

The "Camden Cyclist"

Dec '04/Jan '05 Newsletter of Camden Cycling Campaign

Camden
Cycling
Campaign

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Dates for your diary

Meetings: December 13th and January 10th

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

Mon 13th December: traditional CCC social

On popular request, this event will be held in the Community Centre. Please come and enjoy a social get together as a relief from a year of rather serious campaigning. The usual Indian food will be provided. Bring your own drinks.

Report on discussion with Doug Amer

Doug Amer (Head of Street Policy at Camden Council) and Christopher Nicola (Traffic Planner within Street Policy) came to our October members meeting to discuss the future planning of cycle routes in Camden.

Doug assured us that TfL is committed to its promise to build 900 km of cycle routes in London by the year 2009. Camden's bid for the LCN+ program for 2005-6 consists of:

- completing the Seven Stations Link (SSL) or Route 0;
- design study for Link 27 to connect Tottenham Court Road to Tufnell Park via Hampstead Road and Kentish Town Rd.

The news regarding Link 27 was very well received. CCC can start thinking about the details of the route in order to feed them into the CRISP process when it starts.

The next LCN+ route to be tackled will probably be Route 50: to run from the West End, via the west of Regents Park, Avenue Road and Swiss Cottage then on a route to the east of Finchley Road as far as the borough boundary.

Christopher Nicola spoke about the work he is doing on Camden's programme for cycling over the next five years, which includes bids for non-LCN+ improvements. Any ideas we have for small schemes which do not involve red routes should be forwarded to him. Christopher has already incorporated a number of the ideas put forward by CCC.

Doug added that although red routes are generally out of bounds in this respect, there are occasional opportunities for the Council to make minor changes, so CCC should include them on their list of suggested improvements.

Doug suggested that we put forward proposals for links between LCN+ routes (ideally ones already in place) which could then be developed incrementally.

We discussed some suggestions for routes that were made by members prior to the meeting. These include:

- West Hampstead to Swiss Cottage, to Primrose Hill, then to the West End with a possible extensions from West Hampstead to Kilburn and from Swiss Cottage to Route 6.

- links from Euston and St Pancras stations to the SSL;

- a link from Swiss Cottage to Tufnell Park.

Doug said that Camden can't get local funding for large-scale local routes but can do small interconnecting pieces, e.g.

- as links to an LCN+ route which can be funded by TfL. We discussed a link at Swiss Cottage from Finchley Road down the steps into Swiss Terrace as a link to LCN+ 50.

- as a series of small measures

CCC will be consulted on the draft text of Camden's Local Implementation Plan (LIP) early in 2005. The LIP describes how Camden intends to implement the Mayor's Transport Strategy during the period 2006-11.

Report on Sela's October Ride



Photo Sela Yair

Sela Yair writes: On a cold and wet Saturday morning, four cyclists left Camden to cycle through Buckinghamshire. We started at Amersham station and headed north on the road to Chesham and turned east to the village of Hyde Heath.

After leaving the B485 towards Ballinger we started our beautiful cycle ride in the narrow roads of Buckinghamshire, leaving behind us scenes of cars driving up and down the road. The photo of Oxford Street was taken in Ballinger and the village shop is located in this street. From Ballinger we cycled towards Tring, mostly descending, something we will pay for when leaving Tring.

We stopped at the reservoirs north of Tring for a lunch break. There is a small pub that we didn't find very nice, so we took lunch in a tea house, just beyond the reservoirs. The only time in the day it was raining was when we sat in the tea house eating our lunch and fortunately when we left the rain had stopped.

We took a short walk to see the birds in the reservoirs and to see the canal.

We rode back towards Chesham, paying back the downhill we took before. Now we had to climb back up, almost to Chesham where we decided to take a detour and cycle to Latimer.

The route was magnificent. Finally we caught the tube back from Chalfont and Latimer.

Latest advice on Somers Town troubles

The curfew on local youths on the Somers Town cycle route was lifted early in October. Attacks on cyclists in Ossulston Street and Polygon Road started again almost immediately.

To help the police and local community take effective action, please report all incidents. They need an accurate picture of the scale of the problem - under-reporting gives the impression of odd isolated incidents rather than the near epidemic taking place. You should of course use 999 to report serious incidents. Please also email details to:

- police.patrols@btopenworld.com which is managed by Susan Close, in her capacity as Chair of the Community Guided Police Patrol and

- copy Cllr Sybil Shine sybil.shine@camden.gov.uk and Paul Gasson (contact details below).

Include time, place, and details on 'what, who, how' e.g. describe assailants, phrases or actions used, and the number plate of any motor bike. Susan Close offers third party reporting (without identifying you) passing details onto the police on your behalf if you wish. Paul Gasson can provide her telephone number if you need it.

