

Cycle into Summer



Ealing Cycling Campaign 2007

With Funding from the Community Cycling Fund for London

TfL LCC

Cycle into Summer

Background

Ealing Cycling Campaign (ECC) is the borough branch of the larger London Cycling Campaign. A series of bicycle maintenance related sessions were organised with a heavy emphasis on encouraging people to work on their own bicycles and with special reference to working with children.

The Project

Whilst ECC had run maintenance sessions before, the group had lacked sufficient tools and funds to run a proper programme. We had long recognised that badly maintained bicycles were a danger to their riders and that a lack of cycle maintenance skills was a barrier to people getting back on their bicycles after a period of not-cycling.

During previous National Bike Weeks the group had gauged from questionnaires there was sufficient demand for bicycle maintenance training, however formal courses would need organisation and tuition skills that the group did not feel they possessed for the start of the project.



The project team therefore decided to target school fairs and youth groups for the following reasons:



- Children's bicycles are frequently the least well maintained
- Schools would provide the project with publicity
- In the event of rain, the schools could provide wet weather cover
- The fairs would attract a wide range of people, not just committed cyclists
- The group would gain exposure to local schools

The overall plan of the project was therefore:

- Target children and their parents within an environment they felt comfortable in
- Encourage cyclists of all ages to work on their own bicycles under close supervision.

- Engage adults at the events in conversation with regard to cycling issues and transport matters in general
- A secondary phase to run more formal classes after summer

Prior to National Bike Week in June 2007, we contacted 300 members of ECC via email, informed them of the project and asked for leads into schools and youth projects. The project team were quickly made aware of several forth-coming events either directly or indirectly linked to our members. Once we had determined the level of demand we set about organising the logistics and tools. Several issues came to light: first, that many youth groups were winding down for summer and that the school fairs were heavily concentrated at weekends in a short space of time near the end of the summer term. The weather forecast was not good either.

Off the back of National Bike Week the project was launched with five events spread over four schools and a community centre in a local housing estate. A sixth one came to light later.

Initial Findings



The team soon realised a number of issues:

- Publicity

Although the schools advertised the project there needed to be greater stress on people to bring their bicycles. A simple line on the event project announcing Doctor Bike would be present was simply not sufficient.

- Volunteers

Additional people were required to help at the events with a remit of not performing any maintenance but rather speaking to attendees, taking notes of people who were keen to receive further information, and keeping the queue happy. Once the bicycle was checked over, customers were handed a TfL bicycle map of the area and a booklet on simple maintenance branded by Ealing Cycling Campaign.

- Fact Finding

The team felt uncomfortable using the detailed questionnaire initially designed for adults and instead reverted to a simple age and sex log. See appendix 2 for example.

- Bicycle Condition

Children's bicycles were in a far worse state than expected, frequently missing components, corroded or just generally of a bad build quality.



- Organisation

It soon became clear that the project could become slicker in terms of equipment and transportation. A standard equipment list was drawn up and a check list produced to form a guide so team members could easily hand over to each other. Simple details such as the location of the fair, contact details of the organiser, where to position tools etc were written down in the form of a basic check list.

- Internal Skills

Overall the mechanics felt confident with the issues presented to them but at times members had to defer to one another for some specific items; unusual brakes, BMX bikes etc. From this a need for bespoke training was identified.

- Components

At previous Doctor Bikes sessions a cycle shop was usually nearby to obtain spare parts but the school fair sessions meant spare parts were required to be brought on-site.

Event Details

Oaklands Primary School

Our first project was quite an eye opener. It was a typical school fair and we learnt a lot in terms of where to position our stall, the sort of bicycles that turn up and the sheer logistics involved. We saw 21 bicycles with a surprisingly large number of adult bicycles. The visit was a success and the school have asked us back. We will run another Doctor Bike at their Car Boot sale in October.

North Ealing Primary School

The day started wet and the weather got steadily worse, the administration of the school fair was very good but we saw fewer bicycles.

Our Lady of the Visitation Primary School

This is a large school in the middle of the borough in Greenford, again with good organisation but unfortunately the fair was tied in with the local church's Holy Communion and peo-



Bike Doctor John Cieslik-Bridgen with Ealing MP Steve Pound

ple were not keen to bring their bicycles at the same time as attending the service. We saw 13 bicycles and met the head and local MP.

