



# Freewheeling

## Lambeth Ladies Learn to Love their Bikes

**WELCOME**  
to the first issue  
of *Freewheeling*,  
the newsletter of  
the Cycling for  
Women Project

*Freewheeling* brings you news, views and interviews, plus useful information on cycling events, rides and cycling organisations in London.

We hope you enjoy this first issue!

If you have comments or suggestions for the July & August issue, contact Alix at WDS—see back page for details.

Women's Design Service would like to thank:

Our fantastic volunteers, London Cycling Campaign, Transport for London, Lambeth and Camden councils, Evans Cycles, Brixton Cycles, Bikefix, Cycle Training UK Ltd, Transport 2000, Sustrans.

Lambeth residents Rita Foster and Annaliese Garratt learned to love their bikes on Valentine's Day when they took part in their first free cycling lesson provided by the Cycling for Women project.

Rita and Annaliese are in the 'action research' group in Lambeth. They have been kitted out with bikes and accessories and are receiving free training.

"I want to take my two kids to school by bike rather than by car," says Annaliese, who lives in Brixton. "Having lessons on how to cycle on the roads with confidence will help me get around safely."

Rita is a nurse and would like to cycle to work: "I cycled a long time ago, and now I would like to get back my confidence on a



And baby makes three: Annaliese and son Louis join Rita for their first cycling lesson in Brockwell Park

bike," she says. "The training will help me overcome my fear of traffic, and if I start to cycle to work instead of driving it'll help me get fit and save money."

Rita and Annaliese will be informing WDS about their experiences as new women cyclists, and suggesting how cycling can be encouraged among women.

## FREE new information booklets

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) has recently commissioned a number of helpful information booklets on popular cycling subjects in the capital.

From buying a bike and how to get started, to what to do in the event of a col-

lision, these booklets will help you to enjoy the benefits of cycling whether you are new or seasoned cyclist. And they're free too!

Titles include:  
- Buying a bike  
- Getting started  
- Cycle sense

- Cycle to work  
- Cycling with children

The booklets can be ordered from LCC or download from the LCC web site:  
tel 020 7929 7220,  
[www.lcc.org.uk](http://www.lcc.org.uk).

## Cycle of activities

It has been very busy at the Cycling for Women project over the last few months. Cycling lessons, maintenance classes, bike rides, route auditing and survey work have all contributed to the range of services WDS is providing.

The 'action research' groups in Camden and Lambeth are now up and running. Six women in each borough have embarked on a new challenge with the help of Cycle Training UK and Camden Council to help them start cycling for transport. They will be filling in travel diaries relating their experiences and showing how their travel habits may change.

To mark the first anniversary of the Congestion Charge on 17 February, the Camden Cycling Campaign provided free cyclists' breakfasts at Byng Place, beside the new two-way cycle track to Tavistock Place. Hot coffee, croissants and pain-au-chocolat were on offer for early morning riders. Women's Design Service recruited women for the project and helped serve (and eat) the breakfast.

In the spring, six maintenance classes helped 36 women get to know their bikes better. Bikefix in Camden and the Guinness Trust estate in Lambeth kindly lent workshop space for free to hold the classes.

Cycling lessons have been pro-



Croissants and coffee: early morning cyclists enjoy a Bicycle Breakfast in Camden.

vided in Lambeth and Camden to help women lacking confidence to start cycling in traffic.

WDS thanks Lambeth and Camden councils for their kind assistance in letting WDS refer women to their training schemes.

For those eager to use their newly learned skills and get out on their bikes, WDS held two springtime rides. On the back of these sociable and confidence boosting rides, WDS aims to do informal audits of the cycling facilities on the route. What to the participants think of the street design and suitability of cycle routes?

The Wandle Trail ride on 29 March was a huge success with 24 cyclists (men and women) riding the 15 easy going miles from Clapham to Croydon.

The ride, which keeps close to the river on the Sustrans route, took in the sites of the Sunday



Cycle trainer Lucy shows how it's done at a Camden bicycle maintenance class, held at bike shop Bikefix, Lamb's Conduit Street.

Market at Abbey Mills, Dean City Farm, through Wildnerness Island and Beddington Park, with inevitable stops for lunch and tea.

A bridge complete with cow-catcher gate at Ravensbury gate provided a good opportunity to do some weight lifting, when rider Sian's tricycle would not fit through.

The threatened mon-

soon showers held off for The Ice Cream Ride on Sunday 8 May. Mindful of summer days ahead, eight women of various ages and abilities were ready to see what Camden could offer by way of dairy refreshment.

Alas, our first stop, Baskin Robbins at Swiss Cottage, was closed. So we decamped to the nearby Choco Bar for excellent coffee, gazing longingly at the Belgian chocolates.

A lovely pedestrian/cyclist-only square greeted us at Belsize Park, but we managed to resist the tempting cafes. Instead, we marvelled at the grand (and obviously expensive) town houses that lined the scenic route up to Hampstead Heath.

We squelched over mud and took in the glorious views as we rode across the Heath, then made our way down to Golders Hill Park.

The final stop, Marine Ices at Chalk Farm, was the jewel in the ice cream crown. The freewheel down via Gospel Oak brought us there quickly and easily, and completed a round trip of 8 miles.

*For more rides, see the Diary opposite.*

*With thanks to Sian Charlton for her Wandle Trail ride report*

## Nappy Ever After an interview with Hilary Vick, who runs a unique two-wheeled laundering service

**What is Nappy Ever After?**  
Nappy Ever After is a nappy laundry service. We deliver clean cotton nappies and take away the dirty ones for professional laundering.

**What vehicles do you use?**

I started with my road bike and a Columbus trailer to see if we could run the service this way. Now I use a Pashley 'Deli-bike' (£500) with a bigger covered trailer (£300), paid for by a grant from Groundwork and Local Agenda 21 Green Values. I can put the clean nappies in the front and dirty ones in the back.

**hours maximum in any one session.**

**Did you enjoy the Cycling for Women maintenance class you took part in?**

I think women are afraid it's going to mess up their appearance. They should go to Paris, Amsterdam or Berlin and see how elegant women can look on a bike.

So few bike lanes are safe which deters women from cycling with children on board. It's even worse at weekends when many lanes aren't observed. Many drivers are not trained to respect cyclists: In Germany if a driver is caught driving in a way that's dangerous to a cyclist s/he is sent back to driving school.



Hilary on her Pashley 'Deli bike'

**What are the benefits of using bicycles for work?**  
Running a bike is cheap, efficient and it's astonishing what loads can be carried. You can also be very precise with your customers about delivery times. And one less polluting vehicle on the road.

**What parts of London do you mostly cycle round?**  
We deliver from Primrose Hill in the West to Finsbury Park in the North, to Hackney Downs in the East. For deliveries I do four

Yes, it was fantastic. I needed to learn how to maintain a bike with hub gears and I was taught that. Although I've been fixing punctures and brake blocks for decades I still learnt more about it. I think it's brilliant to be taught by a woman. It's the first time anyone taught me spanner theory "Lefty Loosey, Righty Tightly". So simple!

**What do you think are the barriers to women cycling?**

**How do you think more women can be encouraged to cycle?**  
More safer cycle lanes and strong enforced sanctions for drivers who put the lives of cyclists in danger.

**How long have you been cycling?**  
I started cycling to school when I was 15. I've been cycling in London since 1981.

**What's the best thing about cycling in London?**  
You know what time you are going to arrive somewhere.

### In a nutshell

- Regularly cycling 4 miles a day reduces your risk of a heart attack by 50%. (British Medical Association, 1997).
- According to the British Medical Association, the health benefits of cycling outweigh the risks from traffic by 20 to one.
- If just 20% of car journeys were made by bike instead, the UK's emissions of greenhouse gas carbon dioxide would be cut by 7.2 million tons (Department for Transport, 1998).

## Dates for your diary: upcoming rides and events

### Bike rides

**Sat 22 May**  
**Brixton to Hertfordshire**  
Relaxed 25-30 mile ride, Meet Ritzy Cinema, Brixton 10am. Feeder ride 10.15 from Camden, corner of Copenhagen Street and York Way. Both meet at 11:15 on top of the Green Bridge, Mile End Park (over Mile End Road) to leave at 11:30. Contact Che Sutherland 07814 445491

**Sat 12 June**  
**Sustrans/Wandle Festival ride on the Wandle Trail**  
Meet Clapham Common Bandstand, Clapham, 10am. Repeat of the Wandle Trail ride. Contact Che Sutherland for details 07814 445491

*All WDS rides are aimed at women but open to all.*

### Events

**Sat 12–20 June**  
**Bike Week**  
Contact London Cycling Campaign for details (see back page).

**Sunday, 13 June**  
**Bikefest in the Square.** Festival of cycling in Trafalgar Square. Organised by Transport for London [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

**Saturday 19 June**  
**'Learn to ride a bike' training sessions with Camden Council** Contact John Clarke 7974 5537 [john.clarke@camden.gov.uk](mailto:john.clarke@camden.gov.uk)

**Sunday, 4 July. Camden Green Fair and Bikefest.** St James Gardens, Cardington St, NW1.

The newsletter of the Cycling for Women project  
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**Cycling for Women** is a research project looking into how more women could be encouraged to cycle in London, providing practical assistance to new women cyclists. We aim to inform policy-makers on how to make cycling in an urban environment an easier choice for women.

**The Women's Design Service** works in partnership with women and statutory and voluntary agencies to improve the urban environment.

Supported by:



## Useful contacts and web sites

**London Cycling Campaign (LCC)** Everything you need to know about cycling in London including advice, rides, events and details of your nearest local cycling group.  
[www.lcc.org.uk](http://www.lcc.org.uk) 020 7928 7220

**Camden Cyclists** The Camden group of the LCC.  
[www.greengas.u-net.com/CamdenCyclingCampaign.html](http://www.greengas.u-net.com/CamdenCyclingCampaign.html)  
Jean Dollimore 020 7485 5896 [jean@dollimore.net](mailto:jean@dollimore.net)

**Lambeth Cyclists** The Lambeth group of the LCC.  
Philip Loy 020 8677 8624 [philip@lambethcyclists.net](mailto:philip@lambethcyclists.net)

**Brixton Cycles** Friendly local Lambeth bike shop.  
145 Stockwell Road, Brixton. 020 7733 6055  
[www.brixtoncycles.co.uk](http://www.brixtoncycles.co.uk)

**Bike Fix** Friendly local Camden bike shop.  
48 Lambs Conduit Street, London WC1. 020 7415 1218.  
[www.bikefix.co.uk](http://www.bikefix.co.uk)

**Re-Cycling** A second hand bike shop at 110 Elephant Road, behind Elephant & Castle, SE17. You may want to take a knowledgeable cycling friend with you when choosing a bike.

<http://www.bikemagic.com/news/article/mps/UAN/3384/v/4/sp/>. Fun web site, includes articles, reviews, holidays and a page on cycling for women.

**Cycle Training UK.** Cycling skills training: cycling & maintenance. 020 7528 3535. [www.cycletraining.co.uk](http://www.cycletraining.co.uk)

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