



Look at that scenery! Wheelers Scottish Highlands tour, May 2004 saw 14 of us visiting the most north-westerly point of the British mainland, here Cheryl and Che' breeze along

November 2004

Saturday, 27th November
Wheelers Bicycle Maintenance Workshop

11.00am-3.00pm at Limehouse Town Hall. Further details on our workshop page. **Special event:** Puncture Repair Training Session presented by our very own Mr Bike. Start time tba.

December 2004

Wednesday, 8th December
Monthly Wheelers Meeting
Meet at St Georges Town Hall 236 Cable Street. 7.30-9.00pm - everyone welcome. Followed by a visit to a local pub from 9.00pm. Contact Owen.
Notes from previous meetings.

Sunday, 12th December

EASY RIDE: Christmas Lights Ride & Carol Service

Meet upon the Green Bridge* to be ready to leave at 4.30pm for an hour's easy ride around the illuminated winter wonderland that is Tower Hamlets at Christmas. We will finish up at St Johns on Bethnal Green and join in the carol service at 6pm, eat mince pies and sup mulled wine.

We have been given permission to bring the bikes into the church - Fr Alan Green the rector, himself a member of Wheelers and past participant of the Beigel Race adds: Bicycles should certainly not remain outside (I am sure there were oxen, asses and bicycles in that stable...)

If you just want to join in the carols, go straight to the church:
St John on Bethnal Green, 30 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PB.

For more details contact Gary 020 7265 9095.

Wheelers Bicycle Maintenance Workshop

Mr Bike is having a rest, there is no workshop in December.

January 2005

Wednesday, 12th January
Monthly Wheelers Meeting
Meet at St Georges Town Hall 236 Cable Street. 7.30-9.00pm - everyone welcome. Followed by a visit to a local pub from 9.00pm. Contact Owen.

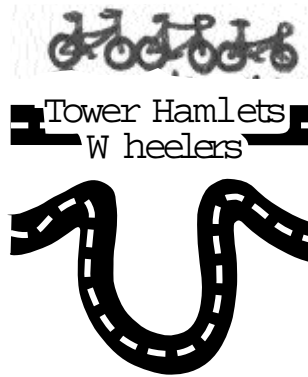
Wednesday, 19th January

Annual Wheelers Supper
Venue tba, everyone welcome.
No premises booked at time of going to press, but contact Owen or Gary for latest details, or to reserve a seat.

Saturday, 29th January

Wheelers Bicycle Maintenance Workshop
11.00am-3.00pm at Limehouse Town Hall. Full details on our workshop page.

*The Green Bridge is in Mile End Park; it crosses Mile End Road near the junction with Grove Road and is the one that's yellow underneath.
Details of all events: venues, rides meeting times and train times are posted to the email group nearer the event dates. Otherwise phone Owen for further details of meetings and Steve for further details of rides and socials and to check that there have not been any cancellations. All contact details opposite.



Tower Hamlets Wheelers

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THW news

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Dr Bikes tip

Its winter, its dark, get yourself

some decent lights.

Even better, fit a dynamo with
standlights to your machine.

Tower Hamlets Wheelers
bicycle maintenance workshop

(see left) will help you do this,
and give advice on what types

of dynamo system to buy

THW news

DECEMBER / JANUARY 2004 / 5

THE NEWSLETTER FOR TOWER HAMLETS WHEELERS • LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

A year and a half!

Well, what a year it's been! A full programme of rides, bikeweek events, some serious week long 'expeditions' culminating in being involved in one of the winning projects in the London Cycling Awards. Tower Hamlets Wheelers are as active as any London campaign group can be.

The year began with our ride organiser Steve Collins taking us on a post-festive-flab-busting ride across north London on a chilly **January** morning. Setting the scene for the rest of the spring trips, ok weather, great company and a variety of shorter and longer tours. **February** saw Owen and Gary attend a weekend course set up by Youth Action UK, teaching them to become 'Children's Bicycle Skills trainers', (this scheme kept Owen busy throughout the summer and he went on to be part of the team that won one of the LCC awards). By **April** we were down in Kent, more hills, more miles. Meanwhile things were happening on the campaigning front. LBTH Transport Dept has thoroughly bugged up the Cable street cycle route, removing the cycle priority of the original design, and giving priority to motor vehicles. This means cyclists on

the Cable Street cycle path must give way at every side road to permit motor vehicles to have right of way from minor roads, *reversing the initial priority the scheme had been designed for*. Cynics amongst us will say indicating LBTH attitude to transport: cars first, everybody else sod off. Following a letter to Margaret Cooper, the transport head and her subsequent response, Wheelers committee are formulating a reply. This campaign continues.

