

East London Cyclist

www.wheelers.org.uk

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2008

THE NEWSLETTER FOR TOWER HAMLETS WHEELERS • LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Good medicine...

Doctors and staff at **St Stephen's Health Centre**, William Place, E3 are very excited that they can now offer individual cycle training and group rides to patients. A pilot study has been set up, funded by Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust (department of public health).

Often GPs will have discussions with patients about exercise, and have been able to refer to gym "exercise on prescription" schemes. I have found that when I have the conversation with patients about what sort of exercise they might be interested in taking up, many express an interest in cycling. Often they are in their fifties or sixties, and haven't been on a bike for several decades, and would like to give it a try again. Sometimes they have never learnt, and would enjoy this challenge; or they are already competent cyclists, but would like more confidence in traffic. This scheme differs from the existing "buddy scheme" and also from self/voucher funded cycle training. Firstly, through the encouragement by GPs in targeting those who would most benefit from exercise (for weight management, blood ↗



pressure, diabetes, anxiety, depression), it will involve "hard to reach" groups. Secondly, you don't need to own a bike to take part. The scheme is run by Bikeworks, based on the edge of Victoria Park, who have access to accredited trainers, and a fleet of bikes. These bikes can be used on the group rides also. Group

rides will be at a leisurely pace, mostly on Saturday afternoons, mostly off road, so that they can appeal to even the least confident riders.

Questionnaires on "self efficacy", "illness perception", mental health and simple measures of physical health will be carried out before and after the pilot, and anonymised results analysed.

The first participants have been delighted with the scheme. We are hoping that some will migrate to more ambitious rides, and will be able to get advice along the way on practical issues such as buying bikes (Bikeworks have some recycled second hand bikes, for instance). We will be

looking for volunteers to escort some of the short group rides (up to 2hours). All will be in the company of a trainer. Wheelers volunteers will be assisting with the rides, and participants will be invited to our workshop for friendly help and advice, as well as other rides. For further details contact:

rachel.bower@gp-f84034.nhs.uk, 07968 763796 ■

Dr. Rachel Bower

Planning ahead

You may have noticed major road works in Aldgate, Stepney Way and Whitechapel Road/Mile End Road.

The Wheelers commented on the plans for these and you should be seeing changes to the road layouts, which benefit you and other cyclists.

We are all volunteers and are representing cyclists in the borough as well as having fun, we get to learn new skills and meet new people all the time. We are the voice of everyone who cycles in Tower Hamlets... but if we never hear from you, you don't have a voice.

We welcome your comments and suggestions and you can send them to one of the email addresses on our website. ■

Strategy workshop

Recently, the number of cyclists has increased dramatically, the Olympic site is having a major impact on cycling in Tower Hamlets, we have expanded our range of activities and there have been two consultations, which will have great impact within the borough.

As a result, we are considering how and where to direct our energies and resources to achieve the greatest effect and developing a strategy.

Everyone who cycles in the borough, whether a commuter or resident, should be considered and we would like to hear from you. **The Strategy Workshop is planned for 22 November. (Venue TBC) For more information, please see our web site!** ■

David Tuckwell

Jam Factory Ride

Congratulations to those who did the Dunwich Dynamo. Wheelers went to the Tiptree jam factory instead. The cream tea was fantastic, I tell you, huge scones and of course there was the jam. James Bond used to name-drop Little Scarlet (strawberry) jam, along with all the other loads of product placements. Ian Fleming must have gotten cases of it for years.

There was a quick wade around in the ocean at West Mersea with the jellyfish, as well as a cafe that serves 2 egg sandwiches (a welcome technological innovation from the normal 1 egg ones) and huge helpings of chips.

We didn't get trapped on Mersea Island after all, but if we had, the Essex boys zipping around on their jet skis could have rescued us. Tollesbury was quaint with the flooded road. And we got 2 minutes of rain and were forced to hide out under a boat. Somebody needs to organize a ride back to try out the pool. It is posted that they have a very strict limit of 1000 people in the pool, we need to try and get 1001 in there to see what happens. Personally, I don't think you can fit more than 960 people in there.



