

East London Cyclist

www.wheelers.org.uk

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2009

THE NEWSLETTER FOR TOWER HAMLETS WHEELERS • LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Highway hopes

Transport for London have allocated £145 million for the creation of 12 radial Cycle Highways, aimed at helping commuters access central London quickly and easily.

The project will be split into two stages, with a pilot for two routes being completed by May 2010. One of these routes is an East London route, coming in along the A13, and then across Tower Hamlets to the City (via Cable St). Wheelers recently attended the first Cycle Route Implementation Meeting (or CRIM in Cycle Planning parlance...), starting at the Royal Mint St end of the Cable St cycle path, and heading eastwards to Poplar.

We were certainly impressed by the turnout - we counted 28 attendees, from TfL, LBTH, LCC and various planning consultants. This rapidly demonstrated some of the inadequacies of the Cable Street route, since it took several cycles of the lights at the East End of Royal Mint St to get us all through. We proceeded along Cable St, then down Narrow St, Poplar High Street and on to the East India docks, from where the route joins the A13 cycle path.

There was much note-taking of minor issues - maybe a kerb should be dropped here, and a bollard moved there. And there is a plan to paint the track blue rather than green. And we were a bit disappointed, because we think an opportunity is being missed:

- There seems to be no plan to provide a proper link into Canary Wharf
- The Cable Street track is too narrow to handle an increased volume of two-way traffic. We think it is time to restrict motor access to Cable St, and allow cyclists to use the full width of the road, in a similar way to Narrow St.
- The route is planned to end at the end of Royal Mint St. But then where do you go? Virtually nobody has Royal Mint St as their destination
- The route through East India Dock is tortuous to say the least - not bad for a Sunday morning leisure route, but not really a serious high volume route into the City.

The impression we got was that all the Cycle Highway (originally to be a Super Highway but already re-branded) will be, is what we already have with some minor tweaks. We have made these points to the TfL Project Manager, and we hope they will be taken on board. LCC has employed a consultant/campaigner (Rik Andrews) to represent the member's views and we will be working with him as the project progresses. ■

Dave Allison

Greenwich

Following our report in the last issue regarding the Greenwich Foot Tunnel closure, Cllr Peter Golds responds with some food for thought...

The increase of cycling, amongst all age groups, in recent years has been beneficial to the community as pollution is lowered and to cyclists as their health improves.

Here on The Isle of Dogs we welcome the provision of cycle racks in new developments. The proposed closure of the Greenwich foot tunnel, for essential work, is bad news for pedestrians and cyclists alike. As a local councillor I am seeking information from Greenwich Council who manage the tunnel as to details of the closure period. I am also in touch with the DLR to see what provision will be made for the many cyclists who need to cross the river.

I have been asked by a number of tunnel users about cyclists riding in the tunnel, which is a danger for those of us who are on foot. Walking your bike through the tunnel only adds a few minutes, but it creates a great deal of good will, particularly amongst the elderly and those with youngsters.

These are the very people we need the support of when we, as elected representatives, are calling for more facilities for cyclists.

Importantly for all of us we need the tunnel out of action for as short a period as possible. ■

Cllr Peter Golds
Councillor for Blackwall and Cubitt Town

Pedalling pilgrim...

warmshowers.org is a web site for touring cyclists and friends around the world that are willing to offer each other help and hospitality on their travels. Having cleared out my spare room of junk and bike bits and finally turned it back into a bedroom, I decided maybe I could put up a few fellow cyclists on their way for a few nights.

Eventually I was contacted by Sean, a touring cyclist from Australia looking for a place to stay for a few nights at the end of his tour before returning home.

Sean had been on the road for 9 months, on the last section of his 'Cape to Cape' tour, some 9000km from Singapore to Cape Finisterra, Spain, taking in the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the ancient pilgrimage pathway of St James.

His motivation for doing this mammoth trek, apart from a sense of adventure, promoting maximum use of the bicycle as a form of environmentally sustainable transport, and to raise money for WaterAid, an international NGO dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people.



