Pub
-  Train
-  Cafe
-  Car Park
-  Cycle parking

2

Trent Bridge & Hethbeth Bridge

The word Trent is an old English word for trespasser, here meaning a river that often flooded its banks and changed course. Hethbeth Bridge was the medieval causeway. From the remnant that survives you can see how low and near the powerful currents it must have been. It had a history of collapsing too - which can't have been reassuring for the kings, queens and their followers who edged across it on horseback or in carriages.

Today's bridge was built in 1877 by the Nottingham Corporation. Between 1924 and 1926 its width was doubled to cope with the growth in traffic.



Victorian Trent Bridge

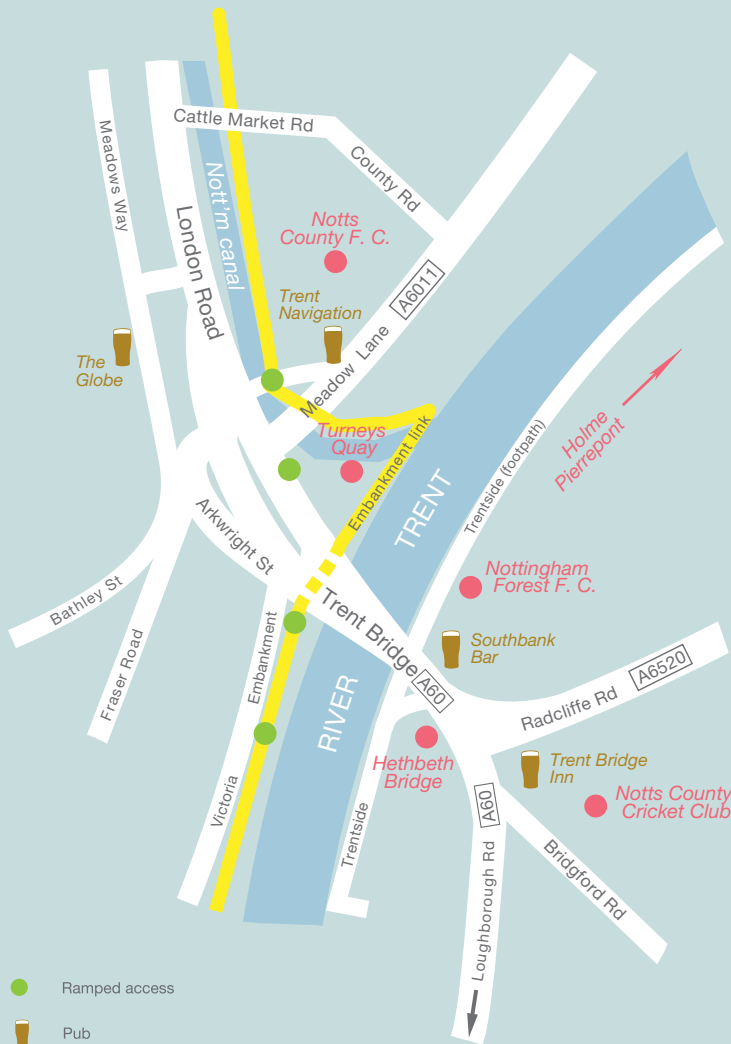
"There didn't used to be a midlands in the Middle Ages, England was divided into "The Royal Forests South of the Trent" and "The Royal Forests North of the Trent".

Adrian Woodhouse
Historian



Medieval Hethbeth Bridge





● Ramped access

🍺 Pub

Following the construction of a new bridge you can now follow the canal right down to the river and directly access Victoria Embankment. When travelling in the other direction along the River, continue under Trent Bridge, carry along next to the River where you will be able to cross the canal and continue towards the City Centre along the canal.

3

Victoria Embankment, Parks & Gardens

Nottingham has a long history of enjoying itself. And the riverbank has long been an area for fun and games. In the Middle Ages it was reputed to be one of the best open spaces in England. In the eighteenth century locals played football, early morning cricket and raced each other on Shrove Tuesday. By the end of the 19th century sport had become regularised. Nottingham's biggest sports clubs - Forest, County and Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, as well as the rowing clubs, are still nearby, which means that Nottingham people continue to come down to the river for their recreation.



The war memorial and gardens.

