

You never forget?

Some kinds of received wisdom are so dangerous they should have a health warning on them. Try this one; "You never forget how to ride a bike."

Er.. yes you do. Just give it long enough. I use to ride to school every day; spent two summers in the saddle youth hostelling round Wales and England. Then my driving licence came along and the bike was no more. Well not for twenty years or so, when a string of disastrous relationships with exercise routines - gym membership never actually used; rowing machines unrowed; swimming pool visited but not actually swum in - sent me back to the bike shop.

Like computers, bikes have changed. They sort of look the same, but rather like a modern Packard-Bell versus an eighties Applemac, under the surface they work very differently. take the gears. You knew where you were with the old Sturmley Archer three-click jobs. Now there are two gear levers, interacting more subtly and complexity than a top-of-the-range Mercedes gearbox.

Well, so what. All that stuff can be absorbed and learned fast enough. But when, for the first times in decades, I swung confidently into the saddle and set off, it was immediately obvious that something terrible had gone wrong. Call it instinct,

but as I toppled sideways into a neighbour's hedge I knew this was not how it was meant to be.

But I suppose there's some truth in that stuff about never forgetting, etc - you do actually re-learn pretty fast. And I'm glad I did. For me, cycling round the Suburb, or to the shops in Temple Fortune, is a continuing pleasure. It's a lot quicker than walking and, very often, driving - especially when you don't have to queue outside M&S's car-park, or vie with two other drivers for the one parking slot left. And so far I've found it pretty safe - you don't have to use main roads much and most local drivers are fairly cyclist-friendly. It's got me a lot fitter too.

So I'm delighted that the Suburb is staging its Bike Festival. I know there are specific issues to be assessed - how can we make riding to school safe for our kids; how can we open up parts of the Heath and Heath Extension to more cyclists without hacking off the walkers - but there are some simpler and undeniable equations. The more of us use a bike for local trips, the less traffic congestion we'll have. Local roads will become safer. We'll all become quite a lot healthier. *Especially* if you remember that you *might* have forgotten how to ride a bike.

RICHARD MADELEY

Overwhelming "Yes" to traffic restraint



Doing it voluntarily

One of the aims of the Garden Suburb Agenda 21 Partnership is sustainable reduction of traffic and speed on the Suburb. The 20mph scheme was an LA21 proposal and the Partnership is campaigning for a voluntary overall reduction by issuing '20

is plenty' car stickers to remind us all, as well as commuters cutting through, that this is an area where we want to be able to walk in safety across our roads. Cut out and use this as a sticker or collect one from the Garden Suburb Gallery.

Residents pressure group 'eyes' Golders Green plan

In July last year some residents received notification from Barnet about the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) affecting this area. There appeared to be a random distribution of this information. Residents in the vicinity of the station were dismayed to see that the area designated as Site 19, for development of 'retail business, leisure, and affordable housing' included the whole Underground sidings, railway maintenance depot and the station forecourt.

Subsequently, a number of interested local residents formed the Golders Green Station Action Group (GGSAG) whose first goal was to make the intention of the draft UDP more widely known and as a result over eighty responses were submitted to the planners at Barnet House. The operational members of GGSAG entered into a dialogue with London Underground to understand the thinking of LU in offering this land for future development and coincidentally representations were made to the relevant Barnet committees. Members of GGSAG, Bernard Jackson and Arnold Linden addressed the Policy & Implementation Committee at the Town Hall on January 10 explaining the basis of GGSAG's objection to unrestricted major development of the land. The Group's intention is not simply a NIMBY attitude, but (a) a wish to contribute positively to a sympathetic development of the transport interchange at Golders Green Station which does not adversely affect the environment for local residents, and (b) to find out if LU have serious intention to close the railway

sidings and, if not, to re-define the boundary of the Site 19.

Eventually a meeting was arranged at the home of Richard Morais in Rotherwick Road between representatives of London Underground, Barnet Town Planners and local Councillor Monroe Palmer. This cleared the air most usefully and lead to an interesting clarification of the situation. It seemed possible that the intention of London Underground had been largely misunderstood and LU were not aware of the scope of the draft UDP provisions. As a result GGSAG notified its members (and non-members who had responded to the draft UDP last July). Hopefully they have now commented in April to the revised UDP and asked for the boundary of Site 19 to be redrawn excluding the railway sidings and modifying the definition of the development potential at the station forecourt.

It should be understood that the UDP is not a planning application and to the knowledge of GGSAG no such application has been made. However, provisional studies have been commissioned by LU for development and remodelling of the station which could have serious influences on the traffic, appearance and other environmental realities at the Golders Green cross-roads and GGSAG is maintaining its relations with interested parties to represent the interest of local residents.

For more information please contact Bernard Jackson, GGSAG, 62 Rotherwick Road NW11 8458 6803, bees@dircon.co.uk or RA Consam Chairman, David Lewis, david@wisebuys.co.uk.

Barnet Council consulted more than 1000 households on the Suburb and received an overwhelming "Yes" to plans for calming traffic in Brim Hill and Deansway and a proposed 20mph zone centred upon the Garden Suburb school and Fellowship House.

Barnet Council consider a consultation response of 20% to be exceptionally good. Suburb residents far exceeded this figure with 45% of residents in the proposed 20mph zone replying to the consultation and a staggering 71% from Brim Hill returning their forms.

The message from residents who replied was loud and clear, with 85% from Brim Hill in favour of LBB's proposals, 95% from Addison Way in favour and 85% of the 20mph zone in favour.

Deansway produced a confusing result due to residents

favouring calming but not the specific proposals. The RA's subsequent intervention with the support of our local MP Rudi Vis and the Barnet Council resulted in Transport for London managing to find extra funding to provide alternative measures.

If it is to be effective, the 20mph zone must rely on a degree of self-enforcement. The RA therefore asks all residents to be diligent in respecting this new limit and, by so doing, act as an example to others.

This is one of the first 20mph zones in Barnet and both the Council and the RA will monitor the benefits and look to improvements if required.

Only by demonstrating its effectiveness will we be in a position to advocate its extension to other roads needing such control.

KEN MURRELL

Garden Suburb Theatre costumes

If you have seen any of the Garden Suburb Theatre's productions you will know that the costumes are always a strong feature - simple or outlandish, glamorous or shabby, with the sort of detail that puts the finishing touch to any show, whether it be a historical drama like Nicholas Nickleby or a pantomime. Most of the costumes actually belong to the society, some of it the results of gifts and purchases over the years, but more probably the work of a group of talented designers and seamstresses.

Unfortunately the society never has enough space in which to store its costumes. There are currently a large number of them in carrier bags in a cellar! What is needed is a dry room or garage where more of the collection could be hung up and accessed easily. Absurdly, we sometimes have to borrow or pay for costumes which we already have but can't get at.

If you feel able to help in any way GST would be very grateful. Please contact Debbie Lane on 8445 2269 or Diana Darrer on 8455 7385.

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