

# East London Cyclist

www.wheelers.org.uk

APRIL / MAY 2008

THE NEWSLETTER FOR TOWER HAMLETS WHEELERS • LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

## Bikeworks wonders

I have known about Bikeworks for over a year now since they came to Tower Hamlets. But never realised the extent of the work they actually do – until I dropped in one Saturday.

Their new premises at Gun Wharf, right next to Victoria Park, has provided them at last with the facilities they need to maximise the services they offer to the community.

I could go on about their shiny new workshop with bike repair facilities; their imaginative and practical bike recycling project; their bike training schemes for children and adults; their very reasonable bike repair, sale and hire services, and a myriad of other ambitious plans in the pipeline.

But – what impressed me the most was seeing for myself their new inclusive cycling club, which started on 23rd February and will continue every other Saturday from 1.00pm – 3.00pm.

The new premises mean Bikeworks is ideally located to promote inclusive cycling for all including club members, family members and carers, with bicycles suitable for everyone's individual cycle needs in an environment that's safe and friendly.

They offer the opportunity to meet, talk and of course cycle together around the park for fun, leisure, health and fitness, with a selection of scooters, two wheelers, tandems, recumbents, wheelchair and hand cycles.

Having thought I was just going to drop in, have a chat and take a couple of photographs for this article, I got roped in to doing a few small jobs by Jim and instructor Digger, and had a really eye-opening afternoon.

I had a go at riding a couple of the special bikes and had the pleasure of watching a young woman arrive in a wheelchair, transfer to a recumbent tricycle, and take off around the park – independently – for over an hour. ➔



Bikeworks is a not-for-profit social enterprise and is always looking for volunteers to help out during sessions, moving bicycles, and stewarding riders around the park.

For more information, call Jim Blakemore on 07968 681 633 or 020 8980 7998, or e-mail him at: [jim@bikeworks.org.uk](mailto:jim@bikeworks.org.uk) ■

Robert Lister

## Buddy good training!

You may have noticed that people in many other London boroughs can get free cycle training and wondered whether it is available here in TH. The good news is that yes it is - via the Wheelers Bike Buddy scheme. Aimed at new cyclists, complete beginners and existing cyclists it can increase their skills and confidence riding in traffic. It offers free professional cycle training and support including route finding, bicycle maintenance and advice on all cycling related matters. Loan bikes are available for the training.

We have some funding for the entire borough, including some from the St Katharine and Shadwell Trust, and would particularly welcome applications from those who live or work in Shadwell and Wapping. We have publicised training in the area, but please encourage anyone you know who may be interested to get in touch, or see our web site for more details. ■

<http://www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/bikebuddy/>

Caroline Fenton

## Victoria Park



The borough are drawing up a lottery bid for long term renovation and development of Victoria Park. The Wheelers and Hackney Cyclists have put in a joint response to the

first stage proposals and many are saying let's do the obvious and close Grove Road to private cars. What do you think? Would you like to see Grove Road become an integral part of the park?

THW mooted this idea at a well-attended recent meeting between the LBTH and the Victoria Park Society. The Head of Parks was present and responded that it was a road traffic engineers department issue that would include consulting Islington as it was a major route (disagreement in the room). Plus too many other factors in play, the Olympics being the obvious. My view? Seems sad that the future of the Park is determined by 3 weeks of sporting razzmatazz, which has already lost that corner of the borough other facilities. Read the full response at:

<http://victoriapark.pbwiki.com/FrontPage> ■

Geraldine Matthews

## Isle of Dogs chaos

The building work around Canary Wharf is causing chaos for cyclists – we now have Marsh Wall closed to westbound traffic, and the path around Canary Riverside closed completely. The riverside path was part of National Cycle Network route 1, and, with the local Sustrans Rangers, we have been in discussions with Canary Wharf Management group about getting a sensible diversion.