And the jam factory, having taken home the rhubarb ginger jam, I can recommend it. I'm still trying to figure out how that strange tricycle in the museum works. For a factory, it was a pretty decent museum. Of course, I was probably totally on a sugar and cream high at that point from the cream tea.

Thanks to all that I pumped for information about travel across Russia, China, etc. All has been assimilated and incorporated into the round the world travel plan.

...And that was the last ride report we'll be getting from Kerry, as he and Che are now well into their round the world trip, ending up in Australia where they'll be settling down. A big thank you to Kerry for providing so many reports and photo commentaries of our rides over the past few years, as well as taking his turn to lead some himself. No doubt they've tempted others to come along and experience a ride other than their commute for the first time, which is what it's all about – Owen.

Ride reports: <http://www.wheelers.org.uk/rides>

Kerry's travel blog: <http://mothlight.blogspot.com/> ■

Kerry Nice / Owen Pearson

C Charge Consultation

Transport for London are currently running a consultation exercise about the future of the West London congestion charge. We're not in the area affected, but we believe in the principle of discouraging unnecessary car use. If you agree, go to:

www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/roadusers/congestioncharging/westernextension and register your views. The consultation closes on 5/10/2008. ■

Support local independent bike shops

Recently I needed to replace a bolt on my eight-year old bicycle because the thread had stripped. I visited my local cycle shop, which was one of a large chain, only to be advised that they didn't stock individual nuts and bolts, but could offer a complete brake assembly instead. I wasn't surprised, but was disappointed by a solution that involved throwing away a perfectly good piece of equipment for the sake of one tiny component - we're trying to do sustainable, low-impact, low-cost transport here, but I don't think much of the cycle retail industry is helping. Actually, I was a little surprised that they didn't recommend a complete new bike - much better for their margins. Fortunately, a smaller, less smart, but much more helpful independent retailer (also located in Tower Hamlets) came to the rescue, and I was back on the road for 50 pence. Support your local independent cycle shops - that way they'll be there when you need them. ■

Dave Allison

Rain man...

People often ask, "What happens if it rains when you're on your bike?" and my answer is.. "Well... I generally get wet!" I always carry a waterproof jacket in my pannier in case it rains or gets cold. If the weather looks really bad, or particularly if I'm wearing trousers, [I think he means he usually wears shorts... but we're not sure.... Ed.] I may take waterproof trousers and possibly overshoes.

My bike has mudguards, I've never seen the advantage of not having them when cycling around town as they keep my bottom half dry even without waterproof clothing on.

As I'm based in an office, I keep a spare pair of shoes, socks, trousers and underpants in a draw just in case I get very wet on my way in. Staying in wet clothes is very unpleasant. If you have a benevolent employer, they may be prepared to install a shower and changing facilities for cyclists and runners, where you may be able to dry your clothes.

Of course, this article will no longer be relevant by the time this newsletter goes out, as it'll have stopped raining and we'll be into the Indian Summer, he says ever the optimist. ■

David Tuckwell

Closing paths

When new buildings grew out of the old docklands, planning authorities took as much care as they could, to make the created space as inclusive as possible, bless them. Such a policy was employed at Limehouse Basin where, although privately owned, the council insisted the public should have access around the whole of the old dock. Developers were required to build in paths so that anyone can cycle or walk around the whole circumference of the new Marina.

Now, one of the residential blocks has applied to the planners to close off a path on the north side of the Basin with large black iron gates, locked at night. The application was refused in February after cyclists and others lodged successful objections.

The proposers, the management company of Basin Approach, have made an appeal to the Inspectorate of Planning. This is not the first time such a fight has been launched for the closure of one of these paths at this location. They have all failed thank goodness. To allow such a closure would set a precedent and before long whole routes would be disappearing all over Docklands. Your campaigning and support to maintain the freedom to cycle and walk is vital. To help squash this appeal please send three copies of your letter to the Planning Inspectorate. The letter should include the reference number, your name and address and your objections.

The original application was turned down on two grounds because:

1. "It would restrict full public access resulting in an unacceptable form of development that would fail to achieve an inclusive and permeable environment and would create an unacceptable level of segregation. Contrary to various policy decisions.
2. The gates by virtue of the position and design would be visually intrusive...an inappropriate form of development.... impression of a gated community.... fail to contribute to the permeability of the urban environment...."

