

East London Cyclist

www.wheelers.org.uk

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THE NEWSLETTER FOR TOWER HAMLETS WHEELERS • LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Latest on Cable Street

Following the article on Cable Street in the last issue of East London Cyclist, Wheelers saw revised plans from LBTH to extend the cycle track two way for the last section between Devonport Street and Butcher Row. The proposed crossing has now been changed to a new 'S' shape so that it would not require cyclists to make 90-degree turns.

Work is progressing at the Butcher Row end of Cable Street. Wheelers feel the design demonstrates a lack of commitment and are concerned about the impact this will have on the crossing at Butcher Row.

Gary Cummins writes...

Some years ago, Cable St. traffic priorities were changed. Principally between Leman St and Cannon Street Rd, cyclists using the cycle path now had to give way to traffic entering/leaving Cable St via side roads, when they used to enjoy the same priority as motorists using the main road.

I wrote to Margaret Cooper, LBTH Transport Head and part of her answer justifying the changes was reported in the THW newsletter back in February 2005.



On April 26th, her statement was put to Andrew Colski, Head of Vulnerable Road Users branch, DfT at the Roadpeace conference, 'Murder most Foul: are we doing enough for young people, or still blaming the most vulnerable?'. His answer was that no such advice existed. Over to you Ms Cooper... ■

Commercial Road/Burdett Road

Owen and I attended an on-site meeting to discuss improvements to this junction for cyclists. The Link 196 Cycle Route Implementation and Stakeholder Plan (CRISP) identified this as a major obstacle for North-South cycling in the borough.

There were about 20 people representing TfL, London Buses, TH Council and the transport consultants. The overall tone was very positive and it was interesting to get the different viewpoints – the bus man was a mine of information about traffic light sequences and other things which don't always occur to you as a cyclist. We had good common ground with him too as generally work to improve bus flow at locations like this benefits cyclists as well. As expected there are no easy solutions here but there will be some proposals in the near future that we will be consulted on. We also learnt of a useful "by pass" route via Pixley St and Salmon Lane, definitely worth considering if travelling south towards Canary Riverside as it misses all the traffic lights.

If you are interested in being involved in this type of consultation then please contact Owen and/or come along to one of our monthly meetings! ■

Caroline Fenton

Bikeworks award

Tower Hamlets based Bikeworks, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company based in east London, was highly commended in the Best Community Cycling Initiative category at the London Cycling Awards 2007.

Manager **Jim Blakemore** comments: "Bikeworks are really pleased to have won this award and hope that over the coming year we will be expanding our training opportunities and developing more community cycling projects as well as working with the Wheelers and their Bike Buddy scheme."

Bikeworks aims to encourage inclusive cycling for all, including people with disabilities and other excluded groups, and offer a range of services including cycle training courses, rental, repairs, re-cycling, travel planning and sales. For more information see: www.bikeworks.org.uk or call 07968 681 633. ■

Wheelers weekend

Once again the Wheelers had their Autumn Weekend away. This is an annual event in the Wheelers calendar, during which we travel out of London and sample some of the English countryside, as well as a bit of history and culture, whilst cycling distances of between 45 to 60 miles a day.

It is normally a long weekend, but this year most people travelled early Saturday and returned late Sunday. Peter was the only member of the group to arrive on Friday.

This year the destination was Castle Hedingham in North Essex. It was, in Ken's (the ride leader) eyes, close enough to London for people to ride out. However, none of the participants chose to do so before commencing Saturday's 100K ride. The stay was at the Castle Hedingham Hostel, which is yet another YHA location to be closing soon (January 2008).

Saturday

A quiet train trip to Braintree, then a short ride to Castle Hedingham. After that we unloaded bags then set out for the day ride which included a lunch stop at Cavendish, meeting up with Brenda and Kerry at Long Melford, tea at Lavenham, a stop at Sudbury to allow Peter to get his seat fixed before returning to Castle Hedingham.

