

Smart going!

Hackney schools get the training bug

All over Hackney, children and young people are learning the skills and getting the confidence and experience they need for getting about by bike. Schools throughout the borough have been proving the pessimists wrong, with enthusiastic take-up of high-quality training for road riding this summer. Further training is planned for the new school year, thanks to co-operation between the schools, Groundwork Hackney, Cycle Training Ltd and the LCC (both the local group and the central organisation).

Anthony Brown of Groundwork Hackney writes: "Our Safe Routes To School (SRTS) programme aims to involve and educate communities through improving the safety of the routes taken to school. It's the pilot programme for London, paid for out of the Single Regeneration Budget. The work is all locally developed and relevant and is resulting in research that will help spread the good practice being developed.

"One of our priorities has been to build on the enthusiasm that already exists for cycling. Road training was offered to all participating schools, which included William Patten, Grasmere, Southwold, Harrington Hill, Daubeney and Gainsborough. Sessions were conducted by Cycle Training Ltd, which specialises in the training of children and adults on how to ride safely on the roads. Their syllabus includes maintenance sessions, bicycle control and skills for safe road riding.

"As well as the training sessions, SRTS is working on providing cycle parking. Other developments are in the pipeline as well, such as contributions by SRTS to improve sections of the London Cycle Network to provide better links."

Your school could qualify for training, too. Contact Anthony Brown on 8985 1755.

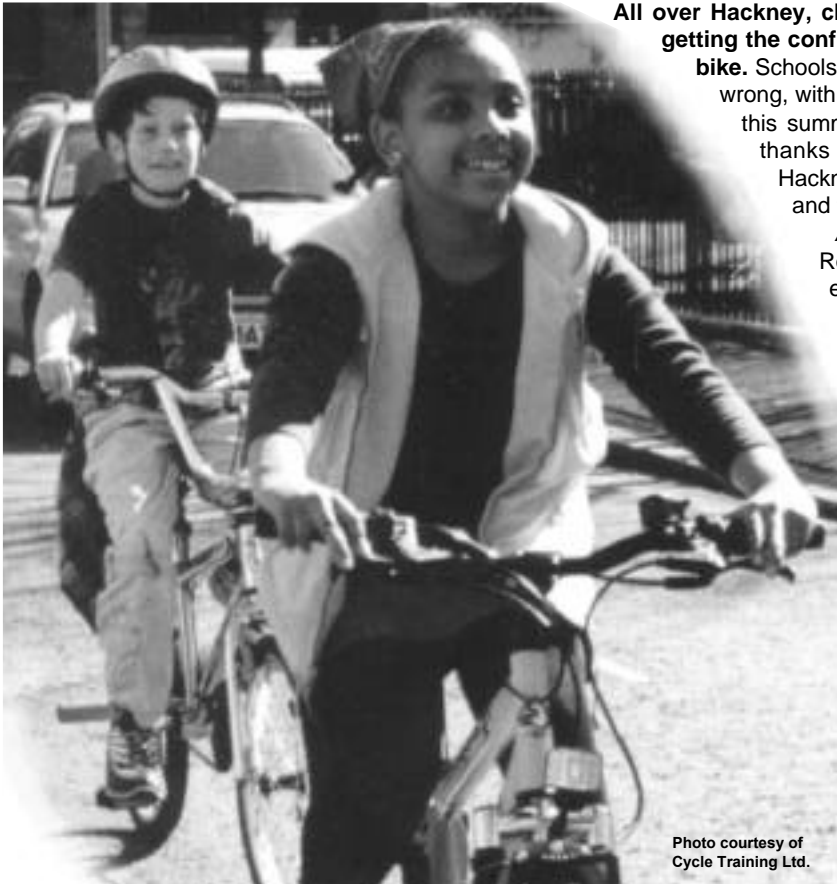


Photo courtesy of
Cycle Training Ltd.

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NEWS IN BRIEF ↩ www.hackney-cyclists.org.uk ↪ NEWS IN BRIEF



Hackney LCC meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 8pm at the Pub on the Park, London Fields E8. Social from 7pm. Next meetings: Weds 1 August and Weds 5th September.

Join our email list today! Send a blank message to hackney-lcc@yahooogroups.com

«Crying out for cycle parking outside your favourite shop or estate? Our cash-strapped Council offers a compromise: you can have shiny new parking stand fitted for about £100 each. Happy customers include the Downs Pub on Downs Rd, the West Reservoir Sailing Centre and the Kingsholt Estate. Contact Steve Walker (see above).

«The Lea Valley Cycling Club has published outline proposals for a 166-metre velodrome at Hackney Wick. Hackney LCC thinks this sounds like a great idea, as long as there's good cycle access and very little in the way of car parking, as we wouldn't want extra motor traffic as a result. For more info, see www.londonvelo.com.

«The 'Wick Link' is almost complete now, allowing eastbound contraflow cycle movement from the junction of Eastway and Lea Conservancy Road. Very good news!

«Sally Haywill, organiser of our January Burns Night fundraiser, says: "Get practising your party pieces – only five months to go!"

Fix your bike! Our maintenance workshop happens every Thursday from 6.30pm at Hackney City Farm, Goldsmith's Row, London E2. Expert volunteer help offered, plus cost-price spares.

Training takes off in primary school

Sally Haywill writes: Thanks to Hackney Cycling Campaign's efficient information sharing, I heard about Groundwork's excellent Safe Routes to School scheme, and LCC's Community Cycling Grants project. A few phone calls later, a chat with a dynamic and enthusiastic headteacher, a brief meeting with Adam of Cycle Training Ltd, and another school, Sir Thomas Abney in Stamford Hill, became the lucky recipient of the Groundwork scheme - all for free.

In September, 20 Year Six children (10- and 11-year-olds in their final year at primary school) will receive four two-hour sessions of cycle training. The aim is to enable the children to become competent and confident on-road cyclists. There will be two groups of ten children each. One session will be run in school time, the other just after school. If there is sufficient demand, more courses will be put on.

Discussions have also started between cycling staff at the school, and Groundwork's architect, to provide secure covered bike parking facilities for staff and pupils. In addition, an application to LCC's grants project may enable an after-school cycle club to take place. The aim would be to consolidate and extend skills learnt on the cycle training course. A trainer from Cycle Training will tutor this club, together with another club open to all-comers concentrating on bike maintenance.

Over the past ten years, since my elder daughters were at the school, I have seen a steady increase in the number of children driven to school by car. In the morning Fairholt Road, the main dropping-off point at the entrance to the school, is seething with traffic, and invariably there are protracted traffic jams, with frustrated and angry motorists venting their ire at each other.

The air is often thick with fumes – just at the point where children converging on school on the pavement are most numerous. Parents, especially those who arrive by car a bit late, rush tiny children across the busy road, or hold up traffic as they stop on the 'No Stopping' places directly in front of the school gates. It's a health and safety nightmare!

Asthma is now a common ailment among children and motor traffic has been shown to be by far the worst culprit in spewing poisonous gases into the air in the city. Encouraging parents and children to think of alternatives seems the logical and sensible thing to do.

Providing them with the information, training and support to do so may make it possible. I can't wait for my ten-year-old to enrol on the training course!

See overleaf for contact details of Groundwork Hackney and the other partners in the initiative.

Shoreditch: one last push!

An amazing degree of consensus has emerged from different interest groups in response to Transport for London's (TfL) proposals for the Shoreditch Triangle. The main bugbear for everyone campaigning for change over the last ten years remains Curtain Road – the street at the heart of the Triangle.

In the schemes put forward by Triangle Traders in the early '90s and then amended and approved by Hackney Council in '97, with the broad support of the community, through motor traffic would be taken out of Curtain Road (CR), and Shoreditch High Street (SHS) and Great Eastern Street (GES) would be two-way for all traffic. while Old Street (OS) would be eastbound for all traffic with a contraflow for buses and cycles. TfL rejected this scheme as 'unworkable', (see *Cycling in Hackney News* April/May 2001). This seems to have been because it would be difficult to cram in a bus lane and a general traffic lane in both directions for the full length of SHS.

What TfL put forward instead was better for buses and cycles in terms of more direct journeys because of allowing contraflow movement on SHS and Old Street (plus making GES two-way for everyone). But it created two mini-gyrotories for general traffic, both converging on CR, which would, as a result, be one-way only northbound. This would scupper the dream of making Curtain Road into the quiet boulevard at the centre of the Triangle, and also put paid to the idea of joining up Hoxton Street and Curtain Road as a north-south 'green route' joining Hoxton and the City.

Very early in the consultation TfL got the message that no one was happy with this aspect of the new plan, and they have already indicated that they are going back to the drawing board. It is good news that they've been prepared to listen, at what seems like a late stage.

The response Hackney LCC has given is in line with the policy of the group ever since we put the scrapping of the Shoreditch one-way system in our 'manifesto' in 1996, and subsequently secured councillors' support for the principle of 'permeability' for cycle traffic in any redesign of the system.

Broadly, we call for:

– southbound access to Curtain Road, including access from Hoxton Street into Curtain Road, which necessitates a

staggered junction across Old Street encompassing the CR and HS junctions.

– two-way use of Rivington Street (the main east-west street within the Triangle), plus suitable facilities at both ends of RS to allow entry and exit (staggered junctions again), in particular allowing cycle traffic movement across Shoreditch High Street from RS into Calvert Avenue.

– more direct routing of north-south cycle traffic between Pitfield Street and Tabernacle Street / Paul Street. The TfL scheme has us veering away from the desire line across footways, where now we go straight on the desire line. (Of course, the fact that we will be able to do southbound at all from Pitfield Street is a plus).

None of this would spell the end of the world for motor traffic. The difficulty is that the whole process is happening extremely quickly, and TfL is planning to begin work as early as October. Shoreditch Town Hall Trust – with whom we collaborated on the 'Look BothWays' event of 1 December 2000 – has presented a comprehensive pedestrian survey of the whole area by Intelligent Space which argues in favour of more and better quality pedestrian crossings, and backs up our argument for a staggered junction in at HS/CR/Old St.

We are going to continue lobbying for the best deal for both pedestrians and cyclists, and we're asking TfL to allow a working group of local interest groups to see and comment on the detail of their revised plan. They won't be splashing five million quid around like this again in a hurry, so we have to get it right – or as near right as we can get it – this time.

STOP PRESS CAR-FREE DAY OK!

TfL and Hackney Council have agreed that Curtain Road will be Hackney's car-free area for European Car Free Day on Saturday September 22nd. Last year's Car-Free Day events were a lot of fun and a real breath of fresh air. It's going to depend almost entirely on volunteer help, though, so if you'd like to help make the Curtain Road event happen, please contact Trevor Parsons on 020 7729 2273 / trevor@ndirect.co.uk