Derwentwater Primary School

We were unable to attend the school fair but the parents association runs a "sale on wheels" at the end of term to raise funds. People are invited to donate any wheeled items from bicycles to prams and related items such as helmets and child carriers. The event was very well attended and we checked over bicycles that people had bought that afternoon. Unfortunately due to the small catchment area very few children actually cycle to school

E.A.S.E. Project (Empowering Action & Social Esteem)

The team came across this operation when it realised it would be prudent for members to undergo CRB checks when working with children. A member went to the Copley housing estate offices for the check and enquired what facilities were available on the estate for children. When it was realised how little there was to occupy the children, especially during summer we quickly agreed to run a maintenance session at their summer fun day.

The event was more successful than expected with many children and adults returning home to get their bicycles. This event exposed some of the worst examples of bicycles to date. Many were in such a state of disrepair that they couldn't be ridden. A common problem with modern children's bicycles



is that manufacturers include complex features, in particular derailleur gears, that children easily damage. We managed to get all bicycles up and running again, though in one case a derailleur was so badly damaged we had to convert the bicycle to single speed.

Brentford Festival

This large community day held in the grounds of Boston Manor raises funds of the restoration of the manor house. We were invited to have an information stall and run bicycle



maintenance too. The day went well with more bicycles seen to than expected, including a pram with a puncture, and a great deal of literature dispensed.

Outcomes

The project team learnt a lot during a busy and fruitful summer.

- Publicity

Media for the event has to detail what the group will be delivering, "Bring your bike to get it checked for free" rather than "Doctor Bike stall". By bringing Dr. Bikes to organised events we tapped into other organisations' publicity. This proved a great way of publicising what we were doing, with minimal time and effort on our behalf. Schools typically arrange for pupils to take leaflets home to parents, and this was a great way of getting our message across. We also gained publicity in The Ealing times, the local free paper; Ealing Cycling News, a newsletter distributed to readers of London Cyclist in Ealing; on the Ealing Cycling Campaign website; and on the ECC email newsletter that goes out to 300 cyclists in Ealing.

- Stress the Plan

The need to stress that people should bring bicycles and be prepared to stay with them

- Formal Cycle Maintenance Classes

Talking to parents at the schools reinforced the need for formal bicycle maintenance classes and drop-in events.

- Organisation

This became slicker as the project progressed. A bicycle trailer was kept permanently loaded with equipment.

- Enthusiasm of children

Many of the children were under the impression they could leave their bicycles with us and come back. Almost without exception they all enjoyed being given the opportunity to pump their own tyres, see how to adjust their brakes and be shown just how simple a bicycle is.

- Bicycle conditions

The state of some bicycles was shocking, lacking brakes, badly damaged parts, sharp edges, the list was endless. This was especially true of children's bicycles that were frequently handed down from siblings and rarely looked after. On several occasions children would arrive with badly fitted helmets on a bicycle with only one brake and almost flat tyres.



The Future

The profile of the group was raised dramatically throughout the project. It was useful and rewarding to talk to members of the public outside Bike Week where frequently the group feel they are preaching to the converted. The group also gained valuable contacts with several schools and established a real presence within the borough. It was also very encouraging to see members of the group come forward to help in many ways throughout the project.

The project will continue now the team has gained links within the community and have sufficient confidence and knowledge to run more formal classes.

More spare parts are required and a selection of more basic tools will be purchased that can be given out during a maintenance session for attendees to use themselves without the project team wondering if they will be lost.

A bespoke training course from a professional organisation is also planned to teach more advanced skills such as wheel truing and also give the project team advice and guidance on non-standard bicycles.

A trailer is also required to compliment the existing one in order to allow us to carry more equipment to an event or attend more than one event on the same day.



The formal classes will be split into two areas:

Youth groups

The Boy Scout Movement, Boys Brigade and Woodcraft have expressed interest. The Boy Scouts are particularly interesting as they have an achievement badge for cycling. Running these courses will further expose the group to the local community.