In 1901 the Victoria Embankment provided a setting for more amusement. The boat clubs, tree-lined roads, war memorial, gardens and suspension bridge are all ideal for promenading - seeing and being seen. The park west of Wilford Grove was bought by the Nottingham Corporation with money raised from the sale of land for the new Midland Station.



The suspension bridge, originally built in 1906 to carry water to Wilford Hill Reservoir.

“The Captain of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club was William Clarke, landlord of the Bell Inn. He married the lady who kept the Trent Bridge Inn in 1837. He then created a fence around the field at the back of the pub and started a cricket ground.”

Peter Wynn Thomas, Nottingham County Cricket Club Head Librarian



4

Wilford Toll Bridge & The Ferry Inn

The bridge was built by the Clifton family in 1870 to pay off their debts. Before that a chain ferry was hauled across the river, carrying goods, animals and people to the meadows, as the seventeenth century Ferry Inn reminds us. Queen's Walk in the Meadows, which goes from the Toll Bridge to Nottingham, is a Victorian promenade designed as a recreation walkway for the working class.

There is a statue of Sir Robert Clifton, a popular Liberal MP during the nineteenth century when Nottingham was famous throughout England for its riotous and radical politics, in the days before the private ballot.



The Ferry Inn

“Big Track is an ideal route to watch wildlife, there’s always something to see. Look out for swans, salmon and Great crested grebe diving for fish.”

Erin McDaid
Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust



Right: Statue of Sir Robert Clifton - Strand magazine called this, "the worst pair of sculptured trousers in England."

From the bridge you can cut across the Big Track using Birdcage Walk which will bring you out by Games Workshop near to the canal, creating a shorter five mile circuit in either direction.



When travelling along Queens Drive away from the Embankment, look out for the ramp to take you back down to the river.

5

St Wilfrid's Church & Wilford Gazebo

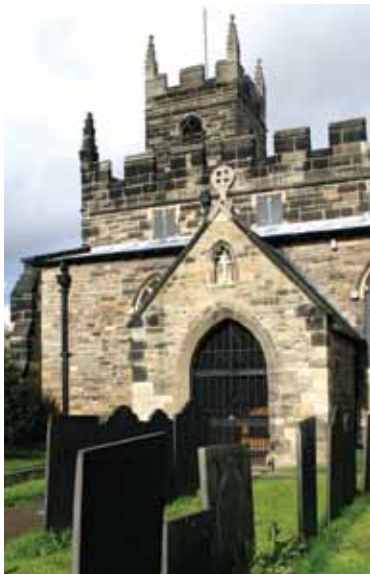
Beneath the shadow of the medieval church of St Wilfrid's are magnificent carved slate headstones and an 18th century gazebo. This curious structure was built to enjoy views of the Trent. Its ground floor was also used as a mortuary for bodies washed up by the river. Wilford's tall grass, pools of water and flat, marshy landscape remind us of how the Meadows would have looked before the land was enclosed in the 1840s. Before the industrial revolution Wilford was a successful agricultural community. You can tell this from the number of old farm buildings, Queen Anne-style rectory and ornate slate headstones.



Eighteenth century Farm buildings







Wilford fields



St Wilfrid's Church

"Years ago we used to wade in the river at Wilford while we were fishing, because the water from the power station was so warm." (not recommended!)

David Turner
Nottingham Anglers Association

-  Mile markers (from Trent Bridge)
-  Ramped access
-  Pub
-  Cycle parking



When heading into town along the river take the short quiet lane at the end of the University sports pitches. Follow this lane and just before a large bend to the left turn right to rejoin the Trent and go under the A52 flyover. This path will take you through to the Queens Drive section of path; at the top of the ramped exit turn right and head towards Victoria Embankment.

When heading out of town towards Beeston Marina along the shared use path (next to Queens Drive) look out for the wooden post indicating the left turn back down to the riverside path. Go down the ramp at this point and follow the path until you go under the A52 flyover. Continue under the flyover but head to your right towards the road; there is a post pointing in this direction. Join the quiet lane and then bear left to rejoin the riverside paths at the University sports pitches.

6

Clifton Hall & St Mary's Church

The river runs in almost a straight line, directed by the cliff on the southern bank. The ancient part of Clifton got its name from the cliffs where the medieval church of St Mary stands today. Next to the church is one of the county's finest 18th century houses, Clifton Hall. There is a small wharf below it designed to take coal to markets in the south of the county.

