

Ealing Cycling News

The LCC newsletter for Acton, Ealing, Greenford, Hanwell, Northolt, Perivale and Southall
December 2009

When Boris met Peter

When the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson visited Ealing Broadway station in October, members of Ealing Cycling Campaign were on hand to brief him about cycling issues at the station and elsewhere in the borough. Elly Castellano and Peter Mynors, ECC's Council Liaison Officer, had a very useful conversation with the mayor, though his opening pronouncement – "I've got no money" – wasn't very promising. Peter and Elly handed over a briefing document that covered three issues – 'Cycle Parking',



London's Mayor, Boris Johnson discusses a point with Ealing Cycling Campaign's Peter Mynors.

'Cycles on Trains' and 'Access to Platform Level' – together with our Station Cycle Parking Survey (see below). First Great Western appear to have buried our suggestion of cycle ramps on the station stairs at Ealing Broadway, but the possibility of re-opening the old District Line entrance to Ealing Broadway station was raised at the meeting. This would allow a second access/exit at street level, reducing staircase overcrowding which is the main objection to cycle ramps. Boris was keen for this entrance to be investigated further. The imminent Crossrail project means that it is hard to get short to medium term improvements carried out at Ealing Broadway station, as a whole new station is planned by 2016.

Station Cycle Parking Survey

We have completed our survey of cycle parking at stations in Ealing. Volunteers carried out the survey in spring this year, and Andy Hillier, Elly Castellano and Tom Hartwell have now put together the final report.

Results:

There are 372 cycle parking spaces at twenty four stations in the borough. This corresponds to 1.2 per 1000 people living in Ealing. Five out of the twenty-four stations have no cycle parking facilities.

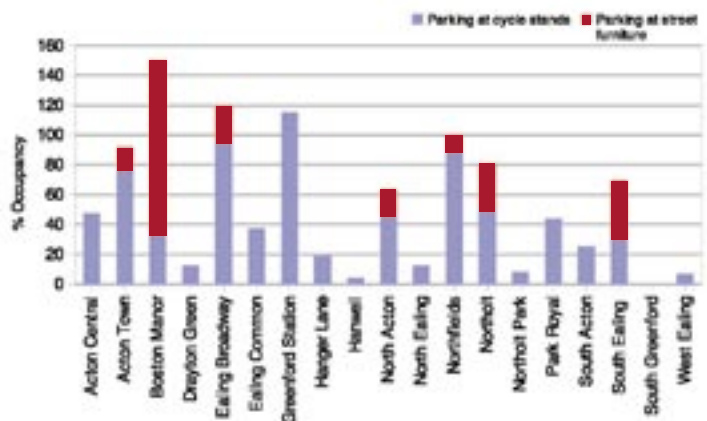
Ninety-nine percent of cycle parking is provided by Sheffield stands and one percent by butterfly stands. Five percent of the Sheffield stands were usable on one side only. Thirty-six percent of stands are covered by CCTV.

At six of the nineteen stations with cycle parking facilities, the total number of cycles parked is greater than eighty percent of the number of spaces provided. They are Acton Town, Boston Manor, Ealing Broadway, Greenford, Northfields and Northolt. Transport for London suggests increasing the number of cycle stands by 20% every time bike stand occupancy

levels reach 80%, so these stations are in need of more stands.

At Boston Manor, Ealing Broadway and Greenford, occupancy is greater than 100 percent because more than two bikes are parked at each Sheffield stand, or because cycles are locked to nearby street furniture. There are cycles parked outside Perivale, Southall and West Acton, all of which have no parking facilities. When cycle parking provision is insufficient, and / or street furniture is more readily accessible than cycle stands, cycle parking is more likely to be scattered around the station.

station	cycle parking spaces	station	cycle parking spaces
Acton Central	19	North Ealing	8
Acton Main Line	0	Northfields	26
Acton Town	26	Northolt	16
Boston Manor	6	Northolt Park	12
Castlebar Park	0	Park Royal	16
Drayton Green	8	Perivale	0
Ealing Broadway	80	South Acton	4
Ealing Common	32	South Ealing	10
Greenford Station	20	South Greenford	10
Hanger Lane	16	Southall	0
Hanwell	24	West Acton	0
North Acton	11	West Ealing	28



Brian on the Box

Martin Gorst

In early November one of our members, Brian Smith, took part in a BBC Watchdog item on flat-pack bicycles. The report, hosted by John Humphreys, sought to discover if flat-pack bicycles – known by some in the cycling community as ‘bicycle-shaped objects’ – are safe once members of the public have put them together. Five people, including Brian, were each given a flat pack bike to build from one of the country’s five largest retailers. Brian’s task was to assemble a Halfords bicycle.