May, and months of planning ended with 14 members of Wheelers, plus a few Scots and Irish heading off via GNER to Inverness where our Scottish Highlands tour began. A week of generally good weather, with a couple of blowy days which was all over too quickly for me. We had all managed to visit Cape Wrath, the colourfully named most northerly point of the British mainland. **June**, the Great Biegal Race, this time with powered two-wheelers too! It didn't help them much though as the bicycles won again...who needs an engine? Bike Week started with Wheelers Cycling Fun Day, a Lazy Lea Valley Ride, The Royal London Hospital Cyclists' Breakfast, Wheelers own

Cyclists' Breakfast lastly ending with the Family Pedalling Picnic! Is that enough? By **July** we were getting stretched, on the day that Steve and Gary were playing at Dr Bikes for the London Leukemia Bikathon, Owen, Keith and several others were holding court at the Spitalfields Festival and Eco fair, doing more Dr Biking, running a bicycle obstacle course and generally fighting the good fight.

From **August** the rest of the year passed in a similar blur of activity. There were the mid-week after work rides, our new campaign highlighting the growing problem of bike theft in the borough, our monthly bicycle maintenance workshops at Limehouse town. Not forgetting our monthly evening campaign meetings where we regularly consult with the borough and TfL on traffic schemes. How much more can we do? Well a lot more if more Wheelers got involved.

At the last count there are 336 paid up members, plus 150 pretty noisy e-list folk, but only a hard core of **10 regular activists** doing all the above.

Come along in 2005 and help us achieve even more!!!!

Tower Hamlets Wheelers new years supper Wednesday 19th January

It's that time of year again, when we get together, share a meal, drinks and a few silly games. Last year our supper gave us an opportunity to meet some new faces too. Even if you have never been to a Wheelers function before give it a try.

We hope to 'take over' a venue as we have in the last couple of years as this has proved very successful.

There will be the usual prize givings, a few silly games and a guest speaker too. At the time of writing there is no definite venue, but contact us nearer the date for details. Please do book in advance as it helps us to reserve table numbers.

Owen: 020 7515 9905,
owen@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk or
Gary 0207 265 9095 garycummins@hotmail.com

Euston... we have a Brompton

Buzz, a recent addition to Wheelers monthly meetings, describes his return to commuter cycling

As one who was amongst London's first wave of cycle couriers, has traded elbows in a few races and cycle-toured in Britain and abroad, no-one was more surprised than me to find that I had somehow turned into a 40 year old car driving middle manager. This realisation coupled with the increasing stress of driving through the heart of London twice daily was enough to convince me that a return to my cycling roots was long overdue. Furthermore, it is pretty hard to maintain one's green-thinking, Guardian-reading, left-leaning, waste-recycling hip and groovy role model credibility with four environmentally aware kids when there are two cars outside the family home.

Helped in no small way by the punitive taxation of company cars and fuel, I decided to ditch my company wheels earlier this year in favour of a combined bike/train commute for my daily 50 mile round trip between the Isle Of Dogs and Heathrow. I must admit that I thoroughly enjoyed the reaction of the fleet management at work, who were amazed that not only was a member of management handing back their company car but that they planned to use the alternative car allowance to purchase a bicycle and pocket the difference. After pointing out that there was nothing in the policy that prevented me doing this, I provided the registration details of our blue badged family car as the requisite 'nominated' vehicle and signed the papers. As word of this heresy spread around the office some colleagues, like my Brompton-owning Hungarian and Dutch cyclist friends, were supportive whilst others thought that I had lost my marbles - especially with winter round the corner.

Time constraints and family commitments meant that I would be using trains and quite possibly the tube, it was clear that I would need a folding cycle to use at each end of the train journey, rather than my old Trek 970. Whilst I would consider myself an

experienced cyclist, I had never owned a folder before, so I spent a good while reading websites like those of The Folding Society and the Brompton Talk Yahoo group to get myself up to speed. Over the next few weeks, I narrowed down the choices to a shortlist and chased down the few dealers offering test rides on pristine folders. It was at this point that Tower Hamlets Wheelers, in the form of committee member Caroline Fenton, gave me a helping hand in deciding my final choice. Rather than test a brand new Brompton at my local bike shop Wharf Cycles, I opted to take up Caroline's

kind offer to test her 3 year old Broomie,



complete with fully loaded front pannier, to get an idea of how they ride and stand up to 36 months vigorous usage. After lodging my Trek with Caroline as surety, a ride around the southern half of the borough was all I needed to cement my decision to buy one. What's more, it helped me adjust my intended specification to match my requirements more closely. Although I had considered buying a secondhand bike, I chose instead to spend the extra to get the setup and additional kit I wanted and duly ordered my Brompton through Wharf Cycles. Just over three weeks later (and the morning after a few post-ride foaming ales with the Wheelers at The Approach), I received a call from Phil telling me my bike had been delivered and was ready for collection.

