

Ealing Cycling News

The LCC newsletter for Acton, Ealing, Greenford, Hanwell, Northolt, Perivale and Southall
August 2012

Broadway Cycle Park Opens



Above: Bassam Mahfouz, Cabinet member for transport and environment; Ben Plowden, TfL's Director of Integrated Programme Delivery; and Julian Bell, Ealing Council Leader, pose for photos outside the new cycle park.



Above: from left to right: Andrew Ritchie, inventor of the Brompton bicycle, and Julian Bell, Ealing council leader, look on as Mark Antwis, Brompton Dock MD punches in the code to withdraw the first Brompton from its locker.

The council opened the first section of the new Ealing Broadway cycle park on Friday 20th July with a short launch ceremony attended by local politicians, cycling supporters, and Andrew Ritchie, the inventor of the Brompton bicycle. The park is the first in the country fitted with a new type of cycle rack designed by Tim Hill-Baldwin that enables cyclists to lock both wheels with a single lock. When complete, it will also feature 21 CCTV cameras and a 66% increase in cycle parking spaces.



Andrew Ritchie arrived to see the opening of the first Brompton dock in London. Other docks will follow in Hounslow and Southwark. The dock holds 20 Bromptons which can be rented for £4 a day, £15 a week, or £50 a month (which works out at £1.60 a day). To join the scheme you can register at www.bromptondock.co.uk.

We think it might take people a bit of time to get used to the new racks, but we'd love to hear what you think about them: info@ealingcycling.org.uk



www.ealingbikehub.co.uk

We've a full range of courses over the summer and beyond with the ever popular gears and brakes nearly fully booked. We'll also be running a one day first aid course in the summer geared around cycling and the sort things we've dealt over the years. We've also lots of bikes to sell and rent which all go to fund

our workshops out in the field from Acton to Northolt.

The Ealing Bike Hub is also sponsoring the summer explorer rides this year - with more than just pens and water bottles! 7th August 7:00pm for 2 hours of mayhem on the roads of the borough as we rush off to find landmarks and more.

Next Meeting

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month. Our August meeting takes place at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 1st August at our regular venue, Café Grove, 65 The Grove, W5 5LL.

The following meeting will be on Wednesday 4th September 2012 at the same time and place.

Contact:

info@ealingcycling.org.uk
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The canal towpath - a new era begins



What we're aiming to achieve - the wide path on the Canal de Garonne.



ECC's audit was recorded from the front of a tandem.



The Trust and Ealing Council inspect the towpath on 5 July.

Many of the best cycling and walking routes in Europe run alongside rivers and canals, using towpaths originally provided for horses pulling barges. In London the canal system has huge potential for such routes, known as "Greenways". However, many sections of the towpaths have been in a poor state of repair, and the width has been reduced by excessive vegetation. This makes it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to pass each other comfortably, especially in wet weather. Ideally the towpaths should be suitable for a wide range of users including people with prams, street bikes and wheelchairs, not just walkers in gumboots and mountain bikers.

A new era begins in July 2012, with

ownership of the canals passing to the Canal & River Trust, a new charity which has just taken over responsibility for 2000 miles of canals and rivers in England & Wales. In Ealing, the council's transport Local Improvement Plan 2011-2014 allocates £700k of funding for towpath upgrading, with strong ECC support last year.

To start the ball rolling, ECC carried out a full audit of the Ealing towpaths in June, a distance of 20km. Every mud patch, leaning hedge and other obstruction was logged. A full inspection by the Trust and Ealing council followed on 5 July. The Trust's consultants will now draw up a detailed specification. The intended minimum width is a 1.8m wide hard surfaced path (as the Greenford Road-

Oldfield Lane section), with mown verges of 0.5m minimum to the hedge and more if possible on the canal side. Vegetation will be trimmed back to a vertical line at the back of the verge, and overhanging branches removed.

In due course the Trust hope to mobilise volunteers from groups such as ECC to help keep the towpaths in good order, once they have been brought up to standard.

Peter Mynors

The Greenway code for Towpaths:

- 1 Share the space
- 2 Drop your pace
- 3 Pedestrians have priority
- 4 Be courteous to others

Cycle Symbols – What's the point?

We've had a few comments about the removal of a section of the east-bound cycle lane in Acton High Street. The council have replaced it with cycle symbols in the centre of the lane, and several people have asked what use is a cycle symbol?

So what was behind the council's thinking?

The first problem they were trying to tackle was vehicles parking to load and unload. If spaces are not provided, people just load in the cycle lane, making it even harder to use, so in an attempt to stop this, they put in loading bays on the westbound side of the road.

Their next aim was to allow cyclists to go in as straight and continuous a path as possible, with a road layout that avoided critical widths where drivers squeeze past cyclists. They decided to keep the cycle lane on the uphill side to make it easier for cyclists to go up the hill at their own pace, without pressure from drivers unable to get past. At the same time, they had to position



this lane far enough out from the loading bays to keep cyclists clear of opening doors, which are responsible for about 10% of cycle casualties in London.

All this meant that there wasn't room for a cycle lane on the other (downhill) side. So they decided to narrow the lane down to a width where it's clear there's no room to overtake a cycle, and to put in speed tables to reduce traffic speeds. Because it's downhill, most cyclists should reach 15 mph, and be

able to travel with the 'traffic calmed' motor traffic.

And this is where the cycle symbols come in. It appears that pictures of bicycles in the middle of the lane are quite effective in showing drivers that they need to use another lane if they want to go past. Though riding this far from the kerb can initially be scary, drivers respond well to a cyclist who rides where the symbols are, and are less likely to try to squeeze by. The important lesson for everyone is that cyclists are allowed to delay drivers, and doing so is not in itself dangerous – in fact it's often the safest thing to do.

The council are interested in feedback on this scheme. In particular, how do you find the downhill shared lanes? Do you feel intimidated, or feel that you are forced to go faster than you want? You can email cycling@ealing.gov.uk.

As always, anyone who wants to be able to ride on the road more confidently should take the council's cycle training.