

Ealing Cycling News

The LCC newsletter for Acton, Ealing, Greenford, Hanwell, Northolt, Perivale and Southall
September 2013

Ealing Mini-Holland Bid



Members of Ealing Cycling Campaign at City Hall with London Assembly member Val Shawcross, chair of the Transport (scrutiny) Committee; council leader Julian Bell; and Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, leader for transport and the environment.

On 17th July members of Ealing Cycling Campaign cycled to City Hall to help Ealing Council present its bid for Mini Holland funding. Council Leader, Julian Bell presented the bid to London Assembly member Val Shawcross. The council is pitching for £35 million to create Dutch-style cycle-friendly streets in an area around Ealing Broadway. The scheme has some great proposals including contra-flow cycle lanes to and from Ealing Broadway station, and segregated cycle lanes along the Uxbridge Road. A decision on whether Ealing will be awarded the money is expected in the next few months.

Summer of Events

Over the summer Ealing Cycling Campaign has organised and taken part in many events. Here are a few...



Gears Without Tears - Our popular guide to using gears.



Ticket to Ride - Our stall and family ride around the borough - with Ealing Council.



Changing Places - the view from an HGV - thanks to Waitrose



Ride into town - We led 130 cyclists to the Prudential London Freecycle

Southall Pop-up Shop

No one can remember the last time there was a bike shop in Southall – if anyone can shed any light on the matter we'd love to hear. To this end in conjunction with Ealing council, London Bike Hub established a pop-up shop in late July to sell new and second-hand bikes as well offering bike servicing and sales of parts and accessories.



The response has been overwhelming with queues forming of people seeking information, bikes including donations and of course bike servicing. The shop opened every Saturday from 10.00 till 4.00 on South Road.

Although Southall is frequently seen as a car-centric community the demand demonstrates there are plenty of cyclists present but with no easy access to a bike shop.

More details at www.londonbikehub.com/southall

Next Meeting

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month. Our September meeting takes place at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 4th September at our regular venue, Café Grove, 65 The Grove, W5 5LL.

The following meeting will be on Wednesday 2nd October 2013 at the same time and place.

Canal towpath improvements

A year ago we reported in Ealing Cycling News that a towpath audit had been carried out by ECC, to help the newly formed CRT (Canal and River Trust) prepare plans for upgrading the towpath.

This upgrade has now been completed, with funding by the council.



View from the tandem: Left, the audit in 2012 – Right, the newly surfaced towpath in 2013

As a result of these works the section of towpath through Ealing can now be cycled on in all weathers. The increased width has greatly reduced the cyclist/pedestrian conflict that used to occur, particularly at very narrow and often muddy areas. Nevertheless the “two tings” rule still applies, and a friendly greeting always helps.

The next step is for CRT to establish a proper maintenance regime. Already the vegetation is growing back – the wet early summer followed by warm weather have provided ideal conditions for growth, as those who have to trim garden hedges know only too well. ECC have discussed with the council the need to protect their investment, and we will be asking CRT what can be done to control vegetation growth on a routine basis.

Peter Mynors

European Bike Express

Cycling out from your home is convenient, as we all know, but suppose you fancy a cycling holiday far afield. How do you get yourself and bike to the start if it's too far to set off from your own doorstep? Well, for our tour in the Pyrenees this Summer we took the bus, believe it or not. European Bike Express operate two bus services from the UK that loop through France: one to the Atlantic coast then across the western Pyrenees and the other through eastern France to the Mediterranean coast. The bus tows a trailer custom-built to carry bikes securely, so you know your machine will get there when you do and in one piece. The bus has several pick-up points in the UK and drop-off points in France, and you can choose any combination of out and return - in effect you book two single trips. We met the bus in the coach park of South Mimms services on the M1 after riding to Acton Central, taking the north London line train to Hampstead then from West Hampstead to Elstree. From there it's a short ride (through pleasant countryside) to South Mimms. Once there we turned the handlebars through 90 degrees and tied labels onto the panniers and were ready to go before the scheduled 1230 pickup. (We had practiced beforehand, as finding something is stuck is not what you want as the bus approaches ...)

The bus crosses the Channel using the ferry from Dover, which gives you a chance to stretch your legs, have a snack and perhaps

introduce yourself and swap stories with other passengers. Once into France the bus stops at autoroute services regularly so you don't feel imprisoned. The seats do recline, they serve hot food on board (try the lasagne), and they show a movie, so you are about as comfortable as you will ever be on a bus.

We reached Bayonne, drop-off point for about a dozen of us, in the morning. It was already hot and sunny, and the riders rejoining the bus at the end of their tours looked brown and told of scorching 40 degC days. Here's one tip: put your sun cream on before assembling your bike and luggage... it will take longer than you think, especially if people travelling super-light donate lots of surplus food for you to pack!

Elly and I set off into Bayonne and along the riverfront cycle path towards Biarritz, stopping to buy bread and picnic lunch food. We had spent the rest of the fortnight in the mountains, ending up 770 km later for one night in Lourdes before rejoining the bus behind a petrol station. Later, at Toulouse we collected two passengers from the outbound trip and swapped stories of routes and cafes, of climbs and wonderful views, of encounters, storms and gateaux Basques.

Would we use it again? Yes, but I might work on some means of anaesthetic and take one of those horseshoe-shaped neck pillows.

www.bike-express.co.uk

David Lomas

U-Lock it or you lose it

Cycle theft has long been a problem in cities. Ealing is no exception. ECC met the council and the police on 20 August to discuss this issue.

Is theft on the increase?

Not in relation to the numbers of people cycling. Cycle theft in Ealing increased 4.5% over the last year but the growth in cycling has well exceeded this. The detection rate has more than doubled, albeit we would like it to be higher.

How do I avoid having my bike stolen?

Simple. Use a good quality U-lock (also known as D-lock), with minimum rating of Silver Standard. Virtually all cycles stolen last year were locked with cable locks. A cable should only be used as secondary protection, for example to secure wheels to the U-lock.

Aren't U-locks expensive?

To encourage people to buy better quality locks, the council are offering Silver Standard U locks worth £30 for only £10. Contact transportplanningservice@ealing.gov.uk.

A top-of-the-range high security lock like the Abus Granit X-Plus 54 costs £61 on Amazon. Even with an angle grinder this takes too long to cut for almost any thief. But the thief's normal weapon is the compact bolt cropper, which easily snips a cable lock.

How should I register my bike?

The police use a database which is described at www.bikeregister.com

They regularly hold bike marking sessions at places like Haven Green. The date of the next one can be found at <http://www.met.police.uk/teams/transportnw/ealing/index.php>

If my bike is stolen is it really worth reporting?

Yes. The police need feedback on theft, to help them decide where to target anti-theft resources. And even if you don't get your own bike back, a CCTV search may identify the person who stole your bike, who may then be apprehended at a later incident. Two groups of regular thieves have been caught this way in the last 3 months.

The good news is that the authorities are now putting cycle theft prevention high on their agenda.

Peter Mynors

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