The report found that all the bikes had problems: In some cases damaged parts were to blame (Brian’s bike had a buckled front wheel), in others it was poor assembly. Watchdog questioned whether it was safe to leave this job to untrained members of the public. In France, apparently, you have to have a professional mechanic help you put the bike together. To be fair to Halfords, they offer to build the bikes in store for free, unlike most of the other retailers. But the overall verdict was that the parts were cheap and the people assembling them didn’t have the skills required. We’ve seen quite a few of these bikes over the years at our Dr. Bikes. On one occasion a woman turned up with a child’s bike in pieces in a carrier bag. Often the poor quality of the parts makes them hard to adjust and set up properly even when you have the skills. It would be a shame to stop people building their own bikes. Many people have the skills to do it properly, and for others, getting to grips with some simple mechanics gives them the confidence to do other work on the bike, such as fixing punctures.

For me, the main problem with these bikes is that they are unlikely to last long. The parts are often of low quality and more prone to breaking than those on better made models. And the problem is made worse by the trend among manufacturers of children’s bicycles to put in lots of fancy features like suspension and derailleur gears. The way children ride bikes over rough ground and throw them around, the derailleur change mechanism is soon bent. Within a few weeks the bike is often unrideable, and abandoned. Perhaps the best hope is that the trend for single speed bikes filters its way down to children’s machines. Then they will run and run.

Meeting... and Eating

We meet on the first Wednesday of every month at Cafe Grove, 65 The Grove, W5 5LL. Our next meeting, on Wednesday 2nd December 2009, will include our Christmas meal (Sorry, you will have needed to prebook your place at the table before this newsletter comes out). The following meeting will be on Wednesday 6th January at 7.30 pm. All members welcome.

Your new committee

At the Annual General Meeting in October, the following members were elected to the committee:

Borough Co-ordinator: David Lomas

Deputy Borough Co-ordinator: David Eales

Chair: Elly Castellano

Secretary: Tom Hartwell

Treasurer: Tim Greg

Council Liaison Officer: Peter Mynors

Newsletter Editor: Martin Gorst

Rides Co-ordinator: Sav Monotorio

News Editor: Elly Castellano

Press Officer: Andy Hillier

OYBike Pedals Away

Back in February 2002, a Greenford inventor turned up to our monthly meeting. His name was Bernie Hanning, and he wanted our support for an invention he was about to trial in the neighbouring borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. It was an on-street cycle hire scheme – five years ahead of the one in Paris – called OYBike, short for “On Your Bike”. “Cars in a city just don’t work,” Bernie explained. “Fifty per cent of all journeys in London are two and a half kilometres long – the fastest way to do this is by bicycle.” On 25th October this year, the OYBike system in Hammersmith & Fulham came to an end, killed off by the imminent arrival of the central London hire scheme. “It is not practical for us to continue to run our nucleus system” their web site explained, “as it will not be compatible with the central scheme.”

Despite closing in West London, Bernie’s idea is spreading around the world. Backed by the big international transport company, Veolia, OYBike has recently opened schemes in Chicago, Nice, and Cardiff.

Out of the Mouth of Boris:



Rides...



Check our web site www.ealingcycling.org for the latest information.

Sunday 6th December 2009 Wimbledon Common

A lovely mix of back streets and cycle paths to reach the common.

Leader: Robin

Time: 10.00am prompt

Place: Ealing Town Hall Steps, New Broadway W5

Sunday 3rd January 2010 Hidden North West London

A 20 mile circular route taking in hidden sights, back lanes & new cycle routes through NW London. We will visit the site of the Guinness brewery (art deco feature regrettably demolished), Hindu temple in Neasden, Twyford Abbey, Brent river path & other lesser known places. We will have a coffee break at the Ace cafe & will end at a pub in Ealing around 2ish.

Leader: Brian

Time: 10.00am prompt

Place: Ealing Town Hall Steps, New Broadway W5

Reasons to cycle through the winter. No. 1: Swine Flu

Just over ninety years ago at the end of the First World War an outbreak of influenza swept across the world. It killed between 50 and 100 million people. In January 1919 Ealing’s local newspaper, the Middlesex County Times printed this advert.

A vintage advertisement for Dunlop tyres. At the top is a black and white illustration of a person riding a bicycle. Below the illustration, the text reads: "BICYCLING v. INFLUENZA. VERY few of the people who've had influenza are regular cyclists. Those who bicycle regularly have been less liable to attack. The clean sweet air on the road is far healthier than the stuffy atmosphere inside the tram, the bus or the train, and with a pair of Dunlop tyres fitted to your machine, you're free from tyre-worry and you've reduced the actual effort of cycling to the minimum." At the bottom, it says "DUNLOP RUBBER CO., LTD." and includes their address: "Foundry of the Pneumatic Tyre Industry, Five Mills, Aston Cross, BIRMINGHAM. London: 146, Oldbrook Road, E.C. 3. Telephone: 409 and 428 HULBORN." The Dunlop logo is also present.

If you can find a London street with ‘clean sweet air’, we suspect that Bontrager, Continental, Michelin and Schwalbe tyres will be equally efficacious.