

The "Camden Cyclist"

Oct/Nov '03 Newsletter of Camden Cycling Campaign

Camden
Cycling
Campaign

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

Mailing list: CamdenCyclingCampaign-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Dates for your diary

Meetings in October & November

Mondays 13th October and 10th November 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.

Camley Street launch with Tom Young

CCC will launch the Camley Street-Agar Grove cycle link at the November meeting when Tom Young will give a talk at 7.45 pm on:

Cycling and the Urban Environment

Tom Young is an architect who founded the Renew Kentish Town movement, which aims to achieve sustainable development in the area according to the needs of the community. In particular it will focus on the development of railway lands between Highgate Road and Gospel Oak.

Tom has been involved with CCC members Peter Wills and Paul Gannon in doing a feasibility study of the cycle link.

Dr. Bike in West Hampstead

October 11th. Another Dr Bike will be held outside West Hampstead library, (Dennington Park Rd./West End Lane junction). A checkup for your bike with free advice 12-5pm. Contact James 7267 3585

October Ride

October 12th. A local London ride, with lunch and tea stops, but bring lights. Meet at 11am at the Interchange Centre (Old Town Hall) Haverstock Hill. Contact James 7267 3585.

Camley Street-Agar Grove cycle link

CCC has received Tom Young's draft report on his feasibility study of a cycle link between Camley Street and Agar Grove. The study was funded by a grant obtained from Camden Central Community Chest by Paul Gannon and Peter Wills.

The proposed cycle link will run to the west of the Midland Mainline railway track between the top (north end) of Camley Street and Agar Grove, joining Agar Grove west of the railway bridge, opposite Murray Street. The top of Camley Street runs under the North London Line railway bridge and reaches a dead end beside the Camley Street workshops. Just beyond the top is the 'hammerhead' area which is bounded on the west by the retaining wall of the embankment between Camley Street and the Agar Grove Estate. From the 'hammerhead', the Agar Grove railway bridge is visible, about 50 metres away. However Agar Grove is about five metres higher than Camley Street.

This link will provide a useful cycle route between the Agar Grove area and the new Kings Cross Central development, as well as giving access to the Camley Street Nature Reserve, the Jubilee Centre and St Pancras Church gardens. It should also give access for pedestrians and wheelchair users. The Camley Street route could become a useful addition to LCN+. The exiting pedestrian link between the Maiden Lane estate and Camley Street is not a viable alternative: it involves carrying cycles or pushchairs up and down the very narrow flights of steps to the footbridge over the railway line.

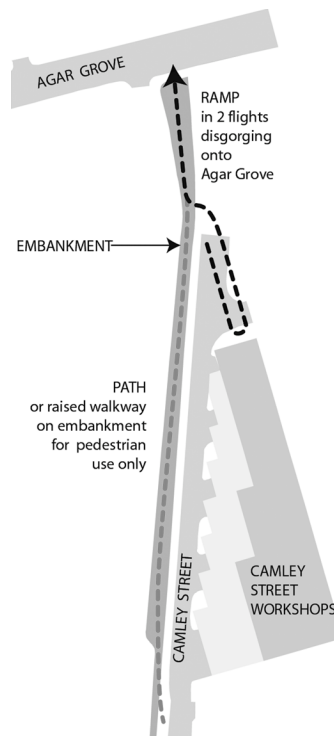


Diagram showing proposed route. Tom Young Architects

Due to the height difference between Agar Grove and Camley Street, the link will be constructed as a suspended ramp over the 'hammerhead' and on to the embankment, then along the top, to emerge at Agar Grove. The above figure from Tom Young's report shows the route of the proposed link. To achieve the height gain in the space available, the ramp will form a dog leg, with a gradient of about 1:15. The ramp must be sufficiently wide to accommodate two-way cyclists and pedestrians. As the 'hammerhead' has a narrow apex, a wide track would be shorter and therefore steeper than a narrow one. Although site constraints mean that the ramp could be too steep for unassisted wheelchair users, it would form a very useful improvement for cyclists and pedestrians.

The next steps for this project will involve getting the agreement of Network Rail and planning permission from Camden Council as well as a costing of the project. Finally someone has to be found to fund it.

Doug Amer's discussion with CCC

Doug Amer, Head of Street Policy at Camden Council joined us at our September meeting to discuss:

The cooperative roles of CCC and the council in achieving improvements for cyclists within the borough.

We had a very interesting evening, learning about the workings of Street Management in Camden and received some useful advice on how to carry out our campaigns.

Who's who: Doug presented a chart showing the structure of Street Management. The largest sections are Engineering,

Parking and Street Environment. The smaller sections include Doug's Street Policy, Boulevard and Business Support. Dave Stewart, Ed Quartey and Lisa Bailey are in Engineering. Doug's section includes Cliff Thomson, Natasha Brown and Keith Hamilton. The managers are: Sam Monk (works with TfL), Alan Butcher (develops local policy) and Belitha Clahar (safer routes to schools).