Unfortunately the best that can be done is to divert the southbound route over the top of the roundabout, and the northbound route underneath. Canary Wharf Management Group have funded new diversion signs and have erected most of them - we're chasing them to put up the rest. It's not a great solution, but is better than having the route disappear altogether.

In the medium to longer term, Sustrans are attempting to get much of route 1 on the Isle of Dogs moved to the riverside path, which will be a great improvement, particularly for leisure cyclists. ■

Dave Allison

## No hole in this polo

Polo - country houses, horses and Pimms...

Not necessarily. Since May 2007 a growing group of people have been playing bicycle polo in a fenced basketball court on Brick Lane, E2. The game, played on grass, was popularised in 19th century Ireland quickly spreading around the world. While the traditional game of cycle polo is still played on grass fields in several countries, "hardcourt polo" (as played on Brick Lane) is gaining popularity especially in the US.

First played in South London a few years ago it failed to become a regular occurrence but games in East London have been taking place every Sunday for the last 8 months. Now, thanks in part to the popularity of Brick Lane Bike Polo, there is currently a regular "South of the river" game happening every week, and Trixie Chix ([www.trixiechix.com](http://www.trixiechix.com)), a Bethnal Green based all women's cycling group also play weekly.



The event in Brick Lane has been growing since it started, last October the first Brick lane Bike Polo Tournament took place with over 250 people attending and teams from around the country. And we are currently in talks with Hackney council to throw the second Tournament. While most people choose to play on fixed-wheel bikes with a very low gear ratio the games are open to anyone with a bike. Come along and use one of the communal homemade polo mallets and see how you get on. Every Sunday 1:30pm onwards, basketball court at the corner of Brick Lane and Shacklewell St., E2. ■

<http://bricklanebikepolo.wordpress.com>

Words: Rakan. Photo: Matt / Roxy Erickson

# Planning to close – closing the Plan

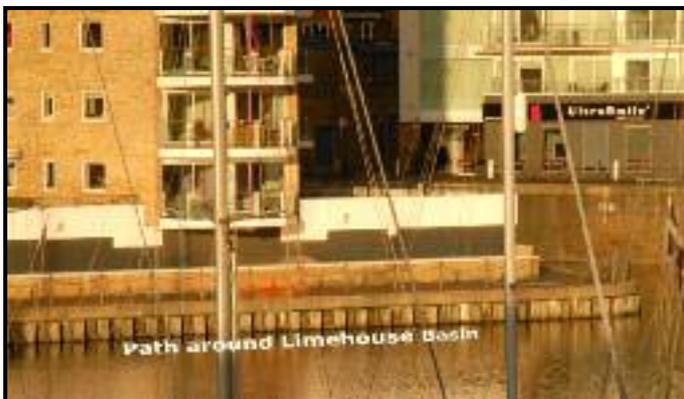
Thanks to our friend in Southwark, Barry Mason, we were alerted to a planning application that would effectively close part of the path around Limehouse Basin.

Many cyclists use this path en-route from Hackney and Bethnal Green along the Regents Canal and into Canary Wharf or west towards the City. As a result the council planning office received seven objections to the path being closed by high wrought iron gates. Four of these objections were as a direct result of the notice being circulated by Barry.

On the grounds that the gates would....

1. Restrict full public access.... create an unacceptable level of segregation and
2. Would appear visually intrusive forming an inappropriate development giving the impression of a gated community failing to contribute to the permeability of the urban environment....

The application was refused planning permission.