Sean arrived in Tower Hamlets having cycled from Portsmouth, with a very loaded bike – front and back panniers with added rucksack and camping gear. (One set of Marathon Plus tyres and no punctures!)

During his stay in London, Sean met up with a few Wheelers, and of course we gave him a great Tower Hamlets welcome with a slap-up meal, friendly faces, and a few drinks. We also dropped in to London Fields to see off the folks doing the Dunwich Dynamo, although we couldn't tempt Sean to do the 200km overnight ride... after 9 months in the saddle, he was looking forward to a bit of a well-deserved rest!

You can read about Sean's adventures, the bike, and maybe donate to his cause, at www.cape2cape.info

Definitely one of the coolest solo bike tourers I have met, and was pleased he could stop by. A much better use for my spare room than storing junk....! ■

Rob Lister

Towpath action

Tower Hamlets Wheelers are organising a series of demonstrations during the summer promoting safer cycling on our borough's towpaths.



Anti-social cycling along the canals is probably the most often aired gripe that's raised on our email group and the main thing people moan about when visiting us at events etc. So we thought we'd do something to demonstrate that we're not happy about it either, raise more awareness of the problem and hopefully change the attitudes of at least a few of the transgressors.

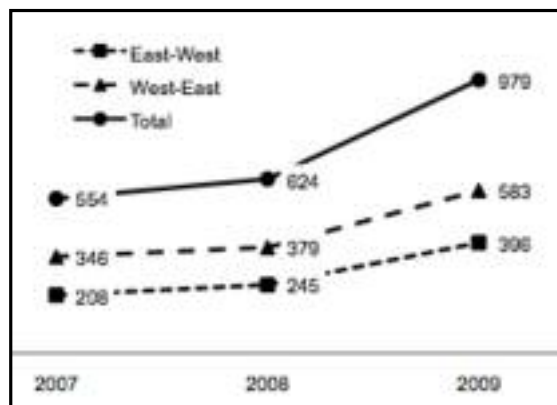
Look out on our website for dates and locations when you'll be able to join in and show your support for keeping speed down and giving pedestrians priority. ■

Owen Pearson

Counting on commuters...

For the last three years during our Bike Week Cyclists' Breakfast on Narrow Street, Limehouse we've carried out a cycle count. As many will know this is one of the main east-west cycle routes linking the City and Canary Wharf. It is to be a part of one of Boris's Cycle Highways (see main article).

The numbers recorded this year show a huge increase. We don't know why the numbers have rocketed so much - it was a glorious sunny morning, maybe many kept on riding after taking to two wheels during the previous week's tube strike - but confirms what we're all seeing, there are more and more joining in pedalling to work!



Bike week 2009

June 13-21st saw another Bike Week, with Wheelers arranging a packed programme of rides and activities. Many of this year's events were particularly aimed at those new to cycling, and we saw many familiar as well as new faces.

The week kicked off with the Pedals to Pedalos ride.. A leisurely ride to Hyde Park, and then hired some Pedalos to pedal around the Serpentine. We did attempt to 'race' however we noticed that it doesn't particularly matter how fast one tries to pedal these things, they just don't go any faster!

Tuesday morning was the traditional Cyclists' Breakfast on Narrow street. Wheelers volunteers handed out morning munchies, tea and coffee to any passing cyclists who cared to stop for a few minutes on their way to work. We counted a record number of cyclists!

Fast forward to Thursday evening, with David T doing a re-run of the now infamous Chicken Run ride, taking in some of the East End's finest late-night chicken emporiums.. One participant described it as quirky, silly and yet strangely interesting....

Friday night saw fun and frolics with the legendary Glamour Ride, now in its fifth fabulous year! About 35 participants put on their glad rags and glammed it up into town, to show that cycling isn't all about lycra. Judging this year's glamour was a tough job for Leigh... everybody had made great efforts, and some had scrubbed up worryingly well!

See www.glamour-ride.org and start planning your outfit for next year!



Back to reality (and more conventional attire) for Saturday, where we linked up with Cycling for Health to offer two easy beginners' rides. The first heading down the towpath to Limehouse, and the second slightly longer Lee ride in the afternoon. More new and familiar faces.