Politicians and Officers: as campaigners we should be clear of the separate roles of politicians and officers. Politicians suggest policy and get funding, whereas officers give strategic and legal advice. If a policy is legal, officers will carry it out. Campaigners can influence politicians about policy and officers as to the details of a scheme.

Consultations: a consultation is not a referendum – its role is to find out what people think. E.g. a scheme to reduce child casualties might be implemented even if the majority of respondents is against it. Camden council takes consultation seriously but does not always get it right – officers can be threatened with injunctions and judicial reviews.

Working together: Doug urged CCC to continue to work through WCRSAG (walking cycling and road safety group) which has an open agenda and is chaired by Julian Fulbrook, a cycle-friendly councillor. As cycling has increased, the public mood has become more hostile (pavement cycling and light jumping), causing politicians to struggle at ward levels. Doug said that speed must be dealt with, comparing the current attitude to speeding with the attitude to drink-driving in the 50s. He would like to see 20 mph as the default in London. Politicians are not ready for hidden cameras; humps are effective but unpopular. Camden is about to test a new technique: 'ripple print' which makes an awful noise inside cars but little noise outside. Doug requested CCC to report how this technique affects cyclists.

Report on James' Annual Ride to Rye

I like to do this ride every year, really just to see if I still can. So, six of us set off at a horribly early hour on Sunday morning to see if we all still could manage the 84 miles of fairly hilly (mostly) rural Sussex lanes. One brave soul had already ridden seven or eight miles to join us.

At that time on a Sunday, the best way out of London is to head down the main road, which we did as far as Lewisham, where we took to quieter back streets down to Orpington.

London ends abruptly at Orpington, giving way to the North Downs which we crossed via Skeet Hill and Firminger Lane. Then there's the long run down the Darenth valley, skirting Samuel Palmer's haunts before reaching Otford, where we pick up the Pilgrims' Way. At Otford, traffic can be busy, so it was a relief to find the High Street closed for bridge repairs. Heading south we cross Greensand Ridge (where I dread one day oil will be found), past Underriver, then Tonbridge, and slightly west of Tonbridge Wells. Lunch was to have been at Speldhurst (with its caves) but we were running a bit late and so took advantage of the Padiham Arms (excellent Harveys).

We parted with one stalwart rider soon after lunch, about 45 miles out, and another couple at Etchingham, about 60 miles.

We were too late for the tea stop, and I became worried about the time. My suggestion to skip Rye and head instead for Ashford (where the station has tea) was rightly vetoed by my determined co-riders. We went on

through glorious countryside with the late afternoon light giving a wonderful golden glow to fields and woods.

We crossed a number of main roads around Benenden and Rolvenden, all of them choked with slow-moving queues. Happily, our wee lanes remained largely traffic free.

We finally made it to Rye three minutes before the penultimate train home (which arrives at almost 11pm); so we didn't have any time to look around, or even have a drink! But we showed we can still do it, and David definitely got in his ton that day.

James Brander

Women on the move - cycling for women

A project by the *Women's Design Service* (WDS).

Did you know that government figures for 1995/97 show that on average, men make about two and a half times as many bicycle trips as women, and cycle about four times as far? And that the Public Transport Gender Audit carried out by the University of East London found that women account for only 4% of journeys made by bike?

The Women's Design Service, a London-based charity that works with women in urban environments, is undertaking a year long pilot project called Cycling for Women based in Camden and Lambeth. The project seeks to understand and address the reasons why comparatively few women compared with men cycle as a means of transport in London. Cycling for Women aims to encourage and enable more women to cycle, and to help inform policy-makers on how to make cycling an easier choice for everybody.

WDS project worker Alix Stredwick spoke at recent CCC and Lambeth Cyclist meetings to introduce the project, funded by the national lottery's New Opportunities Fund, receiving a warm welcome from CCC and LC members.

But WDS needs your help to recruit women to take part in the project. All expenses are paid by WDS, free training is provided and some women may even end up with a discounted price bike!

WDS is conducting action research, where women are kitted-out with bikes and trained to ride on the road. Other women will be provided with on-road cycle training and maintenance classes. WDS hopes to form 'cycle networks' of women supporting each other's cycling, and we will use focus groups and surveys to research attitudes to cycling.

If you are a woman of the age of 18, or you know one who would like to benefit from any of these services or take part in the research, please get in touch:

Alix Stredwick astredwick@wds.org.uk tel 020 7490 5210.



Indira Madhar, newly trained cyclist. Photo: Alix Stredwick

CCC committee contact details

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