

Pedal Power



The Newsletter of Greenwich Cyclists

December/January 2008/09

Woolwich Foot Tunnel Cycle Barriers

For a number of years there has been talk of barriers being put up in the foot tunnel to deter cyclists from cycling/scooting in the tunnel. Well, they have arrived in the Woolwich Foot Tunnel. They have put up a set just before the lifts and a number along the length of the tunnel. As you can see from the photo they will effectively slow cyclists down but will it stop the determined from cycling through them? I am afraid not and this is only one of the problems.



These gates present a number of issues. First is the health and safety issues. As you can see from the gates the bars do extend above the connecting flat bar. If someone were to fall onto the gates what injuries would they suffer? This leads to how does a person get evacuated from the tunnel if there is an injury or accident. These barriers will mean that the person being evacuated may need to be lifted over the barriers if they cannot be manoeuvred through the twists of the gates.

A second issue is that cyclists determined to ride will not be deterred from cycling/scooting through these barriers. The barriers do not achieve their objective of stopping cyclists from cycling. It will however slow them down as they approach the gates and exit them. In between the determined will carry on as usual.

Next is the issue of double wide push carts. I suspect the gates will be a challenge for mothers to get the double wide push carts through. Even the double long ones, front and back seats, may be a challenge.

The motorized wheel chairs (though I have never seen on in the foot tunnel) would probably not be able to get through the barrier. I don't think they could negotiate the second turn.

Finally, the conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians can only increase. Even if you do push your bike through the foot tunnel. As you are facing a crowd who see the lift is open and you are pushing your bike through the first barrier the race will be on to see who gets through first. There is not enough room for a bike and a pedestrian to negotiate the barrier at the same time. Who will give way? Even further on when someone is in a hurry or a group having to go single file through the barrier. Doing this 6 times can only be frustrating for everyone.

For Woolwich there is the curious question of why there? The impending opening of the DLR link from Woolwich to Silvertown will be open soon. I would suspect that this link will take more people out of the foot tunnel. The question then is who will really be the main user of the foot tunnel. I would suggest it will be cyclists as the DLR will not take bikes.

I have spoken to the lift operators and been informed that the barriers will be a discussion at a meeting regarding the health and safety issues. It may even be that by the time you read this the barriers may be removed. I have to query the cost of this exercise if they are removed. There was no consultation with Greenwich Cyclists or LCC as far as I know. There are other items that are more pressing regarding the foot tunnels than putting up barriers that fail to achieve the objective. One example would be more reliable lifts and fewer or no closures of the lifts.

I do not know the outcome of the barriers in the Woolwich Foot Tunnel. I do know there has been years of talk of putting them up in Greenwich. Will it happen? I have no idea. The message though seems to be clear, cycling in the foot tunnels is viewed as a problem and the Local Authorities involved are going to address it in some fashion. The scary question is what will they try next and not consult anyone on?

Meeting with Councillors

Greenwich Cyclists met with Councillor John Fahy and cycling officer Don Anyiam in October. The Council is very keen to raise the profile of cycling in the Borough in the run up to the Olympics, and are anxious to leave a cycling legacy. It was suggested that filling in the "missing link" of the river path, through the Westminster Estate east of the Thames Barrier would provide a wonderful opportunity for a cycling legacy. Greenwich Cyclists have been pushing for this for many years, but it now seems to be supported by many people, including MP Nick Raynsford, the Environment Agency and London Assembly member Len Duvall. It is imperative that Greenwich Council also supports it and Councillor John Fahy promised to follow it up.

The Council is also drafting a (belated) Cycle Policy. Greenwich Cyclists will be consulted and provide liaison over this. Councillor Fahy encouraged cyclists to campaign over issues which they felt would improve cycling in the borough. It was suggested that petitions provide good leverage with the Council.

Bunhill Fields Ride Report

A beautiful, bright, warm October day saw eight people at Cutty Sark Gardens, all regulars except one who had joined the Greenwich e-list as a result of Freewheel. A few people almost joined us instead of the Bexley and Eltham Cottage Hospital Sponsored Ride.