The project has also been in contact with the Ealing Signing and Deaf club who last year obtained a grant to run bicycle outings in a local park for deaf children. We hope to link up with them to check over their bicycles. One of our members is a qualified British sign language user and this will assist greatly.

Formal Classes

The borough provides subsidised classes for adults, and whilst these are excellent they are intensive one day classes. The project will be expanded to provide a more casual environment where people can drop by and work on their bicycles rather spend an entire day in a class room. Having a regular event in a set location will also encourage people to attend and spread the word to their neighbours.

Conclusion

The grant gave us many benefits and will be a lasting legacy for the group and borough. We have not just gained an extensive selection of tools and spare parts but also gained many new skills and promoted bicycle maintenance to a much wider audience, far bigger than we expected.

The format is now in an easily repeatable format thanks to the project check list and pre-packed kit boxes.

87 bikes fixed

Projects summary

Project	No. children	No. adults	Total
Oaklands Primary School	9	12	21
North Ealing	7	5	12
Our Lady	8	5	13
Derwentwater	7	3	10
E.A.S.E. Project	15	2	17
Brentford Festival	10	4	14

Thanks:

A big thank you to all Ealing Cycling Campaign members that took part but with special mention to:

John Cieslik-Bridgen
Elly Castellano
David Eales
Martin Gorst
Tom Hartwell
David Lomas
Karen Skerit
Alan Williams
Jackie Sears (E.A.S.E.)

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Wizz-bike of Brentford for supplying discounted components and spare parts.
Friends of Boston Manor for the stall at the festival
TfL for the grant
LCC and particularly Sarah Slater for support during the project



Quotes:

"Can you fix my puncture? – no but we can show you how",

"I think I might have run over the bike in the garage, that's why the front wheel is bent"

Appendix 1: Cycle into Summer - Check List

Get CiS Project sheet well ahead of time and ensure you know WHEN, WHO and WHERE. Ideally check out school before hand – some are large. Phone ahead first if you plan to visit.

Get contact details for people involved (ECC and school)

Ensure all equipment ready at least the day before.

Know where nearest bike shop is.

Meet up as one party if at possible beforehand.

Turn up early 30 minutes before start of the fair. The fairs are usually planned out as to where each stall/event will be.

Try and get a location with shelter to save having to pack up and move under cover.

Try and get a wall behind you – you can lean bikes against it, pin posters/balloons, and it provides more security for tools and other equipment.

Try and arrange for the school to have a table ready for you.

Kit list

Maps 9

ECC Post cards

Business cards

Balloons

Drawing pins

Blu-tac

Name tags

Business cards

Cycle maintenance booklets (adult)

Cycle maintenance A4 sheet (children)

Tool kits

Component box

Pumps

Stands

Camera(s)

Collection jar for donations – confirm this is OK with the school

ECC contact collection sheet

Summary details collection sheet (age/sex)

Pens

Spokey-dokes etc

Any other promotional fun stuff

Rubbish sack

Remember details of next social ride to pass on

Get table and put maps etc on it
Keep tools together, avoid lending out
Only fix minor stuff
Key is showing people and getting them involved, don't let them drop the bike off and walk away.
Children LOVE pumping their own tyres up
Don't promise to look after their bike whilst they walk around the fair
Don't over do it – "light touch" not full blown service
Collect quotations "Never knew adjusting brakes so easy"
Take (rough) ages & sex of children, you can just ask "What year are you in/who is your teacher etc"
Write "adult" for grown up age.
Don't over do it – begin packing up when other stalls start winding down.
Collect contact details for ECC
Spread the word of CiS – other school events, after school clubs ie Scouts, Woodcraft
Speak to head if possible, ask about bike racks, how many children/staff cycle, School Travel Plan (STP) progress.
Ask if school involved in council Bikelt lessons with CTUK and when.
Do staff cycle to work?
Mention "Walk on Wednesday" could be extended to "Cycle to School Week"

Afterwards

Check all tools etc back in cases, components maps etc
Tidy up rubbish – especially inner tubes

Send photographs
Type up notes
Do time sheets
Relax

Appendix 2: Cycle into Summer - Log



Cycle into Summer

Project:

Date:

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