

EAST London Cycling



**Tower
Hamlets
London
Cycling
Campaign**

**March
2003**

**for large
print tel
8880 6873**

Subscribe 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..!



Wheelers hang our hand-crafted banner from the Green Bridge over Mile End Road at 7am on 17 February, the first day of London's congestion charge. See 'Campaigns' inside and www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/media/cycle_for_free for more pictures.

Wheel way to travel!

by Colin Waters
and Alix Stredwick

As the Central Line was out of action and the congestion charge started, the Wheelers took the opportunity to promote cycling as the best way to get about town.

Our 'cycle convoy' in the form of a 'bicycling bus' came to the aid of suffering commuters who were forced on to packed, achingly slow replacement buses and less convenient tube lines after the derailment of a train at Chancery Lane on 25 January put a halt to all Central Line services.

During February the Wheelers convoy offered an alternative 'crush free' route all the way to Marble Arch, guiding new cyclists along a quiet route passing each Central Line station.

Our efforts and success with the media when we ran the convoy during tube strikes in the autumn - plus hard work leafleting District Line users of Mile End tube station - paid off this time when several new cyclists joined us!

Angela, a first time cyclist borrowing her cousin's mountain bike, was a total star and full of humour all the way. "Thank you for being a true inspiration for getting me on a bike!" she enthused. "I wouldn't have attempted the journey if it wasn't for you. I'm thinking about taking the scissors to my travelcard."

George Okunega (top) was also not put off by the rain and joined the convoy at Wanstead where Redbridge LCC started the service. "I haven't ridden a bike for 15 years!" George panted as he met us at Mile End. His colleague Martin Harris (Wheelers member) had given him advice on lights to buy and clothes to wear. Afterwards George told us that he really enjoyed it and "I'll be riding in again."

The convoy was also a big publicity hit with both local and national media. Media officer Alix featured on a pre-record for BBC Radio London (LDN) and live on BBC Radio Essex. Co-ordinator Owen was interviewed by the BBC and



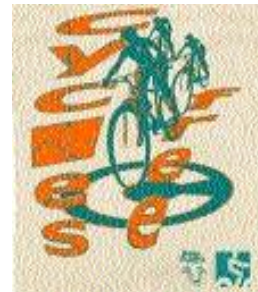
New cyclist George (left) joins the bicycling bus to travel through the east end, turning into Brushfield Street near the congestion charge zone towards the City (inset). Other newbies Angela, Lucy and Damien set off from Mile End tube station (below).



Sunrise Radio 1458 am, the largest independent Asian station. Even more impressively they both appeared nationally in the Daily Mirror! (see page 2). How we grinned when we found out that new cyclist Lucy joined us to check out quiet routes after she heard us on the radio! **Thank you SO MUCH to everyone who was involved - especially Ken who helped every day, Newham and Redbridge LCC, plus all the others who joined us.**

Colin played a key part in the Bicycling Bus convoy and the 'Cycle for Free' banner stunt

T-shirt success



Our fundraising T-shirt is selling fast, and thanks to Owen's website work, word is getting round: orders have been sent from as far afield as Manchester, Devon, and even Hong Kong! So Place your order now before they run out!

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/cc-tshirt/

Inside:

Bike Week 14-22 June

It's going to be a fantastic summer so come and join us at our fun events in this week of celebrations. See page 3.

Wheelers Workshop

Yes it's starting again! We've got some provisional funding from the council - many thanks to former cycling officer Lyndal Peters, whom we interview on page 4. The launch session is **Saturday 29th March at Limehouse Town Hall**, Commercial Road (near Salmon lane), **11am - 3pm**. See back page for more details.

Rides

Next ride: Saturday 22 March - a gentle family-friendly trundle to the Tower of London.

*** Treasure Hunt now on **5 April** ***

AGM: Wed 9 April

Get involved with the running of the Wheelers - you won't regret it! Positions on the committee are up for election. See page 3 for details.

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

Campaigns

Cycle for free!