Sunday saw us unwind in style, relaxing in the sunshine with a picnic and get-together at Victoria Park.... Thanks to all who helped out with our bike week events.... Next year we'll do it all again! ■

Rob Lister

Bike fix-athon!

Sunday 19th July found 6 Wheelers in King Edward Memorial Park Shadwell, acting as "Dr Bike" to the Leukaemia London Bikeathon charity cycle ride. With over 4000 cyclists scheduled to come through the park the surgery was busy all day, and the final casebook was:

- Inflation (no perforation) - 41
- Transmission - 17
- Retardation - 14
- Perforation rectification - 11
- Assorted insecurities - bottom end - 6 (1 terminal), other appendages - 12
- Lubrication - 4
- Wobbles - 3 (including a spoke transplant)
- Posterior alignment - 2
- Other assorted inflictions - 8 (mostly involving cable tie splints, but also three cases of a plastic cup graft onto a tyre*)

And we're pleased to announce that only one bike was declared dead, and all others managed to leave the park under pedal power. Sadly, the track pump suffered a respiratory failure during the afternoon and is currently undergoing open-plunger surgery. We wish it a speedy recovery.

We make that about 1 in 40 of the riders needing Wheelers' therapy. So a very worthwhile day and a good way for those of us who are not tempted by charity rides ourselves to do something for a good cause.

Our regular surgery hours are 11:00-15:00, last Saturday of the month, Boxing Club, Limehouse Town Hall, where we provide assistance to sick bikes and tea and cakes to the owners. Look forward to seeing you there...

* An unorthodox procedure necessitated by us forgetting to bring any tyre boots.



Wheelers Medical Corps

Rides and events

Please check our web site, or call the ride leader in advance, as times/details sometimes change!

August

Wednesday, 12th August

MONTHLY WHEELERS MEETING

Meet at St Margarets House, 21 Old Ford Road 7.30-9.00pm - everyone welcome. Followed by a visit to a local pub from 9.15pm.
Contact: **Owen**.

Thursday, 13th August

ACE CAFÉ AFTERWORKER

Easy 12 mile ride to the legendary Ace Café Stonebridge Park – a Wheelers favourite! Details to be announced – see web site.
Contact: **Keith** (07944 177343)

Sunday, 23rd August

CROSSNESS RIDE (EASY)

Afternoon ride along the Thames to visit Crossness Pumping Station on the last scheduled steaming day of 2009. Details TBC. Contact **Neville**. (020 7537 7821)

Saturday, 29th August

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Monthly Workshop – 11am-3.00pm at Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road.

Sunday, 30th August

BREAKFAST RIDE (EASY)

Cafe breakfast at about 9:15am. 15-20 miles in total. Meet at 8.00am on top of the Green Bridge, Mile End Park.
Contact: **Caroline**.

Sunday, 30th August

GRAVEYARDS OF SOUTH LONDON RIDE

Continuation of our rides in 2007 and 2008, an exploration of some of the South London cemeteries (Norwood and Nunhead), finishing with a swim at the lido. Meet on top of Green Bridge, Mile End Park (time TBC)
Contact: **Steve/Gerry**.(07870 365533)

September

Saturday, 5th September

ST. BARNABAS COMMUNITY FETE

12-6pm at Wennington Green (Grove Rd/Roman Rd junction) www.bowstock.org We will be there with our info stall and Dr Bike stand. Contact **Neville** (020 7537 7821) if you can help out on the day.

Sunday, 6th September

EPPING FOREST & CHURCH TEAS RIDE

(Easy/Moderate) A day out up the Lee Valley with lunch at Epping and Tea at Upshire Church. (provisional date TBC)

Wednesday, 9th September

MONTHLY WHEELERS MEETING

- See 12th August.

Sunday, 13th September

SPITALFIELDS SHOW AND GREEN FAIR

We'll be at this great community event with our info stall and Dr. Bike Stand. Contact: **Neville** (020 7537 7821)

Saturday, 26th September

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Monthly Workshop – See 29th August

Sunday 27th September

Sunday 27th September

BREAKFAST RIDE

- See 30th August

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