Braintree to Castle Hedingham – 14K, Day ride – 86K
Total distance ridden – 100K

Sunday

Easy peasy, and pacey, as we rode down from Castle Hedingham with a break for lunch at High Roding before most people got the train from Chelmsford back into town Ride to Chelmsford: 66K, Castle Hedingham to High Roding – 45K
My total distance for the day – 122K

Participants' pen pictures in no special order:

Jane: She did well, stretching herself to ride a longer distance, and at a faster pace, than she usually rides.

Brenda: Sharp and speedy. That applies to her cycling as well; Apart from this year's Dynamo, this is the first ride that we have been on together, despite the length of time I have known her.

Peter: No comments about New Zealand's national sport but I would recommend that he joins me in some of The Black Knight's workshops to overcome a natural hesitation in cycle maintenance. I believe that he enjoyed the weekend despite riding all day on Saturday, with his knees around his chest because of a broken seat clamp! ↗



Ian: As usual, he sought out the occasional photo opportunity during the ride and enjoyed the scenery throughout, leading to his following others most of the Sunday ride, and on one occasion missing a turning.

Kelvin: An old friend of mine who deserves a mention for leading when I wanted a rest or dropping back to stay with others when I wanted to ride too fast. He also gets an award as he bought me tea at Blackmore after we delivered everyone else, safely, to Chelmsford to return home.

Kerry: At last I managed to see him with his camera. I reckon in the three years I have known him, he has taken hundreds of photos without me even noticing. Maybe I just need to ride behind people more often than I could see what they get up to on rides.

All that remains to say is thanks to all that came along and I hope that I did not manage to pressure you into riding too far/fast but that you did have a good weekend and there was sufficient non-biking activity to keep you happy for the weekend. Special thanks go to Gerry Matthews who had done most of the organising but was unable to join us as she fell victim to a cold/virus and was restricted to home for the weekend. If you want my usually verbose report then you need to check the website where it is posted along with, hopefully, some of the many pictures that were taken during the weekend. ■

Ride report: Ken Peters, Photo: Ian Welsby

Stocking filler...

Back in September at the Spitalfields Green Fair, a stall intrigued me with some unusual wristbands for sale. Stallholder and local designer/maker Amy explained that they were not only wristbands, but ankle bands too! The bands are cleverly designed to be not only stylish, but reflective (due to a special Italian fabric) and non-slip too! It took me a while to choose which colour to buy (gold, if you must know), and I am still very pleased with my purchase. The band has press-studs that allow for adjustment, and very useful for keeping my jeans out of my chainset! With Christmas on its way, this item would make a great stocking filler, and comes in boy colours too! www.velorution.biz
Contact Amy: amy@cyclodelic.co.uk or www.cyclodelic.co.uk ■

Tracy Karkut-Law

Wedding bells...

Hard man... the expression suggests a thug, but in its rather old fashioned 'sportif' terminology it means indomitable, spirited and in this case athlete, as well as a man possessed of a great deal of humility.

In recent years, **Colin Waters** was the closest we had to an athlete at Wheelers, a person who had run several marathons, including the exotic Parisian one; had completed a Lands End to John-O-Groats ride in just six days, (having to purchase a brand new bike on the way as his chosen machine's frame cracked en route) and had ridden the London-Edinburgh-London Audax in three days or so.

Colin was also the person who, on your behalf set about bringing the issue of bicycle theft to the notice of the GLA by lobbying at the highest level, literally (on a couple of occasions in his company I attended meetings at City Hall in view of Livingstone's penthouse offices).

Well, Colin has left the borough and gone south to Balham, he has also married recently, and a few members of Wheelers attended one of the happiest weddings I'd been to in a while down in the New Forest. Colin is a decent, clever chap, reluctant to make folks aware of his own input but equally keen to take on tasks like the newsletter distribution and doing worthy favours for members of the group. He is still about and rides with us occasionally.

Colin, we wish you and your new bride Michelle well. Good luck! ■



Gary Cummins

Hmmm...

What's this facility on New Road for?