We thought we might not be able to make it in time, but an amazing team effort by Wheelers Colin, Steve, Owen, Caroline, Keith, Alix, Dave, Tom, Gary and Alex (who fed us with a slap-up meal afterwards!) hand-made the quality banner you see on the front page in just one day. The Buddhist Arts Centre stepped in at the last minute to let us use their hall, and all our efforts were paid off when we were shown on BBC Evening News in London and Manchester! (plus excellent local press in the Recorder.) We were the 'front page' on website www.ragingbike.co.uk 'a site dedicated to environmental change by increasing the number of people cycling to work'.



Owen Pearson

Failed UK targets

"You've got another 200 miles to go boys - we're just trying to boost the cycling figures!"



used with kind permission from Local Transport Today

Sadly, new forecasts show that Government targets to increase cycling trips between 1996 and 2012 by 200% will not be met. The 10-Year Transport Plan will only boost cycling by up to 37% by 2010, says the Department for Transport. And remember that this is from a very low base: currently only 1-2% of all km travelled in the UK are cycled. Clearly the UK must be even bolder than Ken and his congestion charge before we're all cycling to work....
...But the good news is, if you want to see some cycle racing, check out Owen's ride on Good Friday - see page 3.

More media coverage

First *East End Life*, then the world... Transport 2000 put *The Daily Mirror* on to us when they were looking for people who are exempt from the C charge.

London Cycling Campaign HQ has described our antics as "brilliant stuff" and our efforts with the media as bringing "extraordinary success". This has been fun but hard work, so do lend a hand if media is your thing!



The safety campaign targets cyclists and CGVs

Cyclist safety initiative

CYCLISTS and drivers of commercial goods vehicles (CGVs) are being targeted in a new road safety campaign.



Cyclists' pothole protest

ANGRY cyclists fed up with potholes which make travelling a misery in the East End made a festive protest when they planted a Christmas tree in the road. They planned the tree to use numerous potholes they stumbled upon in Brick Lane, Spitalfields, to draw attention to their campaign for improvements. The protest follows a survey by Tower Hamlets Wheelers cycle group which found 83 per cent bike riders had been caught by surprise or distracted by potholes. Five out of 10 had had their machines damaged - some had even been thrown off. Half had reported potholes to Tower Hamlets Council, but most said the Town Hall took an "astonishingly" amount of time to repair them. "We shouldn't have to report potholes to get them fixed," stated Wheelers coordinator Owen Pearson. "The council should be vigilant and make sure that the highway is always safe for cyclists and other road users. The main cycle lobby blames heavy traffic, uncoordinated roadworks and "lack of quality control and accountability" by utility companies for causing the sorry state of our roads.

New improved cycle schemes

The council has listened to us! In the last *ELC* we reported the 'Zone 11' debacle where schemes for one-way streets were proposed, in order to stop congestion-charge evaders avoiding the boundary by rat-running through residential roads. Now the plans have been revised and include a contra-flow cycle lane on Stepney Way and Belgrave Street. We'd like to thank John Biggs, assembly member at the GLA for his work on this issue.

HOWEVER... The new lanes are raised up in the same way as the raised Cable Street track, allowing no priority at side roads...! Although it's great that our views were considered - showing that **LETTER WRITING DOES WORK** - and our cycle count on Stepney Way was definitely worthwhile, there's still a virtual brick wall

against which we are banging our oft-helmeted heads.

We've stepped up the campaign and Owen has met with LBTH planners and the consultants responsible for these schemes, Faber Maunsell. He found out that proposed one-ways on Columbia Road and Gosset Street ('Zone 26') have also been put on hold due to large number of objections. The Salmon Lane/Rhodeswell Road/Parnham Street junction will also be drastically improved. All sides agreed the meeting was extremely useful and that the Wheelers would be invited to discuss future proposals.

Owen will write full notes on the meeting and send to the email group & website to allow for further discussion.

Make your views known - we CAN make a difference.

Aldgate update

Owen has received a reply from Transport for London to his letter asking to know their future plans for cycle provision at Aldgate, with our 2002 cycle count data. TfL has held discussions with property developers in the vicinity about long term proposals to revert the Aldgate gyratory system and Whitechapel High Street to two way operation. Once initial design work is complete we will be involved in the consultation process. In the meantime, discussions would be held with TfL's Cycling Centre of Excellence to see whether any interim measures could be implemented to improve conditions for cyclists in the Aldgate area.

