



Tower Hamlets London Cycling Campaign

February 2003

for large print tel 8880 6873

We've gone monthly

If you are a London Cycling Campaign member, you will receive *East London Cycling (ELC)* bi-monthly with *London Cyclist* magazine. But *ELC* is now produced every month. To subscribe to the 'extras' (or all the newsletters if you're not a member of Tower Hamlets LCC), send a cheque/PO for £ 5 (or more!) payable to 'Tower Hamlets LCC' to **Alix Stredwick, 109 B. Roman Rd, E2 0QN**. Email alix@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk if you would like it by email (PDF) ...thanks..!

'BONKERS'!

Cllr Michael Keith describes Cable Street markings

by Owen Pearson

This description occurred when I made a deputation to the Council Cabinet on 8th January, as a result of the Wheelers Cable Street cycle track petition.

I outlined the problems we have with the scheme, reiterating our demand for the removal of give-way signs on the cycle track, for the give-way signs for the side roads to be moved back behind the cycle track, and installation of effective signage to make it clear to all traffic that the cycle track has priority.

In case you don't know, once you've made a deputation you take no further part in the meeting

(this was my first Cabinet experience so I didn't know, either). The council employee that the petition relates to - in our case Margaret Cooper, Head of Traffic & Transportation - also submits a report to the Cabinet. It seems that for anything further to happen you then rely on a Cabinet councillor to pick up the debate.

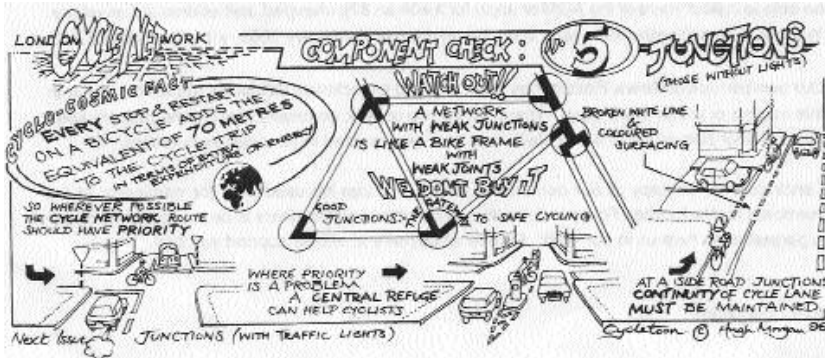
Thankfully, Cllr Michael Keith (Shadwell ward) did just this and basically supported our view that the current scheme made little sense; or, as he phrased: it's "bonkers".

Cllr Denise Jones (St Katharine's and

Wapping ward and vice-chair of the Cabinet) also chipped in with some support. The Cabinet agreed that the council's Traffic & Transportation unit must produce further analysis of the scheme.

So, we've ensured that this issue is still 'live'. The council can't just accept the petition and do nothing about it. But whether Cable Street is modified in the way we want it is still to be decided.

However, changes to traffic regulations are now in force, and include letting cycle tracks have priority over side roads. See



www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2002-/20023113.htm#25 So now the council has no legal reason why our wishes for Cable Street cannot be granted.

Finally, I reminded the council that the give-way signs should never have been placed in front of the car wash entrance. Margaret Cooper confirmed to the Cabinet that they would be "removed forthwith". Any of you Cable St riders please let us know when this piece of highway design nonsense is removed.

Owen is Co-ordinator of the Wheelers

Buy our T-shirt!



Our fundraising T-shirt celebrating the fact that cyclists don't have to pay the congestion charge is now on sale. If you are a Tower Hamlets LCC member you should find an order form with your mailed copy of *London Cyclist*, in which the T-shirt is also featured (see 'news'). You can also order at

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/cc-tshirt/ Please buy one - or more! We're raising money for various 'bums on bikes' projects, and the T-shirts will remind congestion-charged motorists of the free cycling option. Long-sleeved and 'skinny fit' ladies Ts are available (also suitable for kids). If you'd like to hand round more order forms to friends etc please contact Alix (all contacts for Wheelers people are on the back page) **Many thanks!**

Car-free wedding

Wheelers Alex and Tom Brenan got married last month and made every effort not to use a car - they even decided not to use a white tandem during the festivities because a van would be needed to get it there (you're not allowed to take tandems on UK train services). So a local horse and carriage was hired!