The landscape becomes flat here, at the centre of the Trent Valley, often

a region of arable farming. Beeston means long grass farm, while the Rylands once housed narrow furlong fields for growing rye.

"Attenborough Nature Centre is a very modern building, made from sustainable wood, steel, solar panels on the roof and a heat pump in the lake - which of course you can't see. Even the paint is non vinyl eco-friendly."

Louise Buckley, Attenborough Nature Centre Manager



Clifton Hall



Boat House Cafe



Beeston Marina



Beeston Train Station

Rylands
To National Cycle Network 6 (NCN6)

Attenborough Nature Centre

Beeston Marina

Beeston Lock

Sports Pitches

River Trent

St Mary's

Clifton Hall



Cycle parking



Parks



Café



Mile markers (from Trent Bridge)



Ramped access



Pub

7

Boots Offices D90

From the canal you can see the Boots complex, housing a company that began life in the late 19th century on Nottingham's Goose Gate. By the 20th century the company had become international, and the style of architecture here reflects its transformation. The Boots D90 offices were designed by the American team of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. The surrounding area showcases other 20th century industries, including the Players Horizon factory.

"This is my favorite time of day by the canal - just as the sun is going down when everybody's gone home from work."

Don Attenborough, Dunkirk Resident and Canal Boat enthusiast.

(below)

*Don Attenborough's Boat and mooring
- decorated from art students' final year
projects from Nottingham Trent University.*



Tree near Boots



Boots D90 - from Bauhaus to Boots

① Mile markers
(from Trent Bridge)

● Ramped access

● Non-ramped access

● Parks





Nottingham Castle & the River Leen

The River Leen was diverted into the Trent in the 11th century. William the Conqueror built a castle high on the sandstone rock to control the region. The new watercourse was an extra defence, a route for supplies - and it powered the Castle's mills.

The Castle became the Duke of Newcastle's property in 1663. He created a mansion reminiscent of stately designs in Italy or Prague, following the fashion created by Grand Tours of Europe after a young nobleman's formal education had ended. The stone is distinctly less glamorous, being largely local sandstone from Trowell and Mansfield.



The Ducal mansion, on the site of Nottingham Castle

In 1831 during the Goose Fair, riots broke out and the people of Nottingham set fire to the Duke's mansion. The Duke, a member of the House of Lords, was influential in defeating the Reform Bill which would have given the vote to poorer people. After the castle's restoration it became England's first municipal museum of art. Castle Boulevard, running alongside the canal, was built after the Extension Act of 1877. This allowed Nottingham to build on land called the King's Meadows, creating tree-lined boulevards - Lenton, Radford and Gregory - encircling the old town.



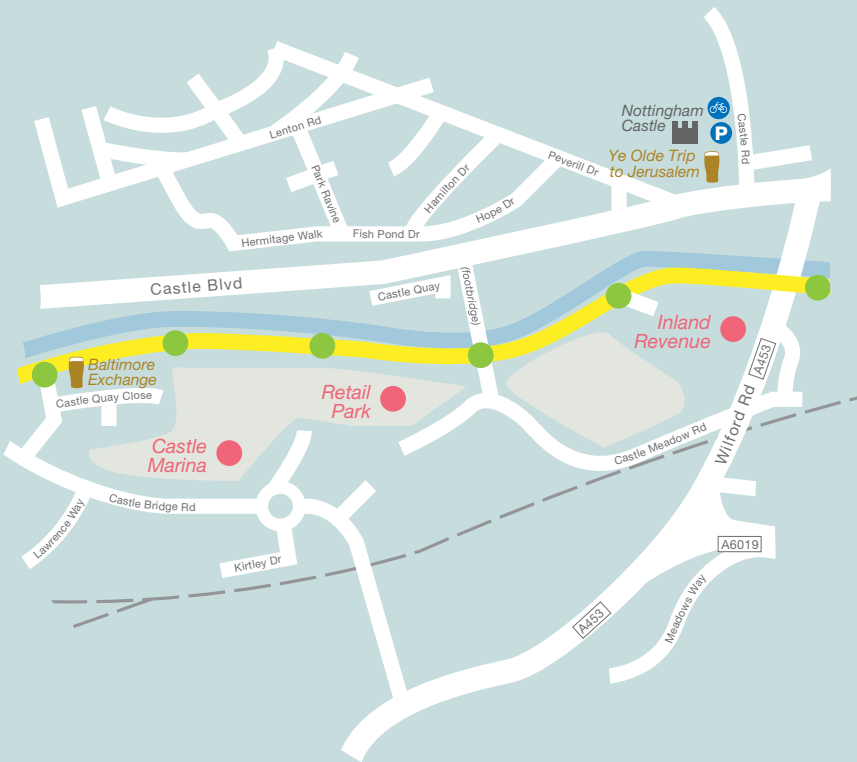
Link to Castle Boulevard




"The Inland Revenue building by Michael Hopkins was ground breaking for Nottingham. It was an eco-friendly futuristic design, which relates to the Castle and encouraged world class architects to come to the city."

