

The "Camden Cyclist"

Aug/Sep '03 Newsletter of Camden Cycling Campaign

Camden
Cycling
Campaign

Web site at: www.greengas.u-net.com

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Meetings in August & September

Monday 11th August and Monday 8th September at 7.30 pm. We meet in the Castlehaven Community Centre, opposite the Stags Head Pub, Hawley Street, NW1 on the second Monday of each month. You can bring your bike inside.

Doug Amer at September meeting

Doug Amer, Head of Street Policy at Camden Council will join us for a discussion at the CCC meeting on 8th September at 7.45 pm. He will address the cooperative roles of CCC and the council in achieving improvements for cycling within in the borough.



Photo: Paul Gasson

BikeFest: Obstacle course

Dr Bike was held by tradition outside West Hampstead library. James Brander reports: It was popular with locals, who brought a wide variety of bikes for a free check-up. Ranging from those who think ten miles enough for a day's cycling, to someone planning a year's trip round the mediterranean coast of Europe, North Africa and Turkey: all seemed genuinely appreciative of the help and advice given.

No major repairs were done, but a few bottom brackets were tightened, a few brakes centred and a few gears adjusted; I hope to everyone's satisfaction.

The message from the day was clearly that CCC needs to do more Dr. Bikes.



Photo: George Coulouris

BikeFest: Paul and daughter on freight bike

Report on Bike Week

Bike week got off to a good start with BikeFest. A big attraction was the collection of unusual bikes provided by BikeFix for people to try riding round a circuit. They included a freight bike, a variety of recumbents and a family rickshaw. Mike Burrows, the guru of cycle design was there too.

The younger children enjoyed themselves riding round a training obstacle course in Drummond Street.

Congratulations to Stefano Casalotti who organised it all. BikeFest was featured in BBC1's 'World of Politics' (on the same day at 12.30) in an item on Bike Week. This included plenty of footage of people riding around on their own or on the BikeFix bikes, as well as interviews of our members Stefano Casalotti, David Arditti and Richard Fletcher.

Cyclists breakfast, in its ninth year, attracted large numbers of regulars and passers by. The weather was fine and people had a good time, stopping for a chat and a snack on the way to work. Many thanks to Jane Boardman for organising it.



Photo: Lionel Shapito

Cyclists breakfast: Jane giving leaflets to a cyclist

Ride on the last day of Bike Week

Camden cyclists have been offered a busy schedule this year, thanks to James Brander. The program included 3 rides in Bike Week. James Brander reports on the last one:

Ten minutes!

That was how little the five of us missed the lifts at the Greenwich foot tunnel by, after riding out from Camden: down through the city; via Southwark Park and Millwall football ground to Deptford, where we joined the Waterlink Way. This is annoyingly interrupted at the moment by Thames water building a new pipeline, though most of it remains a quiet route linking a lot of South London Parks. Lunch in Kelsey Park amongst sparrows, thrushes and squirrels is followed by a traverse of Bromley suburbia which I haven't yet found a pleasant way of doing. Eventually, you arrive at Bromley Common, which seems much better in a group with the sun shining than it did when I originally found my way there on my own in the rain.

From there is a grizzly crossing of the A21 before Jubilee Park, which is always astonishingly bumpy. Alright on my 1944 bike, it's perhaps not a perfect surface for today's more sophisticated wheels.

Then there's tea to be had in the company of Roman legionaries at Chislehurst caves; relics of the ancient forest at Elmstead woods; Chinbrook meadows (where I once met eight lads riding their BMXs all bolted together - steering was quite an art); more tedious suburbs up to Blackheath and down past the Observatory to Greenwich before arriving, as I say, 10 minutes late for the lift out of the foot tunnel under the river.

The ride back from the Isle of Dogs uses first the well-signed National Cycle Route 1, before that heads off north, and then the famous Cable Street cycle lane, over which there were such arguments in the early days of cycle lanes in London.

About 50 miles, and a good day out, more or less satisfying my requirements of pleasant and largely traffic-free riding in London.

Ken Livingstone's 20 mph limit

Ken Livingstone allowed plenty of time for his presentation at the May cycle conference of CCN, CTC and LCC.

He said that since the introduction of congestion charging, cycling has gone up by 16% inside the zone and that the increased use of cycles and buses demonstrates that people can be separated from their cars. The one negative factor is that the increase in the speed of traffic is a danger for pedestrians and cyclists. He therefore plans to propose in his manifesto a 20 mph limit for all residential areas (about 90% of streets).

His action plan is designed to give people confidence to get back on cycles. Cycling and walking will promote health and reduce inequalities - London has a mix of very rich and very poor people. Half of the families in inner London have no access to a car, therefore they can gain mobility from cycling.

TfL will build LCN - 900 km of high quality routes, over 7 years, costing £100 million - to overcome the neglect in the 15 years since the GLC was abolished. They will ensure that funding given to boroughs for cycling will be spent on cycle facilities. Livingstone is determined to stop the school run -

the most dangerous time in a child's life, he said. He will promote safe routes to school.

Ken Livingstone plans to try to bring the Tour de France to London!

In response to a question about motor cycles and the congestion charge, he said that motor cycles will be charged when it becomes technically possible

Ken Livingstone's announcement was reported in the Sunday Times of 25th May 2003 in an article entitled: 'Livingstone plan for 20 mph London'. The article is available on the web at: www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-691832,00.html

Seven Stations Link: progress?

The consultation on the section of SSL running east from Judd Street to Grays Inn Road was due to be considered by Camden council on June 17th. Unfortunately this has been deferred until mid September. This is the last section of the SSL in Camden that requires the building of special cycle lanes. East of Grays Inn Road, the route will follow Ampton Street and then join the Islington section of SSL.

Mobile phone ban for drivers

The ban was announced on the BBC website on June 24th and widely reported in the press on the next day. See the BBC's web site at: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3015610.stm

From December, it will be illegal to use a handheld mobile phone while driving. This new offence will attract a fine and three penalty points. However, the ban will not apply to hands-free phones. Neither will it apply to the use of a phone while cycling.

In the government's recent public consultation, 90% of responses were in favour of a ban.

Traffic calming in Camden

The council's traffic calming proposals for the Primrose Hill area have led to vehement public protest by some residents in the area. The local press gave extensive coverage to the debate, which displayed a widely-held anti-hump fervour, together with strong objections to road closures.

People objecting to the proposals seem to have lost sight of the advantages of traffic calming. These were explained by Paul Gasson in an excellent article in Camden New Journal on June 26th., which is available at the following web address: www.george.jean.connectfree.co.uk/ccn/pg.cnj.26.6.03.html

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