

The International Cycle Show

This has been held for the past two years in September at the Design Centre, Islington and I took the opportunity to go this year.

The centre has a small main hall with conference rooms on one side of a balcony gallery. The main hall featured mostly bicycles from the main manufacturers, the balcony presented innovations, and the conference rooms accommodated retailers, campaign groups, accessories and a night zone, featuring lights only. One of the loading bays at the conference centre was used as a bicycle testing area and during the day seminars were held in various locations, with themes ranging from sports nutrition to rides with the CTC. Unfortunately I arrived too late to attend the security lock seminar but did manage to see Josie Dew's illustrated solo tour around the world. The selection of bikes on display was dominated by racing and mountain bikes and all the paraphernalia that goes with them; I think the commuting and touring market was less well-served, but there were plenty of folding bikes on show, the *Air Frame* being of particular interest because it folded quite compactly.

Both the LCC and the CTC attended, along with other green campaign groups and Transport for London (TfL), who handed out maps; if you were looking for a bicycle holiday there were plenty of companies there to help.

Two new products which stimulated my interest were the shaft drive bikes by *Zero Cycles*, a steering column device which unlocks enabling the handlebar to be twisted for easy storage, and an anti theft device. I was enormously privileged to be given the opportunity to build a wheel on the *Sapim* stand, tutored by Belgium's top wheel builder - unfortunately I've forgotten his name.

I went to the show on the Friday and it was not particularly well attended; however it is worth visiting, both for experienced or novice cyclists, although the £12 entry price is prohibitive and should be reduced if the organisers want to attract more people.

KC Jones - The Black Knight

THW Bike Buddy scheme

The Wheelers' Bike Buddy scheme is designed for adults resident, working or studying in Tower Hamlets who are new to cycling or who would like help to gain confidence in urban cycling. It provides lessons with professional instructors, followed by support on the road by pairing the new cyclist with an experienced one. To help those who are keen to get into cycling but don't currently have access to a bicycle, a number of donated bikes have been "recycled" and these are available at low cost.

If you know anyone who would be interested in joining the scheme, please contact Owen Pearson (contact details on this page). Also, if you have a redundant bike that you would like to donate, preferably a general-purpose machine that could be made usable with some effort but not too much money, we would be glad to receive it. Spares such as saddles, racks and lights would also be useful.

If you would be able to promote the scheme at your work place, college or community group, perhaps by putting up a poster, distributing leaflets or putting something on an intranet or bulletin board, please let us know and we will supply suitable materials.

David Allison



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QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

Why is it that every time it rains whilst you're riding, traffic lights are against you?



news

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2003

THE NEWSLETTER FOR TOWER HAMLETS WHEELERS • LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

TRUST ENCOURAGES WHEELING!

BLT (Barts & The London NHS Trust) is currently working with consultants on its Green Travel Plan, which is funded by TfL.

Initiatives to encourage staff to use more sustainable forms of transport than the car have been introduced and the Trust is working hard to promote cycling. A package of measures designed to get staff started includes:

- interest free loans of up to £500;
- cycle maps and information sheets;
- the establishment of BLT's 'Bicycle Users Group';
- discounts at local bike shops and via the Web;
- 20 free cycle lessons.

BLT has surveyed each of its hospital sites to assess current cycle facilities and is striving to improve these. Bids have been made both internally and to TfL. If successful, BLT intends to provide

secure covered bicycle parking for staff. Not forgetting patients and visitors, BLT is working with the Corporation of London and LBTH council to increase cycle parking on the boundary of its hospitals, too.

Finally, BLT has already been successful in obtaining £2000 to establish a bike-pool scheme. The bikes will be available to staff travelling between the hospital sites during their working day. Initially, four bikes will be purchased. It is hoped to have the scheme running by mid January 2004. Watch this space for progress . . .

Many thanks for this article to Lisa Howkins, Transport Liaison Manager, Barts and the London NHS Trust. She can be contacted on 020 7601 8482 or email: Lisa.Howkins@bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk

Get Involved!

