

# East London Cyclist

www.wheelers.org.uk

OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER 2007

THE NEWSLETTER FOR TOWER HAMLETS WHEELERS • LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

## Grove Road update

We've received a steady stream of responses about the Grove Road/Old Ford Road roundabout cycle lane (covered in our last newsletter) Tower Hamlets have received many complaints since the cycle lane was painted green – taking cyclists the “wrong way” round a roundabout.

We hear that Cllr Joshua Peck has raised the issue with highways chiefs, who acknowledged “it's not ideal”, and agreed to look into options for widening the island, and better signage to make motorists more aware of the crossing, but admits: “No one has been able to come up with a better option.” So if you have any ideas, let us know. One idea being to move the crossing back where it was, but the most radical suggestion so far is just to remove the roundabout.



**Your letters make a difference.** Thanks to everyone who has contacted LBTH on this issue. The more people that write, the greater chance of action being taken. Please keep writing to your local councillors to highlight this poorly thought out cycle lane at Grove Road/Old Ford Road roundabout. Wheelers have received many reports of near misses. Something must be done as a priority. ■

## Latest on Westferry Circus

Just as some of us have got used to zipping round on the pavement of the lower level roundabout and as we were about to sign it as a safe diversionary route for the national cycle route, we are informed that the pavement is about to be closed off too. So for the more experienced cyclists it looks like using the road at low level is probably the fastest and simplest route through this area, but for inexperienced cyclists we are now going to have to sign a new route via the high level roundabout and lifts for those that don't want/can't carry their bike up and down 40 steps. ■

Caroline Fenton

## New route guide maps available

TfL have recently released updated versions of the popular cycling guides. Obtain your free map(s) by ordering online at: [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk) (See: Road users – Cycling Guides) or call 020 7222 1234.

The new maps cover a larger area, with a new detailed map for central London. Tower Hamlets is covered on map 7 (not old numbers 10/11)

## Bridging the gap

We could get a new cycle/footbridge across the canal leading to Mile End Park approximately half way between Mile End road and Roman Road, if the Sustrans Connect2 project is successful in winning £50 million “Living Landmarks” lottery funding.

Of course it won't cost £50 million just to build that one bridge – the great thing about this project is that it would deliver new links for cycling and walking, typically to get across railways, rivers, canals and busy roads, so that people can get where they want to go more easily, in 79 locations all around the UK, and here in Tower Hamlets we have one of the schemes.

You can help make this reality – the award of funding will be decided by a public television vote this December. However competition is strong, there are 5 other projects in the final shortlist.

To find out more visit the special website:

[www.sustransconnect2.org.uk](http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk) and register your support. ■

Caroline Fenton

# Trip down memory (cycle) lane

Gary Cummins sent us this picture of Cable Street taken in 1984, with the idea of comparing what it looks like now in 2007.



Then: Cable Street. circa 1984...



...and now.

Robert Lister, campaigns coordinator, comments: "The question is... is it any better now, and does it achieve the aim of being a useful facility? Are new cyclists encouraged by it? "

See the Department for Transport's consultation on Cycling infrastructure design at:

[www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/infrastructuredesign/consultationpaper](http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/infrastructuredesign/consultationpaper)

Recently proposed amendments to the Highway Code to add a rule forcing cyclists to use cycle lanes have been dropped, following campaigns by CTC and LCC, the Government has agreed to amend the Highway Code to improve cyclists' safety, and to encourage drivers to take more care around vulnerable road users. The new version makes clear that cyclists have every right to cycle on the road. Rules 61 and 63 state that cycle lanes and cycle facilities, are "not compulsory" and the decision to use them "will depend on your experience and skills". ■

Catch up with Gary, our former leader, on the e-group.

# Cable Street blues

...Speaking of Cable Street, regular users of the cycle lanes there will know that bits of it have been dug up for what seems like forever to replace water mains - (only weeks after it was extended!)

Clancy Docwra, the contractor carrying out the works on behalf of Thames Water, confirmed the work is due to be completed at long last by 28<sup>th</sup> September. Clancy Docwra can be contacted on: 020 8923 3299.

It looks like Tower Hamlets Council are going ahead with their plans to extend the cycle track two way for the last section between Devonport Street and Butcher Row. Wheelers were invited to comment, but advised against the proposed scheme, which would see cyclists having to make 90 degree turns to cross Cable Street, having to slow down and almost stop, instead of a continuous cycle lane. Also with plans not yet finalised for the crossing at Butcher Row, this could be awkward if the layout at Butcher Row is subsequently changed.

Possible alternatives discussed by Wheelers included making Cable Street two way but closed at one end for access only to prevent it being used as a rat-run, or to keep the entire cycle lane on the same side of Cable Street all the way down, however, as this would require more alteration work (and presumably cost) LBTH were not in favour of this idea.

Prepare for more disruption at the end of Cable Street... ■

## It's the little things...

Are there any particular niggles you notice on your daily journey? Potholes? Shared pavements along cycle routes with no drop kerb? Sunken drains? Broken street lamps? Glass?

Let us know what you've seen, and report it!

Call London Borough of Tower Hamlets:

020 7364 5004 to report potholes, glass, broken streetlights etc, or report it online: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk)

For outside Tower Hamlets, you can report via:

[www.fillthathole.org.uk](http://www.fillthathole.org.uk) as well as see what's already been reported. ■

Robert Lister, Campaigns Coordinator  
[campaigns@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk)

# Some people have all the lock...

David Tuckwell tempts fate by telling us: "30 years cycling and never had a bike stolen. It's not luck... well maybe a little...."