Well, a month or two has passed since then and I am nicely settled into my new routine.

Just after six o'clock each weekday morning, you will find me aboard my

Brompton L6, my laptop and files stuffed in the large front touring pannier, whizzing towards Paddington - or an intermediate station if I'm in a lazy mood. These early starts mean that I can be away from my office by four o'clock, reading a book on the train by half past and home 45 minutes later most days. The rides are great and a world away from the grim grind of my previous stop/go life in the car. The routes I take are a mixture of main roads, signed cycle routes and quieter back streets and are derived from local knowledge of East and Central London and the handy LCC/TfL Area 8 map for the Hayes and Harlington section of my journey. The occasional wet weather doesn't bother me, but cycling in my smart casual work clothes (rather than the usual Lycra) has taken a little getting used to and, combined with the absence of a shower at work, means that I'm not breaking any speed limits either. Overall, my journeys are easily quicker and more relaxed than before, more than compensating for the occasional bad day.

Even though my company doesn't take advantage of the Government's tax exemption schemes for employees buying new bicycles and personal computers [1], my return to commuting by bike and train has provided me with other clear and tangible benefits. It has removed the stress of two daily drives through London, saves me thousands in tax and congestion charging, contributes to a healthier life by supplementing my training runs and lessens my personal impact on the environment. Then there's the fact that I get to park a design classic next to my desk, engage in impromptu chats with interested strangers and pretend I'm Lance Armstrong with a laptop. All in all, I can't think why I didn't go back to my two wheeled roots sooner.

[1] The Home Computing Initiative & The Green Transport Plan - see <http://www.boost.uk.com/>

Pedal Power Cycling club for adults with learning disabilities



From: Jo Roach
To: markbutland@youthaction.org.uk
owen@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk
Subject: Fw: Pedal Power

Dear Mark,
Thanks for all the information about cycle training in Tower Hamlets, we would certainly like some training for members of Pedal Power hope that we will meet soon to discuss how to make this happen. The following piece is about Pedal Power -

Pedal Power is a cycling club for learning disabled people which started in 2004 and over 4 sessions has had about 80 participants. My daughter who has learning difficulties aged 30, now lives independently. I was very concerned at the lack of exercise she was taking and that she was no longer riding a bike which is something she really enjoys and is very good at, I discussed this with Beverly Jenkins the behaviour specialist at St Leonard's and she suggested that we start a cycling club for adults with learning difficulties to improve their cycling skills or if complete beginners to have an opportunity to learn.

Pedal Power has had 4 sessions at the Eastway Cycle Track with

excellent support of Caroline Argent Sports development officer. We have paid some very good cycling trainers to work at the sessions and some club members have cycled for the first time, one young man with a severe form of autism rode a two wheel bike for the first time with the biggest grin ever.

Some of our members already cycle regularly and we want to encourage them to try for the special Olympics. Our disabled members are part of the management. At Pedal Power we encourage parents, carers and support workers to cycle as this is an inclusive club, not one where we divide into participants and spectators.

Often learning disabled people are treated like children but learning to ride a bike is a great equaliser and anyone can shine. We would like to fund raise for specialist bikes. One of our members who is also our secretary and uses a wheelchair has taken a wheelchair proficiency test and longs to have a cycle that "goes really fast".

A chance of adventure is necessary in everyone's life. We have a team of excellent volunteers, some are ex-racing cyclists who can train and challenge our members who want to

race. Some of our volunteers haven't ridden bikes for years but have gamely taken to the track and improved their skills and fitness, one is contemplating using her bike to ride to work.

One of our volunteers has also unexpectedly taken up running so that he can accompany the young man who uses a wheelchair to go round the track.

As well as all the health benefits and fun of belonging to a cycling club, Pedal Power stands for empowerment - strength and independence.

My daughter Suzie says - It's fun - I've met some new friends - I like telling people about Pedal Power at my college - it's something my mum and I do together - It's great.

Jo Roach

For further details contact Jo
020 8809 7718

Time: 1pm - 3pm

Cost £2:50 + bike hire

Bring your own bike if you can.

Sat 27th Nov 1- 3pm Victoria Park
Sat 11th Dec 1- 3pm Lea Valley Cycle Track Eastway

Lea Valley Cycle Track

Quarter Mile Lane Leyton E 10

By bike: From Ruckholt Road turn into Quarter Mile Lane. The Cycle Circuit is a short distance along this road.

By bus: W11 bus stops outside.

By car: Via the Eastway, the 106, Ruckholt Road, A102 (motorway).

There are small brown road signs.