This type of token safety measure is a waste. LBTH can say they've done it, spent X amount improving conditions for cyclists, but it's just paint on the road, 'my four year old could have painted that'. Cycling, as a fast-increasing, important mode of transport, deserves greater consideration and sensible investment.



When provision is off road (Mile End Park, river paths) it's easy, but we're in danger on the roads. You get to tricky bits and facilities run out, and where they don't (Advance Stop Lines) they aren't enforced and are abused by motorists. ↗

Badly planned and implemented facilities don't improve cycling conditions. LBTH may say, apart from improving 'safety', it reinforces other road users' awareness of cyclists. It's better to increase awareness by having more cyclists, encouraging more by installing facilities that really provide for them. Facilities trampled 'undertyre' by motorists are degraded.

LBTH ask what we need without listening well (THW objected to the roundabout facility south of Victoria Park and they put it in!) or think some things too difficult, continue the status quo favouring motor vehicles, degrading the environment for the greater number of other users.

The council does not run all roads in Tower Hamlets. Transport for London administers major roads, but LBTH can represent the local community to them. On a recent site visit by consultants, and others, looking at provision for cyclists along the A11 (a road crossing the entire borough) no one from LBTH was present.



More examples of poorly designed facilities can be seen at the Warrington Cycle Campaign's 'Facility of the month' page at: www.warringtoncyclecampaign.co.uk – They've amassed such a collection, there is now a book out, entitled *Crap Cycle Lanes* – proceeds go to the Cyclists Defence Fund. ■

David Tuckwell

...Hell's bells!

"Keith, I liked your bell piece in the last *East London Cyclist*... the 'backwards to go forwards' statement was a nice reminder that digital/electronic is not always the way to go in this hi-tech world. Had I written this article I'd have said:

'The humble bicycle bell, a piece of British sh**e engineering, so designed that two weeks after purchase the lower half of the body had filled with water, and the internal mechanism was so rusted it resembled the sunken innards of the Titanic.

On approaching an unwary pedestrian, a push at the handle would elicit 111 decibels of silence, a harder push gave a definite but quiet 'gnrhwhh' and the handle remained firmly in the 'away' position requiring halting, dismounting and a two thumbed tug back into position, more akin to cocking a weapon than ringing a bell. The top half of the body came in several colours, chrome, red, or picture decal (mine was Flintstones), but these all turned to rust within days, or were unscrewed by 'friends' and chucked away. The ping bell though still works, and has saved me from many encounters with stepping out pedestrians.'

But I didn't write the article so well done for doing it, as you are a tiny bit older than I, you may have had better quality bells available..." ■

Gary Cummins, Making us laugh on the e-group!

Rides and events

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

November

Wednesday, 14th November

MONTHLY WHEELERS MEETING

Meet at **St Margaret's 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, 24th November

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Monthly Workshop – 11am-3.00pm at **Limehouse Town Hall**, 646 Commercial Road Turn up early to allow time for big jobs!

Bicycle Security Awareness Event, in association with Limehouse Police.

Come along to the workshop to get your bike security marked and registered. Officers from Limehouse Safer Neighbourhoods Team will be on hand to record your bike's details and offer security advice..

December

Saturday, 8th December

CYCLE PROTEST RIDE

Ride to Lincoln's Inn Fields, Holborn, to join the National Climate March. Meet at 9:00 am, on top of the Green Bridge at Mile End Park. Contact: **Rob**. (07973 815198) www.campaigncc.org

Wednesday, 12th December

MONTHLY WHEELERS MEETING

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

Sunday, 16th December

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS RIDE I

Meet on the Green Bridge at 3.45 for 4.00 departure. Ends at candle-lit carol service, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Bow, 6 p.m. Contact: **Neville** (020 7537 7821)

Sunday, 23rd December

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS RIDE II

Meet on the Green Bridge at 4.45 for 5.00 departure. Ends at candle-lit carol service, Limehouse Parish Church, 7 p.m.

There is no bicycle maintenance workshop in December. ...Happy Christmas!

January

Wednesday, 9th January

MONTHLY WHEELERS MEETING

Meet at **St Margaret's 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, 26th January

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

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

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