The happy couple planned to leave the reception on their own bikes, cycling to the train station, heading off for a cycling honeymoon (oh yes). Horror dawned when they realised that the train company had double-booked the bike spaces but after a begging letter and a Christmas card, the guard let them on. Phew!



Congratulations to Alex and Tom

Please help! As you will see on the Campaigns page, the group needs volunteers. See inside for details.

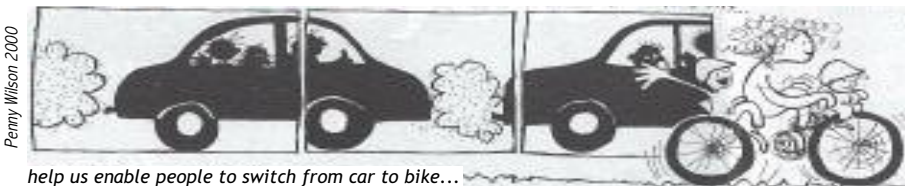
www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

Campaigns

We need you!

The Wheelers are launching a campaign to persuade congestion-charged motorists in Tower Hamlets to switch to cycling. But we need more volunteers to help us do this and a similar project we aim to start in the summer. We're raising some money but PEOPLE are our best resource! Could you be a 'buddy' to a novice cyclist? This would involve accompanying them on a journey, to help build confidence and perhaps devise a quiet route. You would *not* be teaching them, or have responsibility for their safety. You may be able to provide advice, e.g. how to mend a puncture, but you can do as little or as much as you like. We are also adding a 'getting started cycling' section to our website, and will be distributing specially-made postcards to advertise our ability to help new cyclists, plus the revived Wheelers workshop (see top of back page).

If you can help with any of these activities, please contact Alix (see back page).



Penny Wilson 2000

One-way trouble for cyclists?

Thank you to everyone who helped with the campaign before Christmas to object to one-way proposals for various streets in Tower Hamlets, which would not provide a contra-flow for cyclists.

In November, council paper *East End Life* announced proposals to change road layout on numerous back streets, to coincide with the start of congestion charging on 17th February. This is because the fear is that since Tower Hamlets is on the edge of the congestion charging zone, motorists travelling from the east side of London to the west will try to circumnavigate the boundary by taking back-street routes and causing congestion there. This "simply will not do"; partly because of the blight it will cause to residents, and partly because people will be fed up with Mayor Ken for transferring congestion from the centre of town to their front doors - and presumably not vote for him again.

"I am on the case and a solution is being sought"
John Biggs, A.M.

So, the traffic authority for London, Transport for London (TfL), has provided funds for the boroughs bordering the boundary to put in traffic-calming 'complementary measures'. In December's *East London Cycling* we reported that in one of these schemes, *Zone 11 Whitechapel (East)*, Stepney Way, an important cycle route, would become one-way going east, with no contra-flow provision for cyclists.

At the November Wheelers meeting the group decided to launch a campaign to stop this. After Owen's sample letter to the council and 'plea for action' appeared in the December newsletter, along with reminders to the email group (see back page on how to join), more than ten Wheelers wrote in to the Council. John Biggs, East London and the City assembly member (A.M.) at the Greater London Authority, replied to me (your editor) saying "I do understand your valid concerns, and I assure you that I am on the case and that a solution is being sought."

We also did a cycle count along Stepney Way, which confirmed that currently most of the cycle traffic would be adversely affected by the one-way status. The results are on the website; see www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/campaigns/ and the link to the count data is near the top of the page.