Bookworms wanted

If you regularly visit a Tower Hamlets library please let Alix know whether you spot our newsletters - they should be on display. 8880 6873 alix@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

Finding funding

£££

The council has provisionally agreed to make us a grant of £1,200 and we have applied to several grant-making bodies to help our workshop and 'Bike Buddy' scheme get off the ground, plus help to continue our publicity success.

Icy cycle paths

No response yet from the pot-hole people to Colin's letter to the council querying why main cycle routes were not gritted as main roads were during this winter's cold snap.

Streets for People



The Wheelers have joined the Streets for People network (costing £5), an initiative by pressure group Transport 2000. We have also joined the London Thames Gateway Forum based in E1.

Rides, Socials & Events

Feedback...

Fenland, Footlights and Fitzwilliam

Ride all the way to Cambridge, 8 February, led by Gary Cummins.



A great ride, which we hope to repeat in late summer. Pictures and captions by Steve Collins.

(left) Smiles all round from Colin, Dave, Caroline & Alix after elevenses at the northern end of the Lea Valley. Out of the picture, Gary is consulting the map from his book of long gradients to Cambridge... (below) Anticipating a good hearty pub meal at lunch time somewhere near the Haddams... Little did we know that we ought to savour this meal!

(below) "I thought we'd gone further than this!!"
(below right) The excuse for stopping at this pub was toilets. Unfortunately it was closed. ('The Cock' half a mile from Crabbs Green?...just as well really...)



(below) Regathering at crossroads, Ken & Alix still looking fresh.



(right) Reaching Cambridge, we enter another pub (before being forced to patronise Burger King due to packed-out restaurants!) Was this an out of bicycle experience? Gary after a few showing us the 'beam hover' with deft back brake skills.



Steve was a 'virgin' Wheelers Rider on this trip of 65 miles! For more ride pictures visit: www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/rides/

Future stuff... join in!

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 March** The Half Moon, Mile End Road E1 (near Globe Road) **23 April** The Coborn Arms, Coborn Road, E3 **21 May** The Pier Tavern, Pier Road E14 (off Manchester Road)

Events **Bike Week 14-22 June** We're already planning for this so do get involved and help us make it the best ever. **Sat 14 June** Family Fun Day with TfL-funded training in Victoria Park; **Sun 15** Kids & adults can try racing and off-road cycling plus fun events and a BBQ at the Eastway cycle track; **Mon 16** Gary's evening history ride; **Wed 18** Cyclists' Breakfast; & Keith's evening ride; **Thur 19** evening ride around borough taking in parks, cycle routes and 'useful places'; **Sat 21** midsummer madness ride to Primrose Hill for sunrise; & Great Beigal Race; **Sun 22** Pedalling picnic ride in association with Sustrans. And our 'Bicycling Bus' will run daily.

Meetings Second Wednesday of the month, 7pm-8:30pm, in Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road (by Newell St) E14. After, many go to The Grapes pub for 9pm, on nearby Narrow Street. **9 April - AGM** Nominate and vote for our committee. Owen is happy to remain Co-ordinator and Gary is happy to remain Rides & Socials organiser. Alix is happy to remain Media Officer and Newsletter Ed BUT would be pleased to do a gradual handover over the summer as she starts a course in the autumn which will take up plenty of spare time, which is currently spent on Wheelers activities. We also MUST have a Treasurer and Secretary. Contact Owen for details owen@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk 7515 9905 **See you there!**

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; 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 for medium and longer rides do bring snacks to 're-fuel', and plenty of fluids. It helps if you bring a spare inner tube in case of puncture, and if the ride involves a train journey, don't forget your railcard...

Sat 22 March

Bikes, Beekeepers and Battlements

Easy family-friendly ride on quiet roads to the Tower of London. Get in for £1 if you have a Tower Hamlets library card/leisure pass/Idea Store card. Meet 11am; back by 4pm. Contact ride leader Alix for more details 8880 6873.

