

## RIDES & EVENTS

Warmer days and evenings signal the start of our rides events programme for 2007. Wheelers welcome anyone to join in with our social rides at weekends and on Wednesday evenings for an after-worker easy paced cycle around this fascinating part of London. As the evenings draw out we go further afield with themed rides led by some of our more experienced members.

A variety of rides are anticipated for what promises to be a long warm summer 2007, as cycling becomes more popular this is a good chance to get the low down on good cycling technique and practice. If you have good road experience this is a great opportunity to share your skills with those who want to learn. If you are a new cyclist or returning to cycling after a long time out of the saddle, you will find our rides ideal and safe ways to start or restore your confidence. Wheelers are a friendly diverse group of individuals, always willing to talk cycling and help in any way they can to promote self propelled transport.

If you are interested in joining a ride or want to find out where and when to meet try [www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk](http://www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk) or for up to date information call Steve, our Rides Coordinator, on 07951 797845

If you would like to extend your cycling by writing about it, we welcome reports on rides that you have enjoyed. It doesn't have to be perfect English, we can always help with editing, but any experience you have had is often worth sharing especially if it was enjoyable. Stories that are funny, exciting, annoying, dramatic or just mildly interesting give others huge encouragement and yourself, an ego boost. Some of our rides are run jointly with other groups or are designed espe-

cially as campaigning events. Last year we had Tower Hamlets Wheelers riding in fancy dress and no dress at all, riding for deserving charity efforts and riding to just to raise the profile of cyclists generally. Start the wheels rolling by meeting us at our usual meeting place, on top of the green bridge in Mile End Park and make some great new cycling friends.

See you there.....

Please check the Wheelers Website for latest on rides. If you have an idea for a ride, a long/short weekend or an upcoming cycling event please email:

[newsletter@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk)

## BICYCLE MAGIC

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A large range of bikes, parts and accessories in stock by all you're favourite makers. Lots of space for you to browse and choose, with friendly help and advice.

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[www.bicyclemagic.com](http://www.bicyclemagic.com)

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**NEWSLETTER Distribution:** Please help? Only 10 minutes, Every two months. Temp. Contact: Ralph on 07747 606481

### RIDE Safety

Always tell someone where you are going and when you are expected back.  
Going alone to meet unknown others? Consider contacting Wheelers first.  
Always bring lights - esp. from Sept - May evening rides.  
Carry a puncture repair kit, spare tube and pump.  
Use 2 strong D Locks to secure bike to racks and solid objects.  
Ride safely and considerately esp. around pedestrians and on cycle paths

MAINTENANCE WORKSHOPS  
LIMEHOUSE TOWN HALL  
11-3 LAST SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

### Contacts

#### Coordinator

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#### Newsletter distribution

Temp.  
07747 606481  
[newsletter@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk)

### Rides

#### June 2007

**Saturday 2nd June**  
Discover your Park 11am-5pm.  
King Edward Memorial Gardens.  
Wapping. Contact **Owen** 07903 018970.  
**Wednesday 13th June**  
Monthly Wheelers Meeting  
Meet at (venue tba) 7.30-9.00pm - everyone welcome. Followed by a visit to a local pub from 9.15pm.  
Contact **Owen**.  
**8th-17th June**

Wheelers tour of Northumberland and Cumbria

**Sat. 16th - Sun. 24th June**  
BIKE WEEK

Activities every day except Monday, come and join in.....  
Contact Owen or Steve.

**Saturday 30th June**  
Wheelers Bicycle Maintenance Workshop  
11.00am-3.00pm at Limehouse Town Hall

# East London Cyclist

The newsletter of Tower Hamlets Wheelers/ London Cycling Campaign May/June 2007

## What a mess! Cycle "facility" or "farcility"

Grove Road / Old Ford Road Roundabout is top of the Tower Hamlets Wheelers agenda this spring. The e-group has been literally steaming with amazement at the new green way laid down at the Grove Road roundabout at the entrance to Victoria Park. As the photo below shows clearly, there is now a two way cycle path marked across the road seemingly in an attempt to improve the lot of cyclists using this popular route along Old Ford Road. Wheelers would contend that this initiative is confusing and patently unsafe for cyclists to use. Vehicle drivers must be totally confused too. What is the law on rights of way here? Who gives way to who on a roundabout has always been generally understood by road users if not fully practiced. Anyone ever having an accident on a roundabout will report the huge difficulty it is getting an insurance company to find fault. So what chances have cyclists when two way green cycle paths appear indicating that cyclists ride the wrong way round the roundabout? Looking at the photo, taken by a Wheeler, the cycle lane is bizarre, with the dotted white lines giving no apparent protection to the crossing cyclist at all.

