



Brent cyclists

Harrow Cyclists

Newsletter

February 2009/March 2010

www.brentcyclists.org.uk
www.harrowcyclists.org.uk

Bad weather news

It has been said that “there is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing”, but this may not be entirely true when it comes to cycling. The snowy and icy road conditions meant it was decided to cancel Brent Cyclists January meeting, at which the Chair of Brent’s Highways Committee, Cllr. Daniel Brown, was to have spoken. BC very much hope to be able to arrange another meeting with him soon.

Harrow Cyclists Christmas Lights Ride was postponed from 20 December to 27 December, but did go ahead then, in rather chilly conditions.

If you are interested in our events it is a good idea to subscribe to either or both of the group *Yahoo!* mailing lists, which you can do by sending a mail to **brentcyclists-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**, or **harrowcyclists-subscribe@yahoogroups.co.uk**, respectively. These lists do not send out large numbers of mails, but are the quickest way organisers can get the word out about any changes of plans due to bad weather or other unforeseen circumstances. You can also check the two group websites for information, of course.

Incidentally, this type of cold weather problem does not occur in that most civilised of cycling nations, The Netherlands. As a *Youtube* video linked to on the Brent cyclists website (see *Recent posts*) shows, in freezing weather, which occurs more often there than here, they salt the cycle paths in towns before they treat the roads. We can but wish...

Another postponement

Ken Worpole’s talk to Brent Cyclists, given as being 3 March in the text of the magazine, will now take place on 6 April. The 3 March meeting will take place, however (weather permitting!).

Harrow Cyclists choose new committee and campaign priorities

At the first Annual Meeting of Harrow Cyclists on 9 December, a constitution for the group was adopted and a committee elected. The committee is:

- Co-ordinator: Colin Waters
- Secretary: Helen Levy
- Treasurer: David Turner

- Campaigns co-ordinator: Dan Hanley
- Publicity officer: Tony Levene
- Newsletter editor (with Brent): David Arditti
- Rides co-ordinator: Trefor Bark

At the January meeting it was agreed that the group’s initial campaigning priorities would be:

- 1) To get a west to east cycle connection through Harrow town centre implemented, probably using College Road
- 2) To get a major increase in the number of Sheffield cycle stands in the borough.

Discussions are ongoing with the council about both of these. A contraflow on College Road seems possible, but no timetable has been produced. Harrow has £15,000 available to spend on cycle parking in this financial year, and HC have submitted a long list of proposed locations for stands to the council, emphasising that what is required is lots of basic cycle parking provision, rather than anything expensive or high-tech.

A hole lot of trouble

A noticeable effect of the recent freezing weather has been the emergence of many bad holes in the roads caused by the cracking of surfaces by the expansion of freezing water, particularly in the junctions between repairs and original surfaces, and the subsequent erosion by traffic. The freezing conditions are not, of course, the fault of government, but the terrible state of maintenance of the surfaces to start with, full of patch repairs, is.

In the short term, the best action you can take on potholes is to note as accurately as possible their position and then report them using CTC’s *Fill That Hole* website:

www.fillthathole.org.uk. You can add a picture of the hole if you want. The information will be passed to the relevant highway authority (in London, either TfL or one of the boroughs). You can also use this site to see what holes have already been reported and how the authorities are doing at fixing them.

However, none of this addresses the underlying problem. This is that the money central government supplies to the highway authorities is sufficient only for each road to be resurfaced, on average, once every 25 years. Minor roads may be resurfaced much less frequently than this. This is the basic scandal that needs to be brought to politicians’ attention. They do not seem to understand that, while for motorists potholes are only a nuisance, for two-wheeled

road users they can be deadly, and the Third World standard of maintenance of UK roads it is putting cyclists' lives at risk. This is a point that needs to be brought to the attention of all those seeking re-election this year.



The surface of Stag Lane, on the Brent-Harrow border, typical of our road surfaces at the moment

Brent: another cycling study

It has been announced that Brent is one of 12 outer London boroughs that have been allocated up to £25,000 for a "Biking Borough" study. This is "to examine the existing state of cycle provision and to identify how best to improve provision and promotion". The award of this funding does indicate a certain commitment to cycling of the council, as the application had to be supported by a senior council officer and a senior councillor. It appears to be part of the Mayor of London's stated commitment to promoting cycling more in the outer boroughs.

Brent Cyclists will no doubt be inputting into this study in due course, which should cause the borough to commit funding to cycling through its Local Implementation Plan in future years. We might, however, be forgiven for being somewhat sceptical of another study, when we have seen so many studies come and go in the past, with much input from BC, which have resulted in few changes on the ground due to intractable problems in Brent's urban fabric, which would take far larger sums of money than have been so far been available to put right. It would be reasonable to question the need for another expensive study of what is wrong with cycling in Brent: all that is really needed is for the council to ask us about it, or maybe just look at our website. If, however, this does prove to be a mechanism for getting future funding commitments, it will be worthwhile.

Why Harrow has no mandatory cycle lanes

From the Minutes of the Harrow Council Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel, 20 September 2006:
"Resolved to recommend... that it be accepted that there was an obligation to continue with the objectives set out in the London Cycle Network and Local Implementation Plan, however, *there was a reluctance to sacrifice further*

valuable road space to accommodate cycle lanes and the shared use of pedestrian footways should be avoided wherever possible" [Our italics]

So there you have it. The reason Harrow has no legally-enforceable cycle lanes, in which parking can be prevented, is because, according to some councillors, road space in Harrow is too valuable to be "sacrificed" to the needs of cyclists. So, another point to take up with the candidates in the local elections in May: do they believe cyclists deserve part of the "valuable" road space in Harrow, and would they support the creation of proper, enforceable cycle lanes backed with double yellow lines on the borough's roads?

Forthcoming events

Tuesday 2 February: Brent Cyclists Meeting 7.30pm

Samaritans Centre, 1 Leopold Road NW10. Preceded by business meeting at 6.30; all welcome to attend

Wednesday 10 February: Harrow Cyclists meeting 7.30pm

JD's Lounge, 25 Broadwalk, Pinner Road, North Harrow

Saturday 28 February: Secrets of NW London Ride Meet

outside Harrow on the Hill Tube (south side) 10:30am for a joint ride by Harrow Cyclists and Harrow and Wembley Outdoor Group. Distance 20 miles, suitable for all cyclists.

Wednesday 3 March: Brent Cyclists Meeting 7.30pm

Samaritans Centre, 1 Leopold Road NW10. Preceded by business meeting at 6.30; all welcome to attend

Wednesday 10 March: Harrow Cyclists Meeting 7.30pm,

venue to be announced on website



Tony Levene of Harrow Cyclists talks with the owner of a spectacular display on the 2009 Christmas Lights ride

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