Sat 5 April (DATE CHANGE)

Easter Treasure Hunt on Wheels

Join in Gary's fun local hunt following clues for the hidden treasure. Form a team of 4 or just turn up. £2 donation each please. Meet 10am; ends 4pm-5pm in a family-friendly pub.

Good Friday 18 April A Day at the Races

Easy ride to Herne Hill Velodrome in south London to watch the 100th annual international race meeting - same age as the Tour de France - plenty of top riders. Ride is free; £12 for the races; excellent value though. Meet 9:30am. Contact Owen 7515 9905.

Longer rides & trips away

East Anglian Easter

Sat 19 - Mon 21 April Mini-tour of the fens, taking in castles and coast. Join us for 1, 2 or 3 days. Sat: 65 miles to Castle Acre; Sun: 40-50 miles to Castle Headingham; Mon: 30 miles along coast then train home - or ride all the way back. Contact Gary ASAP 7265 9095 if you want to stay over-night as the Youth Hostels MUST be booked! Wheelers have joined the YHA as a group (just £13 per year) so you don't have to be a YHA member to stay with us at a

hostel. Suggested donation to Wheelers for organising the trip: £5-10. Meet 8:45am for a prompt 9am start on Sat 19.

Birthday Bikes

On **Saturday 3 May** Gary is leading a 125 mile ride around Essex, to celebrate the CTC's 125th anniversary and the LCC's 25th anniversary. Special drop-out points at 25 miles, 125 km and 125 miles should cater for all abilities! *Editor's note: I also have my 25th birthday in May...*

Give or Take At Malmesbury School, Bow, 8 Feb

Dr Bike Keith shows the kids how it's done. (Actually it's Mr Bike - Keith's a surgeon y'see!) Many thanks to Mark and Owen too, for a VERY busy day.





Cycling Officer: this is your life (part 1)

Lyndal Peters is in fact no longer officially our Cycling Officer at the council, as she has been promoted to Principle Transport Planner. But luckily for us, she has made a commitment to attend our meetings on a regular basis, and will keep an eye on cycling goings-on. She is also in the process of granting us some money for our Workshop. Here is the first part of an interview with her.

Alix: Thank-you for agreeing to take the time out of your hectic schedule of bus, pedestrian, cycling and street-scape duties to do this interview! You're from New Zealand aren't you? How long have you been in the UK?

Lyndal: Yes I'm from a town called Dunedin in the South Island, which has exactly the same road layout as Edinburgh! I've been in the UK for nearly two years.

What do you like most about your job?

Having the freedom to come up with new ideas and to be innovative in delivering sustainable transport.

And least?

Having to make sure I get all my money spent on time! There's quite a lot of pressure when you have got to go out to consultation (for projects), there are always 'hiccups' when you're designing something.

What do you like most and least about Tower Hamlets?

Brick Lane is pretty good, I like having a look round there. In terms of transport, it's pretty easy to get around the borough on public transport; there are plenty of buses, the DLR is good, there are connections to the London Underground. But what I like the least is that the roads are very busy - there's a lot of traffic going into London. It'll be interesting to see the effect of the work that's currently being done on the A13; it's opening up the road, and also the effect of congestion charging.

How does London compare with New Zealand in terms of traffic levels and how people choose to get around?

Traffic levels are obviously a lot higher in London because there is a bigger population (density), but there's also a lot

more public transport offered here. We don't have the money anywhere in NZ to afford Tubes and so on. We have buses but they're pretty low frequency, and we have one train that travels the length of the South Island once a day. So I came over here and thought: "this is amazing". But it's starting to get all too much over here, the public transport system clearly can't cope.

How does driver behaviour compare?

London drivers are actually quite polite; NZ drivers are more aggressive. Here, people let others out at side streets sometimes, but that doesn't happen in NZ, people just beep their horn! And I have found that in London if you are cycling towards a pinch-point in the road, drivers on the whole won't try to squeeze by you, they'll let you go through, but that wouldn't happen in NZ. But, in NZ, there is a lot less traffic. In Dunedin they are just starting to put in cycle facilities along the state highway.