People crossing will need to keep looking to the right for Left turning cars who themselves have no obligation to give way - the white lines seem to be just to indicate a route. Just consider the difficulty if the new Highway Code is adopted whereby cyclists will be expected to use facilities where provided. The use of this facility will actually put cyclists into extra danger from motorised vehicles and we'll be negligent not to use it. A real mess!

One observer said "I watched a woman on a bike standing headed north as car after car whizzed by without yielding. Finally, she got off her bike, went down the pavement a bit and then ran across during a break in the traffic.

Gary Cummins asserts that " ...this is just the way LBTH likes it. The most bizarre thing I find is still the attitude, and this is big all over the UK that once a person is in a car, they acquire greater rights.

If LB Tower Hamlets are serious about increasing cycling provision, and they have been part of CRISP there must be some equally serious communication problems. This scheme actually encourages cyclists to use the edge of the roundabout taking them out of the eye line of other road users. There are no road markings or signs to warn traffic approaching of the cycle track or the need for extra vigilance for cyclists who may be crossing in two directions on the roundabout. A really poorly thought out reaction to this this already difficult junction.

Owen Pearson for the Wheelers has informed Ashraf Ali of LBTH that Wheelers have certainly not approved the scheme and indeed have no record of even being consulted. The issue has been a live debate for some time and previous schemes have been discussed and rejected.

Wheelers have suggested more effective road calming measures would be a better solution firmly supporting the safety of all road users including pedestrians and vehicle drivers. Ashraf Ali says, "Although we have made some changes to the eastern arm of the roundabout, there was not sufficient justification to have a speed table at all approaches as the vehicles already slow to give way at the roundabout.

The cycle island is provided to have the link between the two park and have an east - west connection. The cyclist should give way and look at both directions ensuring it is safe before crossing."

So now we have it, LBTH isn't doing anything for the cyclist but marginalising (literally) people on bicycles to the edge of dangerous roundabouts rather than using the roads to which we are fully entitled and making it so unsafe we also have to get off and push.

We urge you to write to Ashraf Ali and your local councillors and MP's with a view to get this scheme reviewed and changed before a serious incident occurs...as one cyclist put it..."I'm almost at a loss to find the right words to convey my thoughts on this farcility"



Tower Hamlets Wheelers  
London Cycling Campaign



## BIKE WEEK - FREE CHANNEL CROSSINGS

Sail and cycle to France for free.

To celebrate this SeaFrance partnership with The Tour de France we are offering FREE travel across the Channel during Bike Week.

Cycle over for the day or week and take advantage of the fantastic bicycle routes France has to offer. You will be entitled to FREE crossings for any foot passenger crossing with their bicycle during

**16-24 June, 2007**

To book please call 0871 663 2559 and quote FREEFTDAY for a day trip or FREETRJK for a duration up to week long. Terms & Conditions apply.

Just for info:

To report potholes etc: LBTH Streetline  
020 77364 5004  
email: roadsafety@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Major Roads - TfL 0845 305 1234  
<http://streetfaults.tfl.gov.uk>  
LCC: [www.lcc.org.uk](http://www.lcc.org.uk)  
T: +44 (0)20 7234 9310

F: +44 (0)20 7234 9319

Geraldine Matthews puts a cyclists perspective on car v bicycle road law issue....

