



NEWS SHEET

Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign

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ROAD QUALITY AND POTHOLES

"Improvements to road quality" was the most important need of those who filled in our recent survey. Such improvements are of two kinds: "Potholes" and "Highway Maintenance". Herts Highways received 225 pothole reports in February compared to 112 for the same period last year. This might be due to the bad winter, but this local increase is much more than the national increase of 32%. (which has led to a situation in which there is 1 pothole for every 120 yards of road in England and Wales) This difference may be due to the policy in Herts for maintenance, in which a large number of roads of poor quality are repaired for the same cost as repairing fewer really bad roads.

This seemingly logical approach is flawed, because it is the really bad roads that get most potholes, and the amount of money spent on compensation to road users due to damage caused to vehicles by road defects is greater than the money spent on road repairs.

On average it costs £80 pounds to repair each pothole in Herts (but £46 in Wales).

Herts Highways cannot repair a pothole if they do not know about it. So if you want to get it repaired you should report it. You can report potholes (or damage to the highway) by telephoning 01438 737320 or visiting the Herts Highways website at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/actweb/hfr/default.cfm>.

Alternatively you can use the scheme favoured by CTC (Cyclists Touring Club) and go to www.fillthathole.org.uk. In addition to the reporting form, this CTC site has a **league table** showing that Herts is 138th out of 206 authorities for repairing reported potholes, and about 3rd for the number of potholes reported. Also there is a **list of hazards** and if you put Hertfordshire into the highway authority box, and update the list, you will see details of the 415 hazards reported in Herts by CTC members.

[To be fair to Herts, however, I should point out that many of these hazards are for entire roads, and not the individual potholes for which this reporting scheme was devised.] Work on entire roads comes under maintenance, and planning for this takes several months or even years. Details of road maintenance in Dacorum can be found through minutes of the "Joint Member Panel" of Herts Highways and Councillors at <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1636>

TWENTY'S PLENTY

The Government has very recently come out in support of campaigns for reduced speed limits on country roads and residential areas (*DfT: Road Safety Consultation*). This would mean limits on country roads being lowered to 50mph and in residential areas and by schools to 20mph. There have been long-running campaigns backing the ideas for both - *Slower Speeds Initiative* and *20's Plenty*.

Some councils around the country have imposed these limits but with Government backing they are now likely to become more common. In Berkhamsted the High Street is already a designated 20mph zone. In 2008 Tim Vaughan wrote to the Town Council on this and was told they had a longer term plan to consider extending the zone - that may now be brought forward. We will be taking this up with them again. In Tring, the now defunct "Tring Safety Group" was in favour of 20mph limits, particularly near schools, and have "passed the baton" to TBCC.

For cyclists these initiatives are to be welcomed as they make it safer and more pleasant to ride around roads in the towns. If you have views on these limits please let us know (contact details at the foot of the next page).

FUTURE EVENTS

Free Cycle Training: We are offering free cycle training for children and rusty adults at Tring Market Place on Saturday 9th May. Basic training will be provided by a qualified cycling instructor (Angela Lynch, www.dacorum-cycle-training.com) during two-hour sessions: from 10.00am till midday and 01.00pm till 03.00pm. Please arrive at the start of a session.

BIKE WEEK: This year Bike Week will be from 13th to 21st June. Events we are organising are:

Cycling Treasure Hunt: This leisurely placed event will take place on Sunday 14th June. It is suitable for all the family. Meet opposite the Rose and Crown, High Street, Tring at 1.45pm. Winners will receive gift vouchers from Mountain Mania.

Summer Solstice Ride: This will be on Thursday 18th June starting from the Three Horseshoes, Winkwell. We will set off promptly at 8pm, so please arrive much earlier if you want to eat at the pub beforehand. Make sure your bike has a decent set of lights for getting home.

BERKHAMSTED BIKE FEST: This is scheduled for Sunday 20th September at Canal Fields, Berkhamsted. More details as they arise will be added to the Bike Fest 2009 page on our website at <http://www.tbcc.org.uk/bikefest2009/>

EASY ROAD RIDES FROM BERKHAMSTED

Helen Bojarski of Hemel Hempstead Cycling Club is doing a 3 month trial of easy rides, suitable for all but mainly aimed at women. They will be on Saturday mornings starting 9 May at 10 am departing from the War Memorial car park at the top of New Road by Berkhamsted Castle. There will be a fixed route each month of about 25 to 30 miles taking about 2 hours. The route for May can be seen on bikely at <http://www.bikely.com/maps/bike-path/HHCC-summer09-easy3>.

For Families: There is a mini 8 mile road loop which is on quiet roads and starts from the same place. The route for this can be seen at <http://www.bikely.com/maps/bike-path/HHCC-summer09-mini>. For more information ring Helen on 07974 726887.

BICYCLE SECURITY MARKING

Hertfordshire Constabulary have a mobile Police Office that tours Western Hertfordshire on a four weekly rota. The Police Office offers many services including security marking of bicycles and other possessions.

To see the timetable go to http://www.herts.police.uk/policestations/western_mobile_police_office.htm

BERKO MTB

On several occasions on Wednesday evenings I have been passed on the canal towpath by cyclists with excellent lights who had set off from Ellesmere Road in Berkhamsted. I now find they ride on other days and on other routes. For details of this group go to www.mtbberkhamsted.co.uk

TWITTER

If you look at our constantly evolving website you will see that we are using **Twitter** for rapid news and answers.

I do not think that my mind works fast enough to twitter, so I wonder if a similar vehicle could be started for "grumpy old men". A possible name could be Grumble, so instead of tweeting on Twitter I would mumble on Grumble. Perhaps I should offer the idea as a profitable spin-off for "Oldie" magazine.

Visit our website: www.tbcc.org.uk

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