Julian Owen, Architect



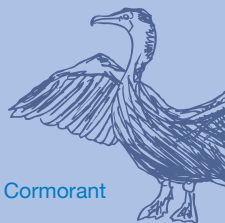
The Inland Revenue Building



- Ramped access
-  Pub
-  Cycle parking
-  Car park

The Really Wild Show

Nottingham's waterways are teeming with wildlife. See what you can spot on your Big Track trip. Then why not get to the Attenborough Nature Centre, just off the Track, to check if you were right.



Cormorant



Moorhen



Red throated diver



Dragonfly



Grey Wagtail



Damselfly



Kingfisher



Stickleback



Brassy minnow



Rudd



Gudgeon



Pike



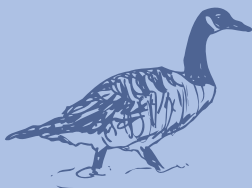
Mute swan



Heron



Goosander



Canada goose



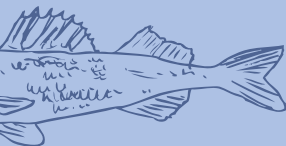
Mallard



Great crested grebe



Goldeneye rintoul



Why walk?

Because walking for 20 minutes uses as much energy as 17 minutes weight training. And it's much, much more fun than pumping iron. You can cover 3-4 miles an hour by walking briskly - and by doing just half of that you'll be getting the recommended daily amount of exercise needed to keep you healthy. Not to mention the fact that walking reduces your blood pressure, strengthens muscles and bones and helps you to lose weight. And that means you'll reduce your chances of getting all sorts of nasty illnesses such as heart disease, osteoporosis and diabetes.

Because it's better for your lungs - if you're sitting in a car you're breathing in up to three times as much pollution as pedestrians.

Because it's going to make you happier. No really, doctors say that walking actually reduces stress levels because it releases lots of feel-good chemicals called endorphins. On top of which, you'll sleep better at night and, as your blood pumps through your body faster, your brain will get more oxygen helping you to think more clearly. So it's not hard to see how walking can help you to cope with stress and to take life's little annoyances in your stride.

Because it keeps you young - walking helps back pain, joint pain, brittle bones and osteoporosis - and by staying active some of the symptoms of ageing can be avoided, or even reversed.

Because you might meet someone you know - or someone you'd like to get to know. A third of all journeys are on foot, so there are a lot of people to bump into.

Because it's simple. Open your door, step out - and off you go. There's a great big open air gym out there and it won't cost you a penny to use it!



Why cycle?

Because regular cyclists stay younger longer - cycling acts like that elusive elixir of youth - giving cyclists the fitness levels of people 10 years younger!

Because it's great for your health, raising your heart rate and helping to protect you against illness and disease. According to government targets, cycling is exactly the type of moderate physical exercise that we should take part in for at least 30 minutes five times a week.

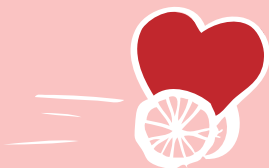
Because you can boost your aerobic fitness by 17% in just six weeks by cycling 4 miles a day - that will take you less than half an hour a day.

Because it's a great stress-buster. Regular exercise helps your body to fight stress hormones and their negative impact. It also lowers your blood pressure, increases your immunity and can even help you to sleep better at night.

Because, unlike a car, you aren't giving off any greenhouse gases, just a big warm glow to the world. Because if you cycle into your mid-30s you're going to add at least an extra two years to your life.

Because your body is going to look better. Yes it is. We promise you. Cycling burns at least 300 calories an hour - a chocolate bar or two glasses of wine - while a 15-minute bike ride to and from work each day burns off the equivalent of 11 pounds of fat per year.