In *Zone 26, Old Bethnal Green (West)*, Columbia Road, a signposted cycle route, would become one-way going east between Ravenscroft Street and Ezra Street; and Gosset Street, an LCC advisory route, would become one-way going east between Turin Street and Barnet Grove. A call to action was also made for this zone, through the email group and inserts to the December newsletter when it was handed out to passing cyclists (see opposite page for when you can help with future hand-outs).

We don't know at this point what the outcome of our responses to the consultation process will be, but watch this space (and join the email group for quicker information!).

This whole escapade shows the lack of communication between different parts of the council's Traffic & Transportation unit. While 'the people downstairs' are busy making life difficult for cyclists - unintentionally, but thoughtlessly - the 'people upstairs' like our cycling officer Lyndal Peters, are busy putting together Cycle Strategies and so on, encouraging more people to cycle.

This new Strategy can be viewed at www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/store/CycleStrategyFinal030108.pdf Those who enjoy statistics will appreciate the results of the cycling views survey that the council carried out last year, stated in the appendix. The main issues from those that responded (82% of which don't cycle) are "more cycle lanes" and "enforcement of other road users".

Clearly, inconveniencing cyclists by making streets one-way and not providing a cycling contra-flow, will *not* encourage this 82%!

Pot-hole reporter



Ian David Baker

You can now report pot-holes and other road defects via the Wheelers website

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/potholes/

A database of complaints is being created and Owen our webmaster will regularly pass on information to the relevant pot-hole person at the council.

Aldgate 2-way?

Following the success of Hackney LCC (and others) campaigning for two-way traffic in the Shoreditch triangle, and the results of our cycle count data at Aldgate gyratory, Owen is writing to TfL to ask how they are going to make Aldgate more bicycle-friendly, and ultimately press for the return to two-way traffic. And we're doing another cycle count at Aldgate once congestion charging has started. We haven't specified a date yet but contact Colin if in principle you'd like to help (contacts on back page).

Sharp-eyes wanted

Please let Alix know if you can help look through local papers after she sends out news releases about our events and campaigns, to see if they cover the story. The Wheelers e-group is notified of the releases; see back page on how to join. (Ed: I thought the pot-hole stunt did not get coverage but in fact it did. Many thanks to Marg for saving the *East London Advertiser* clipping. Made it all worthwhile!)

Icy cycle paths



Wheeler Colin Waters has written on behalf of the group to our cycling officer, querying why main cycle routes were not gritted as main roads were during the recent cold snap, which saw hazardous frozen paths like the one above.

A fine constitution

The Wheelers now has a proper Constitution and Equality of Opportunity statement. These are a good thing to have in their own right, and they are often necessary in order to apply to grant-giving organisations. We are applying to the 'Lotto' Awards for All scheme and other sources for our 'bums on bikes' projects. The Constitution and Equality of Opportunity statements help shape our activities to ensure that we are an inclusive and properly-run group. Follow the links from 'Introduction' to view them on the website.

Rides, Socials & Events

Feedback...

To Hell in a Hand Cart

January ride led by Gary Cummins. Report by Owen Pearson



Refuelling on some home-made cake. Pic: Owen

A great ride on Saturday 11th January where we rode in the sunshine along the Sustran's Thames estuary route finishing up at that shopping hell/paradise otherwise known as Bluewater.

Gary, Ken, Alix and myself set off along the north of the Thames, crossing at the Woolwich foot tunnel. A few miles later I got the only puncture of the day. Soon we were at Erith where we stopped for a late breakfast.

Onwards along the estuary with great views in the sunshine. Some stretches of the track still had plenty of ice on them which required careful concentration, especially by me; 23mm tyres weren't



the steepest gradient on the Thames (pic: Alix)

ideal for the conditions! By the time we got to Dartford we had to push our bikes on the cycle route as there was still loads of snow and ice everywhere except on the main roads. But after a bit of slipping around we finally made it. It is safe to say we were in the minority arriving there by bike!