"I always use two good quality locks: a U or D lock from a reputable manufacturer (Abus or Trelock). For the second, I often use another D lock but currently using a heavy Abus chain. Whilst heavy they give me peace of mind and I must be doing something right not to have lost a bike. These locks are expensive but worth it as I've never had the hassle of replacing a stolen bike, the expense of going by public transport whilst doing so, or trying to find the replacement money. My locks are my best insurance and I'd rather spend money, preventing theft than forking out for premiums year after year.

I always lock both wheels to the frame and wherever possible I try to ensure both locks go round the cycle stand, railings or whatever I'm locking the bike to.

I'm fortunate to be able to keep my bike off the street whilst at work but I still follow the same locking up procedure above.

If I have to lock the bike on the street I always choose somewhere with plenty of people walking/driving past, preferably where it would be awkward for thieves to work unnoticed e.g. the railings running down the middle of a road such as Whitechapel Road. No chance of parking a van and using an angle grinder clandestinely there.

Take all accessories and bags off the bike.

My 'around town' bike doesn't look flash and I wouldn't use my smart and more desirable mountain bike to go out for the evening where it might be locked up on the street, at night, for a few hours.

With a folding bike you may be able to keep it with you upon reaching your destination, always carry locks in case you can't or plans change. I even lock my bikes when I leave them at home to make it as awkward as possible for burglars, they may decide to leave them if they can't be wheeled or ridden.

Never leave the bike unlocked whilst 'popping' into a shop. By the time you've run out of the shop a thief will be out of your reach.

Use registering services such as [immobilise.com](http://immobilise.com) (you can also register mobiles, hifi, ipods, jewellery and other valuables). Do it, and it may help recover your property should the worst happen. At least keep a record of the frame number and a ↗

description of your bike, preferably a photo. It's not much good when the coppers ask what sort of bike it was if you tell them it was 'a blue one with gears'. If you have a receipt, many bike shops put details of the bike, including frame number, on it. Receipts also help prove ownership if the bike is recovered.

Well now, the truth: one of my bikes *was* stolen when my sister borrowed it and left it unlocked outside the library. She was only seven and it was a long, long time ago. Doesn't really count, does it?" ■

David Tuckwell, Wheelers 'Special Projects'  
(and all-round nice guy.) Catch up on the e-group!

Lots more practical advice on cycle security at:  
[www.lcc.org.uk](http://www.lcc.org.uk) – see 'Advice'.

## You can ring my bell

The humble bicycle bell - close your eyes for a moment and think of the sound it makes 'Ting-a-ling' would be a close approximation. This sound has been with us for over a hundred years and is so recognisable that it's now ingrained on our DNA, so why are they not fitted as standard to a new bike? For three years it has been a legal requirement to fit a bell to a new bicycle and the manufacturers have been fitting a 'ping' bell, these are cheap but do they and other sorts of audible warning systems work?

For the last year I have tested the ping bell, the electric megahorn and the air operated Air Zound to see which was the most effective. My 'test track' has been the segregated cycle path in Tavistock Place WCI which I ride through everyday and where cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles compete for space. The main problem with pedestrians is that they use their ears rather than their eyes when they step onto the path or road. All three were more or less ineffectual when it comes to warning pedestrians or traffic unless you were right on top of them, even the Air Zound which is super loud at 115 decibels, why is this?

It's simple, pedestrians and other traffic don't recognise these sounds as a bicycle in the vicinity whereas the humble bell with its 'ting-a-ling' is instantly recognised by all and can be heard from a reasonable distance that it makes others look up especially those distracted by their phones and MP3s. Sometimes you need to go backwards in order to safely go forward so fitting a traditional bell could save you a lot of grief. These are available from most bike shops in traditional chrome, funky colours or with slogans from about £3. ■

Keith Jones (aka The Black Knight)

# Rides and events

Check our web site for the latest information. More rides to be added!

## September

**Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> September**

### CIDER WORKS RIDE

Ashford to Headcorn: Spend a day pottering through Kent. Quiet lanes, dedicated cycle paths and a bit of off road (nothing too drastic, but a bit rocky). Tea/Lunch stops. Bring a packed lunch. 30 miles, easy pace. Meet **Charing Cross station** at 08.25 for 08.54 train to Ashford International arriving at 10.08. Return train from Headcorn. (A 50p donation will be required as this is a CTC organised ride.) Contact: **Leigh** call/text 07957 164619

**Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> September**

### SPITALFIELDS SHOW & GREEN FAIR

12-5pm Allen Gardens, Buxton Street, E1. We'll once again be at this great community event with our info stall and Dr Bike stand. Contact **Owen** if you can help out on the day.

**Saturday, 22nd September**

### CAR FREE DAY

- See web site for more details...

**Sunday, 23rd September**

### LONDON FREEWHEEL

Fun mass participation ride to and around central London. Sign-up to join in at [www.londonfreewheel.com](http://www.londonfreewheel.com). We'll be involved with the feeder rides from Mile End and Victoria Park. See web site for more details...

**Saturday, 29th September**

### BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Monthly Workshop – 11am-3.00pm at Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road.

## October

**Wednesday, 10th October**

### MONTHLY WHEELERS MEETING

Meet at **St Margarets House**, 21 Old Ford Road 7.30-9.00pm - everyone welcome. Followed by a visit to a local pub from 9.15pm. Contact: **Owen**.

**17th-20th October**

### BICYCLE FILM FESTIVAL 2007

See: [www.bicyclefilmfestival.com](http://www.bicyclefilmfestival.com)

**Saturday, 27th October**

### BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Monthly Workshop – 11am-3.00pm at Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road.

## November

**Wednesday, 14th November**

### MONTHLY WHEELERS MEETING

(details as October)

**Saturday, 24th November**

### BICYCLE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Monthly Workshop – 11am-3.00pm at Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road.

Ideas and suggestions for rides are always welcome!

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