We have a few vacancies on the Wheelers committee.

Please contact Owen (*details on back page*) if you are interested in any of these posts and would like more information about what is involved.

SECRETARY (*must be an LCC member*)
Minute taking at monthly meetings

CAMPAIGNS OFFICER co-ordination of campaigning activities

PRESS OFFICER media contact; press release production

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of *THW news* (Tower Hamlets Wheelers news) since June this year, also known in the past as *East London Cycling*. Very hastily compiled to get something out to you with this issue of *London Cyclist*, but containing a variety of news articles and others, we look forward to re-establishing regular production.

I must make special mention of Alix Stredwick, who edited *East London Cycling* from December 2001 until June this year, as well as filling countless other roles (media officer, photographer, and fund-raiser being a fraction of these only). I have not met Alix, but as until now a silent on-looker, I have often remarked the extent of her activity on behalf of THW both as an innovator and constant labourer at the grass roots. Campaigning organisations such as THW and those of us who benefit from their successes are surely indebted to such tireless commitment.

Many thanks to all contributors to this issue of *THW news*, who have responded splendidly and at very short notice.

Carol Gray



Alix Stredwick
(left) taking part in this year's Great Beigel Race

CABLE STREET CYCLE TRACK

PROPOSED MODIFICATION

LBTH council has consulted the Wheelers regarding its proposed plans to extend the Cable Street two-way cycle track from Cannon Street Road to Watney Street using funding from the London Cycle Network: www.londoncyclenetwork.org.uk

On the whole the scheme looks good, with the removal of a lot of 'street furniture' (all fixed items on the highway (this includes the pavement) eg sign posts, benches, street lamps) plus a seemingly improved street-lighting set up. It is also notable that the cycle track has been given priority across the Watney Street junction – in contrast to the other junctions along the existing section of the two-way track, where the roads adjoining Cable Street have priority over the cycle lane.

Our main recommendations to the Council will be to:

- increase the width of the track, which at present is the bare minimum recommended: 2 metres; however there are several existing fixed width restrictions that would need to be removed in order to accomplish this;
- place a stop line on Watney Street at the junction with Cable Street;
- move signposts away from the edge of the cycle track.

With regard to the priority scheme on the existing two-way track, which we consider unacceptable, we are planning a submission to LBTH Traffic & Transportation to re-open the matter. We suspect their proposed scheme at the Watney Street junction pre-empts this...

Owen Pearson THW coordinator

TECHNICAL SHOWCASE

by **Mr Bike** the bicycle consultant

CHEAP WINTER CLOTHING

If you can't afford expensive cycle clothing for your winter commuting or rides, you may have alternatives in your wardrobe. Before the days of synthetic breathable clothing, cyclists wore a combination of cotton and wool.

As a base garment, use a long sleeved cotton fleece shirt, like a sweatshirt or a Norwegian Army shirt (available from most army and navy stores) and on top, wear a good woollen sweater. If the wind is chilly and you're commuting, put a t-shirt on over the undershirt, or if you're training, place a broadsheet newspaper between the undershirt and sweater. The cotton layer will breathe a little, allowing moisture out for it then to be trapped by the wool, thus keeping you warm. For your legs, use a pair of cotton fleeced tracksuit bottoms, and on your feet try a thick pair of cotton sports socks. On your hands you could wear either a pair of thermal gloves, or wool gloves inside a pair of household gloves like 'marigolds' on the coldest days. And finally, a sports headband pulled down over your ears will make for comfortable riding in London, which isn't that cold through the winter months.

Warming up for Iceland under canvas - part 1

It's the camping; I hadn't been camping since childhood when wet fortnights in Cornwall playing in cow pat-patterned fields put me off canvas and campingaz forever. But Iceland sounds wonderful and cycling Iceland even better, particularly if you like cycling. Reykjavic is very fashionable at the moment, but our trip would barely touch the capital of both Iceland and trendy stag and hen night partymongers.