This success shows that in some cases reasonable objections can have positive outcomes. This route avoiding steps and providing a particularly pleasant bit of scenery in the East End has been preserved. The applicant does have the right of appeal but will need to revise the plan radically in order to overcome the strength of the Development Control Plans that which would have been breached. Please support our campaigns by taking the time to write these important letters and emails ensuring safe and sensible routes are maintained for cyclists and all other public uses. ■

Ralph Withers

## Maintenance Tip...

Always tape about a metre of good quality gaffer tape to your frame (round and round) for use when your lights fall off, mudguards rattle or lose a bolt or a hundred and one other uses. A temporary bodge that is quick and easy and does no damage. ■

# Bike Week 2008

Tower Hamlets Wheelers are already putting together a Bike Week programme with events to suit everyone. This includes a picnic in Mile End Park with fun and games such as a cycle obstacle course. The main point of the picnic, apart from having a good time, will be to celebrate and advertise our Millennium Mile Post, which is at the southern end of the Green Bridge.

Our Bike Week will have rides for all abilities and interests. In previous years our rides have included: easy after worker rides around the borough; historical rides; a ride around the borough boundary (more interesting than it may sound); up the Lea valley.

The ride to top them all though, and the one you must be seen on, is the Glamour Ride, which is now so famous that the Wheelers are now known as the glamorous wing of the LCC!

We also have a stand and Dr. Bike at many other events, such as the Green Fair during the year.

Bike Week 2008 will take place from 14th – 22nd June and is this year challenging families to get out of their cars, step away from the TV and get on their bikes. The call to action is 'Free the Family' and rediscovers how much fun you can have together on a bike. Thousands of free cycling events will provide plenty of opportunities for people to get on their bikes. There will be something for everyone from total novices to passionate cyclists.

Keep an eye out for our newsletter and the LCC magazine for further details closer to the time and we hope to see you at one, or more, of our events. ■

<http://www.bikeweek.org.uk/>

David Tuckwell

# Greenwich Foot Tunnel

We received a response from Greenwich Council to our letter acknowledging the problems with the lifts, and advising that they are applying for funding for replacement. No timescales were provided.

They also advised that an additional lift attendant would be starting in late January to reduce staff shortages, although this doesn't seem to have had much effect yet. As Tower Hamlets Council jointly funds the lift, we have written to the Millwall councillors requesting that they take up this issue on behalf of Tower Hamlets residents. ■

Dave Allison

# Rides and events

Check our web site for the latest information....

## March

**Saturday, 29th March**

### BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

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

## April

**Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> April - Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> April**

### WEEKEND AWAY IN ESSEX/SUFFOLK

We have booked the new Stour Valley bunkhouse near Manningtree for our exclusive use. On Saturday and Sunday we are planning to organise at least two rides - one relatively easy, the other a little more challenging (or with less time for sightseeing and eating and drinking!), on Friday you can get there after work, or if you can get the day off, join us for a ride out there (possibly from Colchester) or do your own thing.

Contact: **Caroline** on 07967 139491.

**Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> April**

### 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**.

**Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> April**

### BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

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

**Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> April**

### HEADCORN, KENT (EASY RIDE)

Scenic oasthouses, countryside, early spring blooms. 30 miles. Pub lunch after 15 miles. 9.00 start. Meet on top of Green Bridge at Mile End Park. Train from London Bridge.

Contact: **Steve**

## May

**Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> May**

### BLUEBELLS OF SPRING (MEDIUM RIDE)

Still planning this one but train from Waterloo to Milford, 30/40 mile ride around Surrey, stop at Winkworth Arboretum to see fields of bluebells in full bloom as well as 1000 different trees and shrubs. Pub lunch along the way. Meet on top of the Green Bridge at Mile End Park (time tbc)

Contact: **Kerry** on 07917 616900

**Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> May**

### 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**.

**Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> May**

### BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

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

## Contacts

### Coordinator

Owen Pearson  
07903 018970  
owen@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

### Treasurer

David Allison  
dave@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

### Secretary

Steve Collins  
07870 365533  
steve@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

### Rides Co-ordinator

Caroline Fenton  
07967 139491  
caroline@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

### Campaigns/Newsletter

Robert Lister  
07973 815198  
robl@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

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We will be resuming our popular easy After Work rides during April/May. See our web site for more details...