Because you're in good company. There are a billion other bicycles in the world - twice the amount of cars. Trips on the National Cycle Network rose by 15% in 2005 to 232 million journeys, while commuter trips have doubled in recent years.



Big Sound Track

To accompany the The Big Track we've produced an audio tour of the past, present and future of the canal-side Trent Valley region. Presented by Tom Whalley and Chris Matthews, it features history and interviews with people who use the area and is accompanied by a sound track featuring local bands and artists.



It's not only free, but it's really easy to get hold of!

All you need to do to download the Big Sound Track is to go to www.thebigwheel.org.uk and click on the Big Track link. From there click on tracks and download the mp3 file onto your mp3 player or ipod - and off you go with your audio accompaniment to the Big Track!



*In association with NotinNottingham
and Via Vaudeville!*

www.notinnottingham.com
www.viavaudeville.com

Making the most of the Big Track

As you can see on pages 24 and 25, the Big Track is teeming with wildlife and offers a brilliant opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. The other good thing about the Big Track is that it's totally car-free, making it a safe place for walkers and cyclists to enjoy.

During the warmer spring and summer months the Big Track can get quite busy with cyclists and pedestrians taking advantage of the warmer weather and using it to commute into work or for a weekend stroll or cycle. There's enough space on the Big Track for everyone, but observing a few courtesies can make all the difference.

If you're on a bike, slow down and ring your bell to let people know you're there. Or say excuse me when you pass pedestrians or fishermen. If you're walking, why not say a cheery hello as you pass someone else and try not to block the path in order to make room for bikes. After all, in Nottingham we're famed for our friendliness!



Check out our track record

The Big Track is brought to you by the Big Wheel, the campaign to promote Greater Nottingham's transport network. We represent Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, the Greater Nottingham Partnership, and a whole host of companies and organisations with an interest in how we all get around.

There have been some recent improvements to the Big Track. A new secure cycle compound has been built at Nottingham Train Station and the canal bridge at Castle Marina has been upgraded to make it suitable for cycles, pedestrians and wheelchairs. Additionally, improvements at Victoria Embankment mean that there is now a direct link between the canal paths and the embankment paths at Trent Bridge, making navigation of the Big Track at this point much easier.

As you can see, all sorts of organisations have worked together around the Big Track, representing health, the arts and nature, as well as public sector organisations.

The Big Wheel and its partners want to make it easier to get around - by bringing together bus, tram and train routes, together with walking and cycling. And we want to make life healthier, by leaving cars at home whenever we can.

The Big Track runs near to The Hub (Nottingham Train Station). Buses connect with it at the Station, Trent Bridge, and the Park & Ride, too. Check out our journey planners at www.thebigwheel.org.uk

Greater Nottingham has every reason to feel proud of its track record. There are many signs that we are starting to turn transport around. The amount of traffic on our roads has remained steady over the last 5 years, while there are millions more journeys by bus and tram.

But we do need to do more to help people walk and cycle - not just for their own sakes, but for the sake of the planet too. The Big Track is a major walking and cycling route for Greater Nottingham. More will follow.

The Big Track is part of the Trent River Park project - a wider initiative to regenerate the riverside and open it up for everyone to enjoy.

N.B. The waters of the River Trent are highly dangerous with strong currents, and on no account should swimming in them ever be attempted.



the big wheel
turning transport around
www.thebigwheel.org.uk



Find out more:

The Big Wheel

www.thebigwheel.org.uk
www.triptimes.co.uk
www.traveline.org.uk

Health

www.getmovingnottingham.nhs.uk
www.bhf.org.uk

Cycling

www.sustrans.org.uk
www.ctc.org.uk
www.bikeforall.net
www.pedals.org.uk
www.bottombracket.co.uk
www.ridewise.org.uk
www.britishwaterways.co.uk
www.nottsc.gov.uk/bikeride

Walking

Nottingham City Best Foot Forward
christine.adams@nottinghamcity-pct.nhs.uk
www.whi.org.uk
www.thebigwheel.org.uk/walkweek

Nature

www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/nottinghamshire
www.attenboroughnaturecentre.co.uk

For cycle maps of Nottingham please visit
www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/transport_and_streets.htm or contact
Keith Morgan at Nottingham City Council on 0115 915 5054

For cycle maps in the County, including West Bridgford and Beeston
email urban.cycling@nottsc.gov.uk,
phone 08449 808080, Minicom 01623 434 993