Cycling for women: project results

Alix Stredwick writes: The Women's Design Service has been working with CCC over the past year and a half on 'Cycling for Women' (CfW), a research and training project in Camden and Lambeth (funded by The Big Lottery Fund).

At the start of the project, TfL figures showed for every five men who cycle regularly in London there are only 2 women. CfW aimed to find out why; and start to address the issue.

CfW chose six 'guinea pigs' in Camden to undertake a programme of training to use bikes and accessories and to start cycling. We chose women who reflected Camden's diverse population and the varying needs of women: childcare, cultural expectations, age. WDS used qualitative feedback sessions to monitor their changing travel habits.

"A one year timescale was just not enough for WDS to recruit and train a complete beginner," says project worker Alix Stredwick. "There have been so many interesting outcomes of the project that we would like to extend it and are seeking further funding."

Storage of bicycles in the home repeatedly came up as a sore point for women in the project so WDS did a comprehensive survey of men and women. The results showed that:

- One third of women who do not own a bike stated that lack of secure home storage was a factor in putting them off;
- 62% of women would benefit from an advice service on how to install secure bike storage in the home;
- 94% of all respondents (cyclists and non-cyclists) would like to see at least two bicycle spaces per new dwelling.

Storage in the home was put to Camden Council: it is revisiting its planning guidance on cycle storage provision.

WDS also made an impact on Camden's Road Safety Scrutiny Panel by presenting the results of its survey of perceptions of road safety, where over 50 women were surveyed, half who cycled and half who didn't.

TfL reports that the gender gap for cycling might be starting to narrow, at least in London, with more new cyclists being women than men. We hope that WDS has played a part in raising the profile of cycling for women.

To receive a free CD of the project's total findings which includes a free photo library, contact Women's Design Service 020 7490 5210 astredwick@wds.org.uk. The full length version of this report is available at www.wds.org.uk.

Report on November talk by Patrick Field

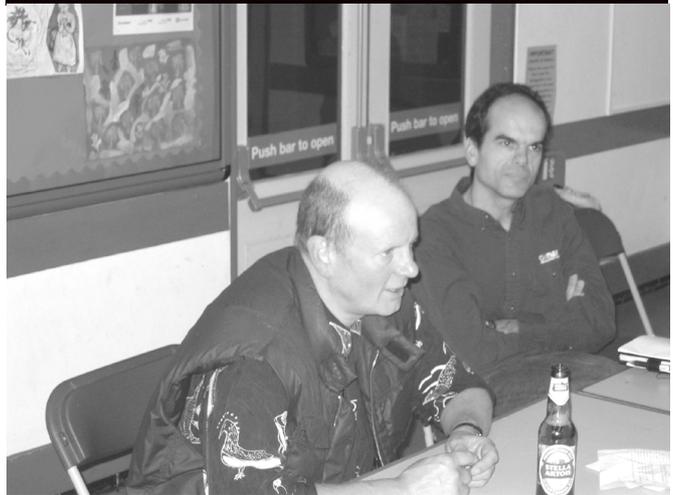


Photo George Coulours

Patrick Field of the London School of Cycling gave us a talk entitled: *An exit strategy for the 20th Century*.

He had lived in Camden as a student in the 1970s and became a land-use activist. He recalled pre-LCC days when a cyclists' demonstration resulted in a no-right-turn exemption from Gloucester Avenue into Gloucester Gate. In those days cycling was a minority activity.

Patrick has been cycle training since 1992-3, when it was unusual to train adults; whereas now it is seen as normal. He wanted to make cycling a more serious activity and encourage people to enjoy the luxury of cycle travel. The main aspects of training involve bike control, understanding how to fit in with traffic and personal attitude to cycling.

On the streets, Patrick finds all types of cyclists from diffident beginners to arrogant young men. There is a National Curriculum – people are being taught to a standard. Children have to learn that adults can behave badly.

Regarding cycling in London: The inner boroughs provide some of the best places in UK to ride a bike and cycling is becoming trendy. But outer London provides the worst environment and cycling is in decline. The ring between the two could go either way: Newham is an example, where the majority don't think of cycling.

There is still a feeling that cyclists are a menace. We must expect these feelings to continue. However we are winning: we don't need to worry about parking, the congestion charge or the price of fuel. The 20th century discovered the limits of the cheap fuel economy. Once everyone has a car, the problems escalate.

Our primary task is as role models. Sometimes we should think of how to cycle better. Our personal quest should be to find out how to release our inner cyclist.

Patrick's philosophy provoked a stimulating discussion, at the end of which he said: "The cyclist's primary role is to keep safe; you should help less good cyclists and make it clear to other road users what you're doing. Be kind, neutral and communicate well with others."

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