There are underlying future issues that may reasonably be envisaged: Precedent setting; Safety around the waters edge; forgetting to open the gates at agreed times; reliance on the security patrols to administer the opening/closing, lack of proper signage; keeping youths out of the area at night where they sometimes gather to socialise out of parental view; not to mention the reduction in cycling and walking provision.

The Inspectorate ref is APP/E5900/A/08/2083059/WF
The address to send your 3 copies is:
The Planning Inspectorate, 3/07 Kite Wing, Temple Quay House,
2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN before 29th
September 2008. ■

Ralph Withers

Green CRISP - Tower Hill to Limehouse Cut

Wheelers recently participated in a Green CRISP for the route from Tower Hill to Limehouse Cut. CRISP stands for Cycle Route Inspection and Stakeholder Plan, and past CRISPs have generally been about on road cycling. This one was a "green" CRISP covering a largely off road, or "Greenway" route, but applying similar principles – the aim was to "to undertake a review of existing conditions for cyclists, and walking where appropriate, giving consideration to any constraints, problems or indeed opportunities to improve facilities". This particular route is also considered to be relevant for travel to the Olympics

Greenways do present some different issues to on road routes - they are also very much for pedestrians and not all pedestrians welcome bicycles on off road routes (and having seen the behaviour of some cyclists you can see why!). The proposals then have to be a compromise between providing optimum facilities for cyclists and preserving the "leisure" nature of the route. I enjoy cycling this route when I am not in a hurry and I would like to keep it that way, not see it become a super fast commuter run.

For those not familiar with this route, it begins at the junction of St Katherine's Way, Tower Bridge Approach and East Smithfield, following through St Katherine's Dock, then via Hermitage Basin, the Ornamental Canal, Shadwell Basin, King Edward Memorial Park, the Thames Path and Narrow Street to Limehouse Basin.

The CRISP report makes a number of recommendations but the main ones that will be of interest are I think:

1. Provision of good quality cycle parking St Katharine's Dock
2. Creation of some smooth cycle channels along the St Katherine's way cobbles.
3. Improved crossing at Glamis Road (east end of Shadwell Basin)
4. Creation of a shared use cycle route along the south side of The Highway between Glamis Road and Spert St (to be used when the riverside park is closed at night)
5. Allowing two way cycling along Narrow Street between Spert St and Horseferry Rd (which will also be useful to those following the East-West NCN+ route along Cable St)
6. General improvement in signing. ■

Caroline Fenton

Top 'O The Morning....

Any users of the Victoria Park to River Lee route might have noticed that finally the ramp down beside the "Top O The Morning" pub to the canal is available for use, no longer gated against the public. Sustrans have been working on this one (it's part of NCN route 1) for many years and so it's great it's finally done.... It just shows that persistence does pay off. ■

Rides and events

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

September

Sunday, 21st September

LONDON FREEWHEEL

Fun mass participation ride to and around central London. Sign-up to join in at www.londonfreewheel.com

Saturday, 27th September

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

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

October

Wednesday, 8th October

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**.

Sunday, 12th October

CYCLE SHOW 2008

www.cycleshow.co.uk (book tickets in advance) Some of us will be riding up, so let me know if you want to come along. Contact: **Robert**

Sunday, 19th October

CROSSNESS RIDE

Easy ride east along the Thames to see the Crossness Pumping Station engines in steam (admission £5). Meet at 12.45 for 13.00 departure on top of the Green Bridge, Mile End Park. Contact: **Neville** (020 7537 7821)

Saturday, 25th October

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

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

Sunday 26th October

BREAKFAST RIDE

Easy ride up the canal and River Lee towpath before it gets busy. Breakfast at Springfield Cafe. Ideal for those with something else to do later in the day, or carry on up the river and make it a longer ride. Meet on top of the

Green Bridge at Mile End Park 08.00.

Contact: **Caroline**.

November

Wednesday, 12th November

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**.

Sunday 16th November

EASY CITY/EAST END RIDE

Details TBC, please see our web site nearer the time. Contact: **Caroline**.

Saturday, 22nd November

STRATEGY WORKSHOP

(Venue TBC.) See web site for more information. Come along and have your say and help us to plan for the future.

Saturday, 29th November

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

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

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