

# The "Camden Cyclist"

Dec '03/Jan '04 Newsletter of Camden Cycling Campaign

Camden  
Cycling  
Campaign

Web site at: [www.greengas.u-net.com](http://www.greengas.u-net.com)

Mailing list: [CamdenCyclingCampaign-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:CamdenCyclingCampaign-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

## Dates for your diary

### Meetings in December and January

In the Castlehaven Community Centre, near the Stags Head Pub, Hawley Street, NW1 on the second Monday of each month at 7.30. You can bring your bike inside.

### Dec 8th: traditional CCC December social

We will celebrate at the Stag's Head at 8 pm after a short meeting at 7.30. Food provided, buy your own drinks.

### Jan 12th: talk by Kevin Mayne of CTC

Kevin Mayne, of the Cyclists Touring Club will give a talk at the January meeting at 7.45. Title:

*Camden and the national context for cycle campaigning*

He will outline the policies and campaigning approach of CTC in terms of the provision of cycling infrastructure and the aspects of health promotion and training. We hope to discuss with him how these can best be dovetailed with CCC's work locally, and any other relevant issues on the national cycling agenda.

### Cycling for Women

This project is running two free women's bike maintenance sessions and two focus groups on women's experiences of cycling in Lambeth; one of each in January and February. Childcare and travel expenses are provided. Please contact Alix Stredwick at the Women's Design Service 020 7490 5210 [astredwick@wds.org.uk](mailto:astredwick@wds.org.uk) if you wish to take part.

## Camley Street launch with Tom Young

There was an excellent turn out for the Camley Street launch at our November meeting. Paul Gannon's introduction told us that local people had often suggested that a link from the top of Camley Street to Agar Grove would be useful. Then Peter Wills suggested that CCC should do a feasibility study. A grant was obtained from CCCU to pay architect Tom Young to carry out the study. The report on the study was passed round at the meeting and is available on the web at:

<http://www.coulouris.net/george-jean/TMP/CAMLEYST.PDF>

Paul explained how the proposed link would fit into the planning brief for the Kings Cross development.

Tom Young urged CCC members to read the report. He reminded us that the existing bridge is a misery for cyclists and pedestrians and that the proposed link is more direct, simpler and considered in the context of the Kings Cross development. It would be the only major new link, making Camley Street a through road a useful part of the cycle network. The design of the link was described in the October newsletter. Tom stressed that it is important to get the design right - an architect or urban designer should be employed.



Paul Gannon, Stefano Casalotti and Tom Young

Photo: Lionel Shapiro

The following points emerged in the open discussion:

The next step is to find out the likely cost of the project. We could ask Argent St. George to do this.

Doug Amer and Richard Kirby of LBC both stressed that the link can only be built in the context of the King Cross Central development, which will not start until 2007 and we might have to wait until 2015.

The existing bridge should be improved, particularly if we have to wait for 12 years for the new link to be built.

We explored the idea of doing something smaller, sooner, for example a pedestrian staircase.

As a conclusion, Tim Young advised CCC to keep the plan in focus by developing and hardening the project over time.

## CCC's cycle mentoring scheme

Indira Mather, the newly trained cyclist whose photo featured in the October newsletter has written the following about her experience with the CCC mentoring scheme.

"Without mentoring, I don't know how I would have gained the courage to ride my bike. Having had only bad experiences on a bike when I was younger, I never enjoyed cycling, and I envied people who looked confident and happy on a bike. I used to drive a car, then I started to use the underground and then the buses, and now I have the option to use my bike.

I gained the knowledge of how to handle myself on a bike in different environments, with different types of vehicles around me, and to be in control of how I am travelling.

As well as learning how to ride a bike on the roads, I discovered that there is a big community of people who ride bikes. My bike has become a new hobby, in terms of just going out and having fun on it, and going for rides here and there, and I have developed a new lifelong skill. I must admit I don't like going fast on my bike: I like to take my time and to be in control. The mentoring has made me interested in keeping myself safe and not being scared off by other forms of transport, so I don't to take any risks."

To find out more about the scheme, look at the following webpage: <http://www.greengas.u-net.com/Mentors.html>

## CCC suggestions for avoiding cycle theft

### Locking your bike

- always lock your bike, even for a 'quick' visit to a shop
- always lock the frame and both wheels, especially if they're quick-release. If you can lock the saddle too, so much the better (remove it if it's quick-release)
- unusual bikes are attractive targets
- even old bangers are at risk
- try to remember to take anything removable off the bike!

### Where to lock it

- always lock it to something: just putting a lock through the wheels isn't enough.
- lock it to railings, a proper parking stand, a tall (more than 4m) lamp post or traffic light post, tree trunks more than 20cms in diameter
- BUT check that what you're locking to hasn't been precut, loosened, or otherwise tampered with
- DON'T lock to parking meters, wooden poles or thin trees, or even steel poles less than 4m high (e.g. CPZ notices)
- if you're leaving it for more than about 30 minutes, try to find a stand or railings where it isn't easy to back up a vehicle
- outside Camden Town Hall is particularly unsafe
- parking stands at right angles to the road or protected by pedestrian railings are better
- bike parks at main railway stations seem fairly secure
- don't leave it anywhere near Whitehall or Parliament Square, nor outside the ICA in St James' Park

### What to lock with

- DON'T rely only on a D-lock, whatever bike shops say
- if you use a D-lock, use something else as well
- some D-locks come with a length of cable to go through the front wheel. These are NO stronger than the D-lock, and should also be used with another lock
- hardened, heavy-duty chain is best, fastened with an ABUS hardened padlock. It's heavy, but worth it.

### What to do if it goes

- report the theft on the Metropolitan Police web site at [www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk)
- report it, with frame number and description, at the local police station. Bikes are sometimes recovered, but won't be given back without proof of ownership
- if you catch someone stealing it or riding it, it's best to call the police, especially if there's a gang involved. The police are taking cycle theft more seriously nowadays.
- if you did leave it in Whitehall, Parliament Square or outside the ICA, you might find the police have taken it. You can get it back, with some discussion, but there'll be no compensation for the broken lock

### Insurance

- best done as part of a home contents policy, though check the exclusions in the small print
- LCC offers insurance, though the premiums are quite high.

James Brander

## Camden Cyclists are law abiding

A lively debate on 'Law abiding cyclists' took place recently on the CCC mailing list. Andrew Conway started it by suggesting that CCC members should lead by example. He had decided to stop breaking rules, with the hope of feeling more relaxed on the road. Many messages were exchanged, with just 2 people saying that they feel good with jumping

red lights and riding on the pavement, but even they advocated behaving well towards pedestrians.

The vast majority supported the plan, saying that they do feel more relaxed and that it is to our disadvantage as campaigners to be labelled as lawless cyclists. Why not join the mailing list and have your say?

## Trouble in Somerstown

During this spring and summer, cyclists have suffered from a series of attacks, mostly near the corner of Purchase Street and Polygon Road in Somerstown. See the map.

In early October, the local papers reported a much more serious attack on a cyclist. As a result, CCC committee members James Brander and Daniel Glaser contacted the local councillor, Roger Robinson and the police in the Somerstown sector for information and advice. They reported to our October meeting that the identities of the main protagonists are known and that some of the culprits have been taken to court, with one successful prosecution. The result is a decline in the terrorising of residents and cyclists.

The police would like people to continue to report non-urgent incidents in Somerstown to the Police Sector Team on 020 8733 6262 (Answer phone) 020 8733 6261 (Office). They are particularly eager to hear from people who can identify individual trouble makers, even if the trouble is only verbal abuse or intimidation.

Cyclists are advised to stick in groups, by waiting for other cyclists to come along and cycle through the area together. You could wait, either at the lights at the south end of Ossulton Street if heading north; or at the south end of Royal College Street if heading south.



## Cycle parking at M & S in Camden Town

We have been encouraging the Camden Branch of Marks and Spencer to reinstate the cycle racks removed when their car park was reconfigured recently. It would be helpful if members wrote urging the restoration of cycle parking facilities. Letters to The Manager, M&S, 143 Camden High Street, London, NW1. (No abuse please!). Cyril Cannon.

## CCC committee contact details

Paul Gasson, Coordinator, 7482 6692, [paulgasson@greengas.u-net.com](mailto:paulgasson@greengas.u-net.com)  
Jane Boardman, Volunteers, 7794 9708, [janeboardman@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:janeboardman@blueyonder.co.uk)  
James Brander, Treasurer, 7267 3585  
Stefano Casalotti, 7435 0196, [s.casalotti@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:s.casalotti@ucl.ac.uk)  
Jean Dollimore, Newsletter editor, 7485 5896, [jean@dollimore.net](mailto:jean@dollimore.net)  
Daniel Glaser, 7916 2433, [daniel.glaser@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:daniel.glaser@ucl.ac.uk)