

The "Camden Cyclist"

Feb/Mar '05 Newsletter of Camden Cycling Campaign

Camden
Cycling
Campaign

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Dates for your diary

Meetings: February 14th and March 14th

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.

Talk by Richard Lewis, Brent Council Officer

Monday 14th February at 7.30

Richard Lewis is a member of Hackney Cyclists who has recently joined Brent Council. He is devising a Road Danger Reduction Plan, which he says draws from Camden's plan, which he describes as progressive. He will talk to us about applying the Road Danger Reduction philosophy to the planning of cycle facilities. Richard is expecting questions about the unexpected outcome of the recent LCN+ Route 5 CRISP.

Dr. Bike at members meeting

Monday 14th March at 7.30

Dr. Bike will be available after the meeting to give you general advice and to help you with minor adjustments to your bike.

First Ride of 2005 Sunday 20th February

Join Sela Yair for the first ride of 2005, along quiet country roads between Guildford and Haslemere with a pub lunch at midday. Meet at Waterloo Station in time for the 9.30 train to Guildford, equipped with a return ticket to Haslemere. The ride is 40 km (25 miles) and there are some hilly parts, especially at the beginning and at the end of the route. Contact Sela 020 7625 3094 / 07900307025, linked2allATyahoo.com.

Bike Week 2005

Everyday cycling for health and fitness will be the main theme of this year's Bike Week, which will take place between 11th and 19th June. CCC will be running plenty of events as usual, including the popular cyclists breakfast. Please get in touch with Stefano (details below) if you have any suggestions for new events.

Road Safety Bill

Although the Road Safety Bill currently going through parliament includes some welcome measures, it could lead to higher speeds and more injuries by reducing the penalties for marginal speeding, such as doing 39 mph in a 30 mph zone. Although driving at 39 mph in a built up zone is more dangerous than driving at 85 mph on a motorway, the former will attract a heavier penalty than the latter.

Please contact your MPs and urge them to oppose any reduction in speeding penalties and to press for measures for reducing speeds, especially on urban roads and country lanes.

You can send a Fax to your MP at: www.faxyourmp.com

Temporary closure on the SSL

Camden Council is currently working on the construction of a two-way cycle track on the north side of Tavistock Place between Woburn Place and Marchmont Street. This section of road is closed to eastbound vehicles until 4th March. Eastbound motor vehicles will be diverted via Bedford Way, Russell Square, Brunswick Square and Hunter Street.

Officially, eastbound cyclists on the two-way track in Gordon Square can go as far as Woburn Place, but if they wish to go further east, they could follow the vehicle diversion. However, it turns out that most cyclists are finding plenty of room to cycle eastbound beside the track under construction.

Effects of Parking on Cycling

Camden Council has invited CCC to give evidence to their Scrutiny Panel on Parking. John Chamberlain, who is preparing our response led a brainstorm on the effects of parking on cycling at our January members meeting. Together we identified many issues including the following:



Photo Paul Gannon

Enforcement: no parking in cycle tracks or by their entries, or close to junctions. Stricter enforcement is fairer. Misuse of permits to be prevented. Prioritise safety-related issues.

Policy: CPZs are good, they reduce car use; we support car-free housing, no pavement parking, no school run parking.

Layout: allocate road space for cycle parking, avoid parking on both sides of narrow 2-way streets, no parking near islands, no cycle lanes near door-zones, provide spaces for small cars, keep cycle lanes clear, free parking for car pools.

Charging: allocate free spaces to non-car owners, higher charges for larger cars and multiple cars at one address.

Safety: prioritise safety-related issues, e.g. blocking of pedestrian ramps and cycle lanes, no parking too close to junctions. Cyclists are in danger from manoeuvres.

John Chamberlain would like some more photos of badly parked vehicles affecting cyclists and any further ideas you have regarding this issue. His contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

Safe cycling in Somerstown

A number of attacks against cyclists in the Somers Town area were brought to the attention of Camden Council and the police before Christmas. Tony Brooks, Camden Council's Head of Community Safety gives the latest on what they have been doing to make the area safer for cyclists and offers some tips on safe cycling in the borough.

Camden Council and the police were very concerned about the attacks on cyclists before Christmas and have put a number of measures in place to improve lighting and curb the youth antisocial behaviour that was taking place.

Steps have been taken to identify the perpetrators of the attacks and other antisocial behaviour in the area and those identified have been dealt with through the use of antisocial behaviour orders and home visits – depending on the seriousness of their behaviour.

