

**BEN HAMILTON-BAILLIE**  
**LOEB FELLOW 2001**  
**DIRECTOR**  
**HAMILTON-BAILLIE ASSOCIATES, LTD.**  
**BRISTOL, UNITED KINGDOM**

When Ben and his fellow incoming class of Loeb Fellows visited Harvard in spring 2001 for orientation to the fellowship, it seemed too good to be true. His fellowship classmate William McFarland of Atlanta observed there had to be some downside to it all. The response from the outgoing Loeb was simple; the downside is that at the end of the year you go back to real life. Ben says of his Loeb year, "It was a fantastic magical time; incredibly short but incredibly rich in experiences that have shaped the rest of my professional life"

Trained as an architect, Ben had been working intensely for years on Britain's ambitious National Bicycle Network. He was ready to get a handle on what could be next for him and wanted the chance to test some ideas about urban design and traffic that he frankly thought might be a little crazy. The Loeb Fellowship turned out to be just what he needed.

Ben found that one of the best things about the Loeb experience was the ability to explore ideas with some of the best minds in any field of study. Ben had observed but couldn't explain why something qualitatively different happens with drivers and pedestrians when traffic speeds increase above about 20 mph. So Ben contacted E. O. Wilson. "A lovely conversation with him shed some light on this." says Ben.

"Humans evolved as hunters with a top running speed of about 20 mph and that still impacts our behavior. It explains all sorts of things with implications for street design and traffic congestion."

Making presentations and teaching some classes at MIT, the Kennedy School of Government and the Graduate School of Design helped Ben discover a talent for writing as well as public speaking. "It's essentially how I make my living today," he says, "I didn't know I could do that." And the confidence gained by working through his ideas about street design enabled him to launch a successful international consulting firm at the conclusion of the Fellowship.

Ben describes the Loeb Fellowship as a wonderful personal and professional punctuation point for him, his wife Jen and their two children. "We think about our lives in two parts, before the Loeb Fellowship and after it," he says, "It was an absolutely incredible experience."



*"While at Harvard I discovered the intellectual framework behind the ideas on urban design and traffic that I now use to help communities, developers, and governments explore better alternatives for shared space. I'd never have done that without the Loeb Fellowship."*