

Pedal Power

The newsletter of Greenwich Cyclists

Issue 36
Mar 2004

Spring into Action!

Greenwich Cyclists' *Spring into Action* campaign will be launched in April (date to be confirmed). The aims of the campaign are to raise awareness of the health benefits of cycling, and to encourage more people onto bikes whatever their level, be they complete beginners, leisure cyclists who want to ride to work, lapsed cyclists, or those who just want to join us for regular rides. In addition to our usual programme, between the April launch of Spring into Action and Bike Week in June we will be leading rides after work every Wednesday and leading commuter rides into central London. To complement these, there will be a four week cycle maintenance course (see below for details) and several cycle training sessions for beginners and improvers. We will also be making a special effort to ensure that there is a ride every Saturday, either in London or further afield. So, something for everyone. Updated details will appear on our April issue and on our website but some highlights are:

Into-workers

Rides aimed at those who wish to start commuting to work but don't yet feel confident cycling on their own. Meet 7.30am CSG on:

Tue 20th Apr - Waterloo Bg via Creek Rd, Jamaica Rd

Tue 27th Apr - Waterloo Bg via foot tunnel and the City

Tue 11th May - Waterloo Bg via Creek Rd, Jamaica Rd

Tue 18th May - Waterloo Bg via foot tunnel and the City

After-workers

Meet 6pm CSG on Wed 14th Apr, Wed 21st Apr, Wed 28th Apr, Wed 5th May (ending up at our monthly meeting), Wed 12th May, Wed 19th May, Wed 26th May, Wed 2nd June, ending up at our AGM, Wed 9th June

Cycle Training

Provisionally planned for Saturday 17th April 10.30 - 12.30 and 2-4pm and Sunday 16th May 10.30 - 12.30 and 2-4pm.

Maintenance Class: See below

One Call Does It All

That's the strap line for Greenwich Council's Cleansweep service. You can use one number to contact the council on a variety of cleaning, maintenance and repair issues. Their commitment includes repairing potholes within 15 days of a report and changing street light bulbs during the next working day.

The Cleansweep number is 020 8921 4661 (Minicom: 020 8921 4650) or send an email to cleansweep@greenwich.gov.uk. The service operates Mon-Fri 8am-9pm & Sat-Sun 8am-1pm

Getting Technical

May bike maintenance classes

We are running our successful maintenance classes over four consecutive Thursday evenings from 6th May at West Greenwich Community Centre. The first class starts with the basics: removing wheels and repairing punctures. The other three classes cover servicing brakes, gears, chains etc. It's very hands-on, very useful, and very cheap:

£4 for the first class

£12 for the next three classes (if you already know how to repair a puncture)

£15 for all four classes

Maximum 12 people in class

7-9 pm Thur May 6th to 27th

141 Greenwich High Road,

Greenwich,

London SE10 8JA

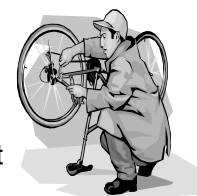
Contact Julian Dobson, 07771 692 344,

julian@jadobson.demon.co.uk



Contact Greenwich Cyclists via Hilary Samuels (co-ordinator) at hilary_samuels@yahoo.co.uk or on 07929 722 973 or write to us at :The Forum @Greenwich (177 Trafalgar Road)

Keep Rolling: Tips to keep your bike on the road



How's your wheel?

Riding behind somebody on Waterloo bridge last week, I noticed that his back wheel looked like it had come off a clown's bike. It had a big kink in it, obviously due to a broken spoke. How he could ride it I don't know. There would have been a noticeable "jiggle" every revolution of the wheel, and I doubt if the back brakes would work properly. I couldn't check, but I would bet that this was caused by a broken spoke. Once one spoke is broken, it places a strain on the others, and so you'll get another, and another. So, if you feel a jiggle, check for broken spokes, and if you find one (or two) then get it replaced ASAP. If the offending spoke is on the left-hand side, it's quite easy to replace yourself: take the wheel to your bike shop and ask for the correct spoke (about 50p). If the spoke is on the cassette side, then you'll need to take the cassette off: for most people that's a bike shop job.

What causes broken spokes?

Several things, but the commonest cause is that they are too loose (surprising that, isn't it). Pluck the spokes: they should give a high-pitched ping (if you've seen Bellevue Rendezvous, you'll know what I mean.). If some of the spokes give a dull plonk, then they are too slack. If you can wiggle the spokes easily from side to side, which I have experienced, then what you have isn't a wheel: it's a collection of bits of string.

Do you feel that your bike doesn't "go" as well as it should? Loose spokes could be the answer. If the spokes are loose, then all that happens when you press down on the pedals is that the back wheel winds up.

Remember, loose spokes mean broken spokes, and wasted energy.

Rides & Events



See www.greenwichcyclists.org.uk for up-to-date information.

March

Fri 5th: Kentish Weald (some hills on this one). Meet London Bridge (outside WHSmith) 10am for 10.23 train to Sevenoaks. Ride to Sevenoaks Weald, Chiddingstone, Penshurst, past Hildenborough, Shipbourn, Plaxtol, past Knole Park and back to Sevenoaks for 16.20 train (arr. London Bridge 16.53). Approx 33 miles almost completely on minor roads.

Sat 6th: Surrey Docks Farm. Meet 10 am CSG for a gentle ride along the river to Surrey Docks Farm. Meet the animals and stop for a coffee before the ride back. 3 miles each way. Kate 020 8858 1594

Sunday 14 March: Kent Country Lanes. Train out to Kent then easy 30 miles. Meet on top of the Green Bridge, Mile End Park at 9.30am. Steve steve@towerhamletswheelers.org.uk

Fri 19th: Local ride, to be announced.

April

See Spring into Action

May

4 week bicycle maintenance course. Exact details still to be decided. See web site or next issue of PP for full details.

Views wanted on Thames Gateway cycle strategy

The Thames Gateway London Partnership has begun consultation on a cycle strategy for the region – which stretches along the banks of the Thames from Southwark to Thurrock. The initiative is very welcome, since the area is set to see massive change, with the Deputy Prime Minister promising some 200,000 new homes over the next 20 years. So, the decision to 'plan in' cycling provision at such an early stage is good news indeed.

However, the consultation so far has been rather underwhelming. A consultation meeting was held during working hours, effectively precluding any working cyclist from attending. (The excuse that the venue was 'only booked for the daytime' seemed particularly lame!) The web questionnaire (see <http://www.thames-gateway-cycle.org.uk/survey.asp>.) covers only cycle routes, cycle parking and delivery agencies when, in our experience, successful promotion of cycling requires a much more comprehensive approach.

We have therefore drafted a comprehensive response to the Thames Gateway plan, which is on the Greenwich Cyclists website (See 'News'). It proposes an audit of the road network for cycling, cycle promotion and training, co-ordination of developers work and investment to make the whole strategy work. All cyclists are encouraged to send their comments on it, before 3 March, to bikepest@hotmail.com. And, if you want to make your own response to the web questionnaire, you are encouraged to do so at the above address.