



'Camden Cyclist' Newsletter: Dec 1999 / Jan 2000

News for cyclists from the Camden Cycling Campaign (LCC), London.

Newsletter editor: Paul Gannon

CCC Newsletter re-organisation

As you will be aware from the new design of Camden Cycling Campaign newsletter, there have been some changes afoot. First, we must record the good news - Paul Gannon and his partner are going to have a baby in the New Year. I'm sure that I speak for all CCC members in congratulating Paul and Ola, and sending our best wishes.

In expectation of the increased workload at home, Paul has reluctantly decided that he must relinquish some of his CCC duties. The new format newsletter is one of the first signs that CCC is changing. Even if Paul was not about to become a dad.; the amount of work piled on him by CCC was already becoming excessive. Paul remains CCC co-ordinator but he will be aided in future by a strengthened committee. If you want to contribute to the committee by helping in some way or other please do not hesitate to contact Paul. The demands on CCC are growing so fast that we are simply unable to cope with a lot of things - such as responding to local traffic proposals from the council - that we really do need more people to help.

In large part this is due to the very success that Paul has made of CCC. We are now widely seen as a very active and innovative cycling lobby group. Although we may moan about the ability, or inability, of Camden council to understand cycling, it is also worth remembering that we are probably more active and more effective than many other groups.

Faced with the daunting task of taking over this newsletter from Paul, I would like to invite all CCC members to contribute items for future issues. And, finally, I would point out, for any one who glances at the name at the end of this paragraph, that I am indeed a different person from Paul Gannon, but I hope that the major difference you will see in the newsletter is the layout, and that the content will remain as vibrant and effective as during Paul Gannon's stewardship,

Paul Gannon, newsletter editor. E-mail: network.europc@btinternet.com

Cycling Audit & Design Unit, CADU

At the beginning of November CCC set up a new group: the Cycling Audit & Design Unit (CADU). The first meeting was attended by members of CCC and Westminster Cycling Campaign. Its primary aims will be, on behalf of CCC, to

- provide detailed & high quality cycle route design
- strategic network planning (within our sector, in order to feed into LCC LCN meetings)
- cycle route audits

Its area of operation will be focussed on Camden and neighbours. Our first big project is for the consultation over Regents Park, and we are developing plans for cycle measures around the Outer Circle. We wish to involve more people who are active within Westminster LCC so that CADU can provide a single and informed

point of contact between the park consultants and LCC. We would also like to bring on board someone from Islington LCC. If you know of anyone interested from either borough please let us know.

The decision to form CADU was taken when CCC received a copy of an audit of the 'Somers Town' cycle route carried out by professional consulting engineers at a cost to the taxpayer of several thousand pounds. The audit is best described as a poor effort. Its main recommendations were for more signposts and painted cycle logos.

It failed entirely to identify, for example, the giratory system around Camden Rd/St Pancras Way, Royal College St as a problem area and focused on very minor points. In response CCC produced a draft audit of its own which brought together CCC members' experience of using this route and ideas about how it could be upgraded much more effectively. The CCC 'amateur' audit made the 'professional' product look very inadequate indeed and led to discussions about how to make more use of the experience we have within LCC.

The group is needed given the impracticality of undertaking extensive route development activities within the structure of both CCC members and committee meetings, both of which must devote time to a wide range of other subjects. At the same time, it has become increasingly apparent that both traffic engineering consultancies and local authorities (including the Boroughs, Royal Parks & the Corporation of London, as well as London-wide authorities such as Traffic Director & London Transport) suffer from a serious lack of expertise in developing and designing cycle networks of adequate quality.

CCC has also found that by taking the initiative, by proposing detailed routes and facilities, it can have considerable influence within local authorities on the planning of cycle facilities. The purpose of the group would thus be to correct the lack of expertise and to put onto the agenda coherent, practical plans for a high-quality network segments in London that can be merged to form a highly useful network within a few years.

Our initial projects will include:

- 'Somers Town' route upgrade
- Regents Park
- Hampstead Heath
- Seven Stations Link
- 'West Hampstead-West End' route

If you have an interest in cycling routes and facilities and would like to be involved in developing ideas that will set the agenda for high-quality cycling provision in London over the next decade please get in touch. The CADU will initially be coordinated by Paul Gannon.

NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...

Royal College Street - snatching ridicule from the jaws of fame

As we go to press CCC has asked London Borough of Camden councillors and officials for a site meeting to discuss urgent safety concerns about Camden's proposed design for the Royal College Street two-way cycle lane extension. Camden has rejected our suggestion for raised tables or junction closures at the junctions with Plender Street and Pratt Street.

We fear that this will seriously endanger cyclists and we will withdraw our support from the project if Camden insists that its design is implemented unchanged.

Also, Camden's design allocates a ridiculous 1.2 metres of space to the segregation island and a barely adequate 2 metres to the two-way cycle track itself. Combining these points, we have to conclude that while Camden

may have understood our ideas for segregation, it is reluctant to take on board another key point - that the details are what make or break a scheme. Camden is definitely breaking this one. The consequences for relations between CCC and LBC could be very serious.

CCC December Meeting

Don't miss the last CCC meeting of the twentieth century!!!

Join us for our usual pre-Xmas social evening on Wed Dec 8th 7.30pm at Castlehaven Community Centre, Hawley Rd

Meetings are normally on the second Monday of each month, 7.30pm at the Castlehaven Community Centre in Hawley St.; however December's meeting is different.

Next. meetings: Wed 8th December & Mon 11th January. You are welcome to bring your bike inside.

Kentish Town Road - Bus priority network pays for Camden's "pay & display" scheme

A Camden borough officer has admitted that the London Bus Priority Network, LBP, measures in Kentish Town Rd were a "cock-up". The build-outs which Camden has put in to provide for its 'pay & display' parking bays are now preventing full-size 'clearways' at the bus stops. Even worse, the buildouts were paid for out of LBP funds yet are solely concerned with generating parking income for Camden. CCC objected strenuously to the build-outs because of the danger they pose to cyclists (and Kentish Town Road is a LCN route), but also as the build-outs seemed to serve no purpose except to provide for parking places! We hate to say it, but we told you so.

British Museum oneway working proposals

Camden is consulting on proposals for one-way working to be introduced on several roads around the British Museum. Check the CCC web-site for details as these proposals will affect cyclists. Let CCC committee members know what you think.

Camden Walking Plan stumbles on

Camden council is one of the first boroughs in the country, it claims, to have produced a Walking Plan. In outline the plan is very worthy, with all the right rhetoric, but in detail it is replete with plausible-sounding excuses for recalcitrant officers and councillors, so don't expect to see any real changes on the streets. CCC will keep the pressure on Camden to take walking more seriously as a mode of transport.



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