We got something to eat and then wandered around a bit with Alix fully justifying our trip

by making some purchases. It was gone three by then - the icy stretches had meant our outward journey took much longer than anticipated - and so we all headed off to Dartford and jumped on the train back. About 30 miles in total.

more pictures of this and other rides at www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/rides/



Pic: Owen

New Year's meal

Snapshots from the email group: "I think I can safely say a splendid time was had by all last night (22nd Jan at Meds, Burdett Road). Great venue, great organisation and great company. Also, Gary finally got to put us through one of his cycling quizzes - it's definitely the first time I can attribute a sore head to being asked difficult questions the night before!" -Owen Pearson "Yeah, we had a great time too. But what was that stuff that was offered (and drunk!) in the tea cups? That's what we blame our sore heads on!" -Mandy and Trevor "It was an excellent evening. I thoroughly enjoyed being in such pleasant company." -Martin Harris See the back page for how to join the email group.



Alix and Mandy at Meds. Pic: Owen. (Ed: sorry, another pic of me! I'm trying to balance male and female appearances in the newsletter.)

Longer rides & trips away

CTC holidays

CTC - the national UK cyclists organisation - has launched its 2003 cycling holidays list at www.ctc.org.uk

Wheeler's rides organiser Gary says: "I have been on loads of these tours and can highly recommend them. Range of prices, all sorts of places. Take a look."

Mountain biking

Contact Mark Butland (see back page) if you would be interested in another mountain bike trip like the Derbyshire one in 2002.

Birthdays!

To celebrate the CTC's 125th anniversary and the LCC's 25th anniversary, Gary will organise a special 125 mile ride, with drop-out points at 25 miles, 125 km and 125 miles. This should cater for all abilities!

Watch out in future newsletters and the email group for date confirmation of this ride (possibly May 4) and the mountain biking weekend, which your editor is personally looking forward to already (see pics at 'Diary' section of website).

Future stuff... join in!

Rides

All rides stated here start from the top of the Green Bridge, in Mile End Park, near Mile End tube station (it's the yellow bridge spanning Mile End Road where it meets with Burdett Road). None of the rides are a race and indeed several rides over the coming months are easy, family-friendly and not too far. Unless stated, they cost nothing to join, and you don't need to book with the ride leader unless stated; do just turn up on the day. We usually stop at a cafe or pub for lunch but you can bring your own food. In any case do bring snacks to 're-fuel', and plenty of fluids. It helps if you bring a spare inner tube in case of puncture but don't worry - others are bound to bring repair kits and expertise! If the ride involves a train journey, don't forget your railcard...

Sat 8 February

Fenland, Fitzwilliam and Footlights

60 miles to Cambridge, with plenty of drop-out points after 40 miles where you could either take the train back to London, or on to Cambridge to meet the rest of the cycling group for a night on the town - in which case we could book accommodation at Cambridge Youth Hostel (£12.50 for YHA members), with ride or train back on Sun. Please contact Gary ASAP if you are interested in the idea of staying over in Cambridge. Meet 8:45am for a prompt 9am start from the top of the Green Bridge.

Sat 8 March

If you go down to the woods today...

Hybrid/mountain bike easy ride on muddy trails to Epping Forest. 35 mile round-trip but on the way back you can opt for taking your bike on the train/tube, cutting riding distance to under 20 miles. Meet 9:30am on top of the Green Bridge. Gary is leading.

Sat 22 March

Bikes, Beefeaters and Battlements

Easy family-friendly slow ride through Tower Hamlets' back streets and cycle routes to the Tower of London. Take advantage of the current special offer entry price of only £1!

you have a Tower Hamlets library card, leisure pass or Idea Store card (usual price: £11.50; offer ends 31st March). Bring proof of your residential address in Tower Hamlets, e.g. gas bill or possibly even LCC membership card! Contact ride leader Alix if you have any queries. Hopefully Rick Sure's Rickshaws and Newham LCC's trailer sound system will join in. You are especially welcome if you have an unusual bike! Take a look at www.hrp.org.uk and www.tower-of-london.com to get you in the mood for a bit of royal history. Meet 11am on top of the Green Bridge. Back by 4pm.