# Behaviour breeds Behaviour

There has been a spate of letters in Guardian (about a month ago?) following an article (pro-cycling, idiocies of Highway Code recommendations) by Zoe Williams. There are simply a lot more cyclists about, some of whom behave in certain circumstances, badly. I biked from Hackney Rd westwards (Old Street, Clerkenwell etc) recently at morning commute time and there were lots of cyclists (v good) jostling for space (not so good) and some biking across pedestrian green lights with pedestrians trying to cross (v bad). But other cyclists equally p\*\*\*\*d of by this and noted that this same set have too strong a sense of self-preservation to jump the red lights onto Old Street roundabout. Mowing down pedestrians one thing, getting mowed down another. However as I sit on my bike watching car after bus after car jump the southbound lights at the Cambridge Heath Rd/Bishops's Way/Hackney Rd junction\* I don't notice much condemnatory (?) behaviour from their fellow motorists. I think it's the same old saw that bad vehicle driving is simply tolerated, and in our dog eat dog society it's get the weaker guy (pace, behaviour some cyclists to pedestrians) so cyclists are criticised. And why should cyclists be responsible for irresponsible cyclists? I've yet to come across a regular driver who accepts responsibility for other vehicle road users. So are your classmates cyclists or drivers?

However bad the behaviour, no cyclist is going to be able to come up with the excuse of the driver who took an unexpected (from his road position) and unindicated left onto Farringdon Rd from lights at Clerkenwell Rd,"My GPS told me to turn left". Do GPS gadgets need to be reconfigured so that they say, "indicate and check mirrors before

changing road position".Perhaps a new chapter in the Highway Code. (But had I been as 'road alert' as usual, I wouldn't have come down his inside until he had cleared the junction.)

(\*What is the problem there? Is it the light phasing? Or just sh\*\*ty behaviour?)

### Editors note:

The question of the moralistic argument of road law will always be debatable, however without a mixture of "classmates" the divisions will only get deeper entrenched in the psyche of both camps. Polemics is not the answer. Bad behaviour breeds bad behaviour = road rage. Good behaviour breeds good behaviour = safety for all.

## BIKEWORKS--

You may have found Bikeworks in their new premises in Mile End Park

Jim Blakemore is working hard with a variety of community projects in Tower Hamlets

Check out his new website at [www.bikeworks.org.uk](http://www.bikeworks.org.uk)



# The Back of The Ride

By Leigh Andrews

## Leigh asks, "Is it different for girls?"

So in the eighties it was all about equal opportunities. In the nineties it was all about anti-discriminatory practice and now, in the noughties, it's all about diversity. For those of you not familiar with these terms - basically it used to be that we were all the same, then we had positive discrimination, and now we respect and acknowledge difference. In an effort to let you all know about the difference being a girl on a bike makes allow me to enlighten you!

First there is some good news. My experience is that there are some definite advantages to being a woman when cycling. Generally women are perceived as less threatening, so it doesn't appear to me that as women we are targeted and harassed in the same way as male cyclists. I'm constantly amazed by the number of arguments most of the men I know get into when they are on bikes. Most of them are calmer, less aggressive people than me so I can only assume that arguments escalate more quickly by virtue of the fact they are men.

The bad news. I've noticed that male drivers seem to think we have even less right to road space than male cyclists. When cycling politely side by side with another woman I've been constantly beeped; when doing the same with men we've been left in peace. Clothes. Woe is me; what are they trying to make us wear? The lycra's too tight, the colours too bland and none of it goes with anything else I have! There are some good female specific cycle clothing web sites (for a fee I'll say who they are!), but in general our choices are limited and naff. Bikes. We don't all love pink! Or pastels. I suggest a consumer boycott where we reject these insipid items, or a mass respray of bike frames on Parliament Square. Oh! and I nearly forgot the day I turned up at an organised ride (NOT by Wheelers or even in London) and was greeted by the male ride leader with the phrase "If I'd known there was going to be so much crumpet on the ride I would've of made more of an effort".

So, if things are different for girls how should we be reacting to that? Female specific campaigns to bike manufacturers? Women only rides? A Grrrrlllll Power armed wing of resistance (mmm, liking that). I've got my own ideas, why don't you tell us yours? Come along to the Wheelers meetings, or the bike workshop or a ride. Get on the e-group, send a letter. Whatever, but get yourself heard!"

<http://www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/>