After consultation with residents and commuters we agreed to implement a 'dispersal notice' in Somers Town and Regents Park, after a successful scheme in Somers Town over the summer saw crime rates plummet. The dispersal notice gives the police extra powers to ban intimidating groups of people causing antisocial behaviour from designated areas for up to 24 hours to prevent trouble escalating and to protect residents. In addition, unaccompanied children under 16 years found in the zone after 9pm could be taken home to their parents or guardians. Those who are banned will not receive a criminal record but face arrest if they refuse to leave.

The dispersal notice started on 1 December and will last throughout the Christmas period until 28 February 2005.

Somers Town has a history of youth disorder and we are working with youth clubs in the area to ensure that young people in the area have enough to do and positive role models to spend time with. We don't want to have to keep introducing strong police powers to tackle the problem and hope that in the longer term, working with the young people in the area, we can help to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

In addition to the dispersal notice we have looked carefully at what environmental improvements we can make to help cyclists feel safer on their route through Somers Town. The council's Environment Department has already upgraded the lighting in Phoenix Road to white light to improve visibility and are starting on a programme to upgrade all the lighting in the area to white light in the new financial year. Foliage on trees that was obscuring streetlights has been cut back and chicanes have been installed in the alleyways nearby to try to prevent joy riding.

There are lots of steps cyclists can take to keep safe as they travel across London. This safety advice isn't designed to scare, but to act as a few recommendations for cyclists concerned about their safety:

Plan your route – know where you are going in advance. Keep to well lit and well used routes and avoid shortcuts through badly lit streets.

Reduce the amount of property you carry with you if you can and secure any bags to the cycle.

If you can, cycle with a friend or another cyclist using the same route.

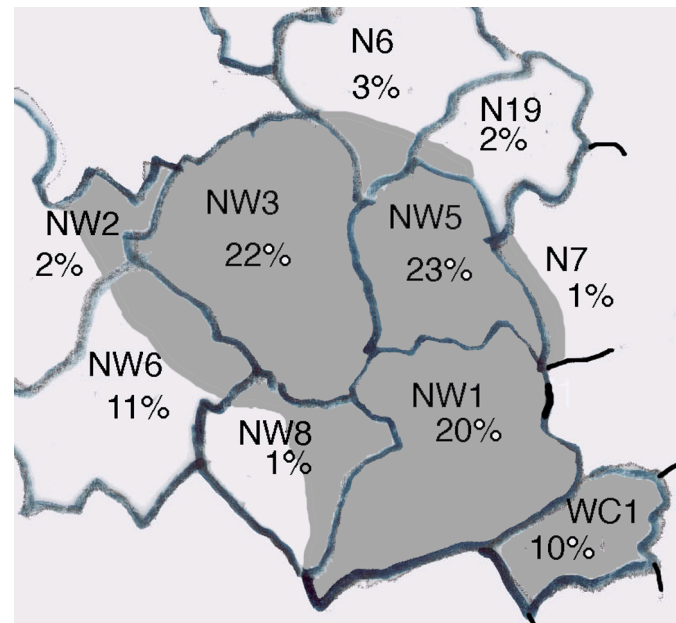
Ensure your cycle property is marked/coded and the serial number recorded (various registration schemes are listed in the Association of Cycle Traders).

Keep aware of what's going on around and in front of you.

Who are our members?

Our membership is now almost back to the 600 level and I thought it might be interesting to find out who we are, for example, where we live and how long we've been LCC members. So after perusing a list supplied by LCC it seems that almost 35% of our members are women. Assuming that they use their cycles, this is a good improvement on other figures quoted recently for the proportion of active cyclists who are women.

As to where we live: NW3 and NW5 between them account for 45% of our members, and NW1 and NW6 for another 31%. Surprisingly, 6% of members live beyond the borough boundaries. In the map below, the approximate area covered by Camden is shown in gray.



The table below shows the numbers of our current members who joined LCC in each of the ranges of years shown. These dates are not very reliable as they don't take into account those that lapsed, even for quite short periods and then re-joined.

Joining dates and numbers of members				
1984-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-03	2004-05
24	56	120	202	192

But it does look as though we have a good proportion of long-term members. I would have liked to study the age range of members, but unfortunately, LCC doesn't store birth dates.

Our mailing list currently has 121 members, most of whom belong to CCC. We use it to discuss facility design, bike advice, problems for cyclists, consultations and to announce meetings and provide news updates. Why not join now? Details for joining are at the top of this newsletter.