Sat 12 April

Easter Treasure Hunt on Wheels

Join in Gary's fun hunt around Tower Hamlets following clues for the hidden treasure, donated by the wonderful Bicycle Magic boys in Whitechapel. Each stage rewards participants with chocolate egg goodies. Play in teams of four, with each player donating £2 entry fee to the Wheelers; either arrange with your clever mates before the day or turn up and we'll allocate you to a team. Ends between 4pm and 5pm in a family-friendly pub. Meet 10am on top of the Green Bridge.

Socials

Regular pub nights are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. There will be an obvious Wheeler at the pub by 9pm. Additionally, after meetings (see below), many of us head to The Grapes pub (Narrow Street) for 9pm, so do join us there if you're not going to the meeting. **26 February** The Crown, corner of Grove Road & Old Ford Road E3 **26 March** The Half Moon, Mile End Road E1 (near Globe Road) **23 April** The Coborn Arms, Coborn Road, E3

Events

Sat 8 February 'Give or Take' community event at Malmesbury School, Coburn Rd, Bow E3 from 12-3pm. If any Wheelers would like to come along to help Waltham Forest LCC provide a bike repair service and give out cycling info please let Owen know ASAP. 'Give or Take' is in effect a glorified jumble sale where anyone can take in or bring back stuff, but for free. Many of the bikes at the last event simply had flat tyres or punctures and Waltham Forest LCC members were able to show people (mainly children) what to do to make them rideable.

March 14-16 Outdoor Show at the NEC in Birmingham. Tickets are £10. If you would like to organise a Wheelers trip there, join the email group (see foot of back page) and send a message round to gauge interest.

Meetings

Take part in shaping our activities and organising our campaigns. Second Wednesday of the month, 7pm-8:30pm, at Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road (by Newell St) E14 7HA (few metres off Route 1 of the National Cycle Network). Afterwards, many go to The Grapes pub for 9pm, on adjacent Narrow Street. Check the website or contact Owen in case venues/dates change.

12 February; 12 March - incl. camping talk; 9 April - AGM

Newsletter hand-outs

Help inform local cyclists about our existence! Contact Alix if you can help at some point between 7:45am and 9:30am **Thurs 6 February, Thurs 6 March or Thurs 3 April**. Afterwards we go to a cafe like the famous E. Pellicci's on Bethnal Green Road or someone's house for a rewarding breakfast.

Editor's rant

Remember that lovely cold snap a few weeks ago when Tower Hamlets was covered in a blanket of snow? Now, you'd think this would be an ideal time to get the four-wheel drive out the garage, wouldn't you? But oh no: we couldn't risk getting it mucky with slush, now could we. The roads were spookily yet wonderfully quiet, and not a 4WD to be seen. A couple of Micras aquaplaning at 3mph while their occupants giggled nervously, but no Land Rovers. I wonder why people buy them, then? Certainly not to help get their elderly relatives out and about. One would have to indulge in a spot of Granny-flinging to make *that* giant leap to the passenger seat. And the fuel consumption! No wonder they complain about the cost of petrol, with gaz-guzzlers like that. The mind boggles.



Do you live on a farm? - I don't think so. A very clean 4WD, complete with pointless bull-bar, crosses the very urban Cambridge Heath Road / Bethnal Green Road junction (during warmer months)

Wheelers workshop

Yes, the famous self-help workshop is being revived! At the January Wheelers meeting, a welcome new face, Saul Albert, outlined the plans of his and other users of Limehouse Town Hall to set up a cycle maintenance workshop. After a chance meeting with Peter Steele, co-ordinator of the original Wheelers workshop, Saul is able to obtain tools and equipment from him. Six members of the Limehouse Town Hall consortium have volunteered to act as workshop managers.

Would you like to get involved? The Wheelers have provisional funding from the council through our cycling officer and we're hoping to secure more funds through the Department for Transport's second 'pot' of money now available for cycling projects in the UK. Contact Owen if you are interested in regularly getting your hands dirty!