The second part of this interview will be in the May newsletter - produced in the month between *London Cyclist*, which is bi-monthly. If you would like to subscribe to these 'inbetweeners', contact Alix (details below, left).

Note: Do let Lyndal know by the end of March if you have an idea for a cycle route, so that she can consider it for the council's transport budget proposal. Contact details below.

Useful info

Wheelers workshop

Opening session is Sat 29 March 11am - 3pm; please come along to Limehouse Town Hall, Commercial Road E14 (by Newell Street). Bring your bike for a check-over and meet your fellow Wheelers! Greater London Authority assembly member John Biggs will hopefully be attending this launch of what could be an extremely useful resource for Wheelers and local people in Tower Hamlets. Please make a small cash donation (£1) and pay for parts or bring your own, plus tools if possible, and any bike parts you wish to donate to be recycled.

London dirt jumping

Construction has started on London's first dirt park, in Mile End Park, for BMX and mountain bike riders. Email londondirtjumping@hotmail.com tel 7264 4660 Write to: LDJ, c/o the Environment Trust, 4 Pinchin street, E1 1SA

Tower Hamlets Wheelers

34 Vermeer Court, Rembrandt Close, London E14 3XA tel 020 7515 9905 wheelers@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

co-ordinator

Owen Pearson 7515 9905

owen@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

rides, socials & treasurer

Gary Cummins 7265 9095

gary@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

newsletter editor & media officer

Alix Stredwick 8880 6873

alix@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

cycle count organiser

Colin Waters 07799 537 504

colin@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

mountain biking trip organiser

Mark Butland 07768 360 726

markbutland@youthaction.org.uk

Who are the Tower Hamlets Wheelers?

We're your local 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 Wheeler but we recommend it.

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

Join LCC!

If you've been handed this leaflet, or have found it on your bike or in a cafe or library, you may like to know more about the London Cycling Campaign. 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: 7928 7220 office@lcc.org.uk

Stay in touch by email

Subscribe to our email group to keep up to date with our activities and join in the debate. You won't get any spam, you can unsubscribe at any time, and you can get a regular 'digest' of topics, instead of each email. Send an email to towerhamletswheelers-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk

Cycle lessons

London School of Cycling is based in nearby Hackney 7249 3779 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 www.cycletraining.co.uk

Take some action!

Transport for London is responsible for ensuring that road defects are fixed www.tfl.gov.uk/streetfaults They will directly fix a TfL road (large arterial roads/Red Routes e.g. A13) or they'll contact the council within 12 hours!

The Council Principle Transport Planner Lyndal Peters lyndal.peters@towerhamlets.gov.uk and Margaret Cooper, margaret.cooper@towerhamlets.gov.uk Head of Traffic & Transportation. Both at Council Offices, 60 Southern Grove, E3 4PN. Road defects: tel 7364 6658 fax 7364 6753 david.wigmore@towerhamlets.gov.uk Wheelers own pothole pot-hole page: www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/potholes/

Your local councillor To find out who they are and what's their address tel 7364 5000 or look at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/yourcouncil/councillor/index.cfm

Your MP Oona King/Jim Fitzpatrick; House of Commons, London W1A 1AA (check at www.locata.co.uk/commons)

Greater London Authority John Biggs GLA, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, SE1 2AA john.biggs@london.gov.uk

Copy any letters to Wheelers co-ordinator

Maintenance & repairs

Wheelers Workshop Last Saturday of every month, Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road, E14.

Hackney LCC workshop At Hackney City Farm, on the corner of Goldsmith Row and Hackney Road. Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Pay for parts you use and make a donation. Check: rosstransport@hotmail.com

Bicycle Magic Shop at 187 Whitechapel Road, nr Vallance Rd. LCC members: 5% discount (parts) 7375 2993

Council's Lifelong Learning service

Check if they are holding low-cost classes 7613 1135

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. Contact Alix.

May copy deadline: Sun 27 April

June copy deadline: Sun 18 May

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk