

Bike Banter

Old Spokes - FLC Seniors Cycling Club Newsletter

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Send your newsletter ideas to:
pamelalester@shaw.ca

Our Editorial Team:

Pamela Lester, Publisher
Peter Bradbury, Feature Writer
Richard Stothard, Distribution
Peter Whitehead, Facebook Coordinator

Inside this issue:

- How Did the Netherlands Become the #1 Bicycling Nation? (#5 in the series)
- **NEW** Ride Review
- Using Strava
- Reflections

How did the Netherlands become the #1 bicycling nation? (#5 in the series)

VERDOMME! SOMEONE PINCHED MY BIKE

Amsterdam was known as the world's bicycle theft capital. It was not hard to earn that reputation since there were more bikes than anywhere else, and they were available for the taking. Most people lived in small, multi-story apartments accessible by stairs. It was challenging to climb them burdened with a heavy Dutch bike, so they left their bicycles outside, locked or unlocked, exposed to the weather, and to "zwijntjesjagers" (bicycle thieves). Space for parking bikes was scarce. In the city center during the workday, a common sight was half-a-dozen rows of bikes lying against a wall. Shop owners even complained about bunches of parked bicycles impeding customer entrance to their shops. Police had to contend with parked bicycles obstructing sidewalks and spilling out onto streets where they interfered with traffic.



A theft was easy. In 1928, legislators added article 156A to the criminal code to forbid leaving a bike unattended without a reliable lock. Citizens ignored the rule, continuing as before to not lock up their bikes. In 1937 alone, thieves swiped 10,000 bikes, or 30 per day, in Amsterdam. That paled against the rate of 60 per day when the Nazis controlled the city. After a reprieve following the war, thefts surged again in 1950. A typical thief could survive by stealing one bike a week. "Joyriders" would "borrow" a bike to commute to work in the morning, and borrow another to return from work in the afternoon. In later years, crooks loaded bikes not locked to fixed objects onto trucks and shipped them to other cities. Police were powerless to counter bike theft; they preferred dedicating resources to other crimes with better chances of the outcome.



Amsterdam had notorious locations for the sale and purchase of stolen bikes. One was at the Grimburgal Bridge; another was at the Waterlooplein Flea Market. Tourists found it cheaper to buy a second-hand bicycle of questionable provenance than to rent one for their stay. Hard-up students bought stolen bikes without

qualms because they could not afford a legally purchased one. Other people sought the bikes to replace the ones that had been taken earlier or were too expensive to repair. Some prolific riders said they had a bike stolen from them every year.

Amsterdam was a Mecca for countercultural, drug-addicted youth in the 1970s; they were the most likely thieves. One of them, Piet, well known, stole bikes at the rate of up to three a day to support his habit for eight years. His favorite line when selling a bicycle was to say his girlfriend had got a driver's license. Piet claimed 10% of people refused to buy stolen bikes because it was immoral, 30% because they were "chicken-hearted," and 60% would buy stolen bikes willingly if given the circumstances.

In the 1980s, Cleff van Zelst, the most famous thief of all, operated with a wrench, two screwdrivers, cutters for bolts and wires, and other equipment. He wrote a "how-to" book about his exploits on retirement titled "100,000 Bike Valves", in which he claimed to have swiped 50,000 bicycles in his career. A bike rental company sued him for his profits.

Stolen bike statistics are imprecise; in the Netherlands, victims report only 1/5 of thefts. The country suffered an estimated 500,000 stolen bikes last year, equal to 3% of the total number of bicycles owned, not dissimilar to the losses estimated for other European countries.

All this helps explain, in part, why Amsterdam citizens opt to own economical and utilitarian Dutch bikes, nothing fancy, so as not to attract the attention of thieves. When parking their bikes in the open, smart owners use two or three sturdy locks, one of which is attached to a fixed object. Improved traffic policies, laws and regulations, better police enforcement, and modern bicycle garaging have helped improve bicycle security over the last few decades.

Next: Where can I park my bike?

Sources: In the City of Bikes by Peter Jordan and other sources.

Editor: We invite your critique, comment, or question about this article or any other in this series. We may publish it with your permission.

Peter Bradbury

(Hats off to Peter for his faithful article writing!! We value and appreciate you!)



Talk of the bike jungle in Amsterdam yielded these photos from our Communications Team during editorial review.



Submitted by
Peter Whitehead

Submitted by
Rick Stothard

*How would a person
ever find their own
bike again?*



Me: what should I do to improve my health
Doctor: buy a bicycle and cut the carbs
Me:



Cycling-Related Classified Ads Section

Good news to
report here.

Successful sales!

*This is the oldest you've
been & the youngest
you'll ever be again,*

Divine Postal Service



*so be
crazy,
love,
laugh
& live
it up!*

Ride Review

A Cycling Club member suggested a new section to review memorable Club Rides. Here is the first – send in your favourite ride reviews for upcoming Newsletter issues.

Level 1 – our rides, compared to Levels 2 and 3, tend to be a little shorter, not quite so fast and definitely fewer hills. While the Level 1 season showed so much promise as spring approached, Covid 19 saw the schedule fizzle to nothing and then slowly restart with weekly rides. While many of the traditional Level 1 riders have yet to participate, each Tuesday has seen an enthusiastic group of cyclists and a diverse selection of amazing rides.

While a typical level 1 ride would range from 20 to 25 km, September 1st was our shortest ride of the year, clocking in at just under 17 km. That being said, it was certainly the most scenic ride of the year. Joining the pathway at Cranleigh Park, our route travelled along the Cranston Ridge, crossing Cranston Avenue and then continuing on the pathway along the ridge. We all enjoyed the long coast down the hill into the new Riverstone subdivision. After a tour of Riverstone, on pathways and streets, we made our way back up the long, long hill. Note – our two e-bike riders had no trouble, one hardy soul cycled the entire hill and the rest of us varied between riding and walking. After stopping at the top of the hill for a well-deserved lunch break, we retraced our route back to the cars.

This short but scenic ride offered incredible views of the river valley and a rare opportunity to see a close-up look at some extraordinary homes with park-like landscaping. A trip well worth the effort!

So, if you are looking for a ride that is a little shorter, not quite so fast with only a couple of hills, take a look at the Level 1 rides.

Submitted by Doreen Munsie

Post-script: I like the idea of using the newsletter to promote rides of different lengths and difficulties. One of the struggles for a person like me, who would lead if I had an idea of where to ride, this might give leaders ideas for future rides. It would also be useful for individual riders to try out something different. Incorporating the geo maps that the Level 2 group has created (when appropriate) would be useful too.



Using Strava

Would you like to track Your ride? Would you like to see how many km of city bike paths you have ridden or yet to ride? Now you can...

Strava is a phone app (both Android & iPhone) that is free and works with or without data, so it's nice when you are not within cell tower range in the mountains. It does have an enhanced version, but I only use the free one. The reason for mentioning Strava as opposed to other tracking apps is that it links to yycpathways <https://yycpathways.ca>

(Follow the link to this information: yycpathways integrates with Strava to sync up all your activities with a map of the City of Calgary's pathway system.)

Once you sync the two (which, by the way is easy, one tap), yycpathways records which pathways you have ridden and which ones are yet to ride on a map by highlighting them. On the dashboard it gives you percentage of pathways as well as giving you the km for each ride you have synced with Strava. It also gives you a dashboard table of all your rides too, so if you want to see your rides in a nutshell it's easier than on the free version of Strava. If you have a lot of rides already recorded on your Strava it does take several minutes to sync. Happy riding!

Have a great day! Heidi Morrison

I got myself a seniors' GPS. Not only does it tell me how to get to my destination, it tells me why I wanted to go there.

SIMPLE FORMULA FOR LIVING

Live beneath your means.
Return everything you borrow.
Stop blaming other people.
Admit it when you make mistake
Give clothes not worn to charity
Do something nice and try not to get caught.
Listen more; talk less.
Every day take a 30 min. walk.
Strive for excellence, not perfection.
Be on time. Don't make excuses.
Don't argue. Get organized.
Be kind to unkind people.
Let someone cut ahead of you in line.
Take time to be alone.
Cultivate good manners.
Be humble.
Realize and accept that life isn't fair.
Know when to keep your mouth shut.
Go an entire day without criticizing anyone.
Learn from the past. Plan for the future.
Live in the present.
Don't sweat the small stuff.
It's all small stuff.



Reflections

LET YOURSELF REST

If you're exhausted, rest.

If you don't feel like starting a new project, don't.

If you don't feel the urge to make something new,
just rest in the beauty of the old, the familiar, the known.

If you don't feel like talking, stay silent.

If you're fed up with the news, turn it off.

If you want to postpone something until tomorrow, do it.

If you want to do nothing, let yourself do nothing today.

Feel the fullness of the emptiness, the vastness of the
silence, the sheer life in your unproductive moments.

Time does not always need to be filled.

You are enough, simply in your being.

Jeff Foster



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Promotes health and fitness for cyclists 55+
www.flcseniors.ca/activities/cycling
Email: cycling@flcseniors.ca
Facebook: Old Spokes