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020 7383 4334

187 Whitechapel Road
Whitechapel
London
E1 1DN
020 7375 2993

www.bicyclemagic.com
Online News Products and Advice.

Useful info

Bike maintenance classes

Tower Hamlets Adult Education classes at St Matthais Centre, Bullivant Street, E14 0ER. £2.55 or FREE if you can show proof of receiving benefit. Bring tools if you can, and a notepad. Tel 7613 1135 to book.

Sat 8 Feb Bicycle Maintenance 10am-1pm ref TCB0882

Sun 9 March Bicycle Maintenance for the Family

Sat 5 April Bicycle Maintenance 10am-1pm ref TCB0881

London dirt jumping

Construction has started on London's first dirt park, in Mile End Park, for BMX and mountain bike riders. It will have 16,000 sq ft of outdoor trails and an indoor mini-ramp. Tel 7264 4660 (ask for LDJ) or email londondirt-jumping@hotmail.com or write to: LDJ, c/o the Environment Trust, 4 Pinchin street, E1 1SA

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Who are the Tower Hamlets Wheelers?

We're the Tower Hamlets cycle action group affiliated to the LCC - London Cycling Campaign. We campaign for safer, more pleasant & convenient conditions for cycling. We encourage more people to cycle: it's healthy, good for the environment and causes less congestion than driving. You don't have to join the LCC to be a Wheelers member but we recommend it.

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

Take some action!

Report road defects: tel 7364 6658 fax 7364 6753

david.wigmore@towerhamlets.gov.uk and also at

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/potholes/

If you're cheesed off with something cycle-related in Tower Hamlets, these are the people to write to: Council Cycling Officer Lyndal Peters lyndal.peters@towerhamlets.gov.uk and Head of Traffic & Transportation Margaret Cooper margaret.cooper@towerhamlets.gov.uk Both at Council Offices, 60 Southern Grove, E3 4PN. Copy your letter to: Wheelers co-ordinator Owen (address left); your local councillor (can be found at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/your-council/data/councillor/index.cfm or tel 7364 5000); your MP (Oona King or Jim Fitzpatrick; check at www.locata.co.uk/commons) John Biggs A.M. at the GLA, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, SE1 2AA john.biggs@london.gov.uk

Stay in touch by email

Subscribe to the Wheelers email group to keep up to date with events, socials, campaigns and news. You won't get any spam, you can unsubscribe at any time, and you can get a 'daily digest' of topics, instead of each individual email. Visit the Yahoo! Groups website (where you can view previous emails to the group) or send an email to towerhamletswheelers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Join LCC!

If you've been handed this leaflet, or have found it on your bike, you may like to know more about the London Cycling Campaign. Take a look at www.lcc.org.uk and consider joining the largest urban cycling campaign in the world. You'll get discounts in some bike shops, free third party insurance, *London Cyclist* magazine six times a year and loads more. Ask for a membership pack:

020 7928 7220 office@lcc.org.uk

Cycle lessons

London School of Cycling is based in nearby Hackney 7249 3779 lsc@clara.net

www.londonschoolofcycling.co.uk

Cycling Training Ltd will send out a trainer anywhere in Greater London for cycling lessons, providing a bike for you if necessary. Also do maintenance classes.

7564 5990 info@cycletraining.co.uk

www.cycletraining.co.uk

Maintenance & repairs

As you can see from the piece at the top of the page, the Wheelers self-help workshop is currently being set up again. In the meantime, Hackney LCC's workshop at Hackney City Farm, on the corner of Goldsmith Row and Hackney Road, is held every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Pay for parts you use and make a donation. Check with rosstransport@hotmail.com or paul.standeven@virgin.net

Bicycle Magic 187 Whitechapel Road

5% discount on parts for LCC members 7375 2993

Also, see left for maintenance classes.

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. Contact Alix.

March copy deadline: Sunday 23 February.

April copy deadline: Sunday 23 March

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk