



NEWS SHEET

Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign

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SOME PROFILES OF MEMBERS

This month I have taken the lazy option and copied articles by members from the "Cycling" section of our website. Serendipitously, this means that those who receive this news-sheet by email will find that the abundant "hyperlinks" should lead you to other sites that provide further information or clarification. However, as someone who has not been house-trained, I was disappointed to note there is no hyperlink for a strange exotic substance called "shoe polish".

Please can other members send us similar articles to indicate the wide range of interests and expertise that we possess?



MOUNTAIN BIKING by Clare Muir

I have enjoyed cycling for many years now as a way of keeping fit and getting out in the fresh air, mainly on a road bike. However, about three years ago I was encouraged to try mountain biking by a friend and got hooked. I now ride out 2-4 times a week off road and compete for Team Leisure Wheels in a mixture of different races from short fast races to long endurance events.

At the beginning of this year I trained as a Level 2 Cycling Coach for British Cycling. This has enabled me to get involved in teaching children and young people to develop new skills and further develop existing ones, whilst enjoying the fun and excitement of cycling in a safe off road environment. Present coaching activities I am involved in, in the Dacorum area include:

- Hemel Hempstead Cycling Club, Go-Ride Cycling courses for 8-16 year olds.
- Hemel Hempstead Cycling Club, Monthly Ashridge Saturday Cycle rides for 8-16 year olds. First Saturday of every month from 10-12noon.
- British Cycling Go-Ride holiday courses for 8-16 year olds.

For more information on the above courses contact:

- Clare Muir on 07941470066
- Helen Bojarski (Hemel Hempstead Cycling Club)
- Graham MacNamee (British Cycling Go-Ride Coach)

I also ride from Berkhamsted on a few mornings in the week with a few women, and would love to encourage more women to do so.

If they want to join us please can they ring me on 0794 1470066

AN APPEAL

I wonder if you can help me. I work with all schools in Tring to help them develop partnerships with local organisations and introduce new services to support parents and children. Grove Rd Primary School is keen to get all its KS2 children cycling safely and taking advantage of the training on offer. However, not all children have bikes because parents can't afford them or don't see it as a priority. The school would like to build up a stock of donated bikes for these children. It's a good idea which I think other schools would like to copy.

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COMMUTING by David Calder (our webmaster)

Earlier this year I was persuaded to join a team taking part in the Race the Sun charity event in the Lake District. The event involves cycling fifty miles, climbing up Helvellyn and canoeing five kilometers. I needed to get fit but my mountain bike was gathering cobwebs in the shed and I didn't know how I was going to find enough time to do all the training.

This was when I hit upon the idea of commuting to work by bike. I got the mountain bike out of the shed, put my clothes and laptop in a rucksack and cycled into work along the canal towpath from Berkhamsted to Watford. The cold wet rains of February had left the track muddy and slippery and the bumpiness of the track outside the towns and villages was too much for a Monday morning on my fixed frame mountain bike. I arrived at work covered in mud after nearly two hours. This wasn't going to be easy as I first thought and I decided to come home on the train.

Not wanting to be outdone I decided to give cycling in amongst the rush hour traffic a try. I was surprised just how easy it was and was able to get to work in under an hour. I was surprised just how easy it was and was able to get to work in under an hour. Click [here](#) to see one of the routes I take. This can be quicker than by car on a Monday morning during school term. Over the first month I invested in a decent set of lights for both the front and rear, a pannier bag specifically for carrying laptops and a simple repair kit that I keep in a wedge bag underneath the saddle. I went even further and replaced the knobbly tyres for slick city tyres. Eventually I progressed to a tourer - a road bike with a relaxed geometry (i.e. not too sporty and designed for long distances), larger wheels and a strong frame to carry me and my heavy laptop and change of clothes.

Here are my top tips for commuting:

- Don't overdress. A t-shirt and shorts are all you need even in cold weather. Cycling generates a lot of body heat. However, the extremities can get very cold in the winter. Warm gloves and thick wooly socks that cover your ankles are essential in winter.
- Use panniers to carry your load. It is much more comfortable than carrying it on your back in a rucksack.
- Always carry an emergency kit. At the very least you should have two spare inner tubes, a pump, tyre removal levers, a puncture repair kit and a set of allen keys (hex keys).
- Invest in a decent set of lights. As well as the lights mentioned above I have a supplemental white blinkie on the handlebars that I use both day and night to increase visibility.
- Carry a good lock. It's a lot of extra weight but a good D-Lock and metal rope mean that I can stop off anywhere on my journey and not have to worry about where I leave the bike.
- Leave as much as you can at work. I leave my work shoes in the office and so I also keep the shoe polish and brushes in my locker too.
- Vary your route. Look for alternative routes that may have less traffic to compete with and that avoid busy junctions and roundabouts.
- Take your place on the road. Don't hug the kerb and follow the rules of the road. Just like any driver on the road, a cyclist is in charge of a vehicle and is bound by the same rules and regulations.

There is a wealth of resources for the bicycle commuter on the internet. I recommend the Commuting thread on [Bike Forums](#) (but note that this is an American forum so you should ignore any discussions about left turns and filter lanes!); the On the road section of the [CTC Forum](#); and Paul Dorn's [bike commuting tips](#) (also American). You should also remind yourself of the [Highway Code](#).

Visit our website: www.tbcc.org.uk

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