There were 18 on our trip – some couples and quite a few individuals. Many of us knew one another from previous tours where some good friendships had been made. Despite the fairly rugged nature of the tour, ages ranged from 73 down to a just-weaned 28.

Our tour leader and the organiser of the holiday was Brian Curtis, a lean Mancunian, himself a week off his 60th birthday. I had toured with Brian before and knew him to be unfazed by most of the mini-disasters that can befall group holidays. The CTC (Cyclists Touring Club) is the oldest bicycle group in the world and one of the largest. As its rather Victorian sounding name suggests, it was founded to promote cycle touring but these days in reality is actually much more concerned with campaigning for better cycle facilities across Britain. However, it still runs excellent cycling holidays, 60 or so this year alone, all over the world. CTC tours are led by members of the club, entirely volunteers, often with a deputy leader, who tends to remain at the back of the group. This also makes them very economical and that's where the tents came in. By camping we would be able to visit places where there was no other accommodation, but it also kept the whole tour cost down to a decent £660. We would be catering for ourselves however.

My partner Aileen and I had borrowed a tent from a mountaineer friend and had had a long weekend's practice in west Scotland as our warm up. Our first experience of campsites in Iceland was a surprise: they are rather different to their British counterparts in that they are often located right next to a conurbation, making it easy to wander to the local supermarkets to collect supplies. By its nature, group touring begets a group collectivity, where food and drink is bartered or shared as are lessons in erecting and packing tents and even bicycle repairs and maintenance.

We landed at Keflavik (for Reykjavik) airport and readied our cycles for the road - they travel with us as luggage - and set off to our first campsite. We would be cycling the south western corner of the country circumnavigating Mount Hekla and making much use of the unsurfaced roads common there. Built into the cost was hiring Halldor Gardarsson, an Icelandic local who runs his own cycle tours, called *Bluebiking*. This meant somebody else was at least carrying all our luggage in a backup vehicle - and those tents.

As we concentrated on pedalling the 30-40 mile distances each day, Halldor brought up the rear in his truck and would arrive at the campsites with us, erect the group tent and boil up gallons of hot water for all, making our own meal preparation a lot easier. The harsh landscape and very changeable weather conditions meant that it was important that nobody went too far ahead on their own in case they got lost. But even with this rule it was possible to ride by oneself all day if you so wished, as the group crocodiled out over 3-4 miles, re-grouping mostly once or twice a day at junctions or filling stations, which in Iceland sell everything from petrol, coffee and groceries to walking boots and, well... kites.

Gary Cummins

And we continue Gary's tale in our next issue, when he discovers Iceland's waterfalls, hot springs... and extreme weather conditions

DIARY DATES DIARY DATES DIARY

- NOVEMBER**
- Wed 26th **SOCIAL** - Meet up with the Wheelers 9pm at The Approach, Approach Road
 - Sat 29th **WORKSHOP** - 11.00am-3.00pm Limehouse Town Hall (with dynamo-fitting session)
- DECEMBER**
- Sun 7th YULE TIDE SHOP easy canal **RIDE** to Camden Market to fill y'panniers up, then down to Greenwich Market and maybe a meal somewhere afterwards; meet top of the Green Bridge, Mile End Park 9.00am; for more details contact Steve 07974 051766
 - Wed 10th **MONTHLY MEETING** 7.00-8.30pm; venue tba.
 - Wed 17th **SOCIAL** - 'EARLY WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATIONS' 6:30pm onwards, gracing all Wheeler-frequented pubs of 2003
 - **NO DECEMBER WORKSHOP**
 - **MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYBODY!**
- JANUARY**
- Wed 14th **MONTHLY MEETING** - 7pm-8.30pm; venue tbc
 - Wed 21st **SOCIAL EVENING** venue tbc
 - Sat 31 **WORKSHOP** - 11.00am-3.00pm Limehouse Town Hall (with Mr Bike puncture repair class)