The south lift wasn't working so we had to carry our bikes down the stairs of the foot tunnel. The north lift was working and the operator told us the south lift was broken because the pedals from a bike had scratched the door sensors and they were awaiting repair. On to the Regents Canal at Limehouse Basin where one more joined us.

The trees and virginia creepers were that amazing red colour they turn this time of year. A relaxed stop at the popular Pavilion Café in Victoria Park where some ate and some just drank tea. Bunhill Fields was an oasis of calm between two main roads and empty of people (live ones anyway). Some sat in the sun while others wandered round following the map of who's buried where and reading about the history and nature from the leaflet provided. Not many eating places open in the City on a Sunday so it was decided to get sandwiches to eat in the sunshine. The ride back came through the City, down Bishopsgate and over London Bridge. We had a short tea and toilet stop at Surrey Docks City Farm. There were lots of cyclists out on our whole route making the most of the weather. Back to Cutty Sark Gardens at about 3.00 pm



Hoo Peninsular Ride

An Indian summer ride on the Hoo peninsula after lunch stop in Cooling, where the churchyard inspired the opening reference in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations to "five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which...were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine, who gave up trying to earn a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle....".

Missed the last train from Bramley and Wonersh station – it went in 1965, that terrible year for little - used branch lines. Instead we had a bracing ride onto the Hog's Back through sleek Surrey commuter villages to Godalming, and back along converted railway track and Wey navigation path in pouring rain to Guildford.

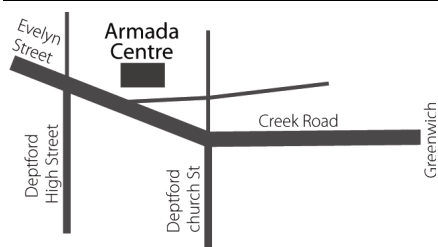


Rides & Events - Some of the upcoming rides and events.

For up to date information on these and others join our yahoo group, details below

◆ Please check your bike before joining a ride. Bring a spare inner tube and water to drink. ◆ All children to be accompanied by an adult. See www.greenwichcyclists.org.uk for low-cost cycle training and cycle maintenance. ◆ Bring your own food and drinks for all rides, some rides may stop at a convenient pub and or café for lunch. If you are in any doubt then please check with ride leader beforehand.

Date	Event	Meeting Time & Place	Leader & Contact Details	Notes
Sunday 30th Nov 08	Downe, then up, then back	Meet 10am Cutty Sark Gardens or 10:30am Ladywell Fields for prompt departure	Paul: 07957 209322 No texts please	Distance probably lower end of range 35 to 40 miles
Saturday 6th Dec 08	Young Lewisham & Greenwich Cyclists " Thames Path to Erith Family Ride "	Depart from John Ball Primary School 11am or Cutty Sark Gardens at 11:30am	Tom Crispin: 07919 447 316	14 or 28 flat miles
Sunday 7th Dec 08	Young Lewisham & Greenwich Cyclists " Leeds Castle "	Depart from John Ball Primary School 11am	Tom Crispin: 07919 447 316	30 very hilly miles
Sunday 7th Dec 08	Ragged School Museum - Mile End	Meet Cutty Sark Gardens 1pm	Sarah Ellis: 07900 677706 No texts please	Some roads but mostly traffic-free some on canal towpaths to this museum of Victorian East End life. Entrance to the museum is free and there is a cafe. About 10 miles in total suitable for all bikes.
Saturday 17th Jan 09	Young Lewisham & Greenwich Cyclists " The Waterlink Way Family Ride "	Depart from John Ball Primary School 11am or Ladywell Fields at 11:30am	Tom Crispin: 07919 447 316	12 flat miles



Contact us

We meet on the first Wednesday of every month (next meeting 3rd December - open to all) at 19.30 at the Armada Centre, 21 McMillan Street Deptford See our website www.greenwichcyclists.org.uk



Greenwich Cyclists is part of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC)

LCC is the only organisation exclusively campaigning and lobbying to ensure the best possible routes, facilities and services for people who cycle in London. Membership benefits include: Free *London Cyclist* magazine Free third party insurance Up to 10% off bike gear at many London bike shops Free legal advice A special deal on theft insurance. Join up today at www.lcc.org.uk and help make London a world class cycling city. Phone: 020 7234 9310.

Join our mailing list

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