



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



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www.wheelrights.org.uk

An altered Kingsway



On 1st November Swansea's Kingsway was altered so that all traffic flows east-west. A cycle lane (on the right in the picture, which is looking east) has been provided. Unfortunately it is adjacent to the footway so that buses have to cross it at bus stops, as do taxis turning left off it. We lobbied hard to have it located in the redundant west-east bus lane, adjacent to the central reservation. Cyclists used to use this to travel west-east; I, for one, used it regularly.

The new route is also intimidating because buses, constrained to a bus lane little wider than a bus, pass uncomfortably close. This is a safety issue. The hatching, as can be seen in the photo, takes up half the redundant bus lane. It would have been better used separating the cycle lane from the bus lane. Also, the cycle lane being east-west, east-bound cyclists are obliged to join heavy traffic up Christina St. and along Mansel St.

The obvious solution is to provide a two-way cycle lane adjacent to the central reservation well separated by hatching from the bus lane. We are lobbying to get this implemented.

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to David Naylor (davidjohnnaylor@sky.com) by mid Feb.

Editorial

The first two articles by our Chairman look ahead and enlarge on the Kingsway – an issue currently dominating our agenda. Following these Gordon Gibson tells us about a planned visit from an infrastructure expert. Thereafter a cross-section of articles reflecting our varied activities.

As always correspondence is welcome as are articles for the next issue.

I hope to see lots of you at our Christmas Social at the *Mumbai* on 3rd December.

David Naylor

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New Campaigns for 2016

Our Kingsway campaign has shown that there are now a few key Councillors and Officers in Swansea Council who are getting our case for cycling. The Active Travel Act is nudging them in the right direction, but there is still a struggle going on. We need to do more to effect a cultural shift by the Council towards cycling and active travel. We may have lost the battle over the Kingsway in the short-term, but the longer war goes on. I believe public campaigning is the key.

The *Wheelrights* Routes Group is now well established and its focus on key priorities and infrastructure designs is showing good results. David Naylor and Chris Walsh are doing excellent work in taking this forward. However as the Kingsway has shown, the submission of good cycle designs has not been enough in itself to shift the Council, and we need to do more to mobilise support for better cycling provision.

We recently discussed the idea of a mass protest ride regarding the Kingsway, and other city cycle campaign groups have successfully organised mass rides which we can learn from. Their advice is that a successful mass ride needs a positive message and needs to be a fun event.

Taking inspiration from the CTC Space for Cycling campaign, I am proposing a “Space for Cycling ride” during Bike Week in June 2016. We could make this a fun ride involving families, with children, whistles, clowns etc. The main focus could be cycling in the city centre, and the route could include promoting the new city centre cycle routes, as well as the new Kingsway cycle lane.

Kerry Rogers and I now plan to establish a “Campaigns Group” to complement, and work with the Routes group, and our initial ideas are:

- Events during Bike Week including a “Space for Cycling” ride
- Co-organising a regional “Cycling and walking Conference” in Swansea in 2016, which would be aimed at key decision makers. A planning group is already established including CTC, Sustrans, Swansea Council, Tidal Lagoon, University, Carmarthenshire Cycle Forum and Wheelrights,
- A local campaign to push forward the Gowerton to Pontarddulais cycle route.

In addition Gordon Gibson has exciting plans to bring the designer of the Poynton layout to Swansea in early 2016. (See p. 4.) This will build on previous work by *Wheelrights* to arrange key speakers to give Seminars to Council Highways staff to assist them to grasp essential ideas about designing for cyclists and people.

If you are interested in helping the new Campaigns group, or have any suggestions, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Nick Guy

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Pedal for the Planet

There is a mass ride leaving Callaghan Square, Cardiff (Close to Central Station, off Bute St immediately S. of Railway underpass.) at 1.30pm on Saturday, 28 November, going to the Senedd where a climate change rally is scheduled for 2.00-3.00pm.

One or two from *Wheelrights* plan to join it. You too?

Kingsway update

On 1st November Swansea Council temporarily stopped two way cycling on the Kingsway and created the unsatisfactory one way cycle lane. *Wheelrights* officers are frustrated and angry about this, after all our best efforts to persuade the Council to do otherwise. The cycle lane is unsafe (esp at the bus stops), doesn't appear to comply with the Active Travel Act statutory guidance, and seems designed to aggravate potential clashes between cyclists and pedestrians (as more cyclists will choose to cycle on pavements). This despite all our lobbying .

However there are some positive opportunities which have arisen as a result of the Kingsway discussions. Firstly, the Council are planning a new two way cycle route along Singleton St and Union St, which will encourage cycling right into the heart of the city centre, and establish precedents for cycle contraflows on one way streets. Secondly, the Council has given public assurances about their long-term plan for the Green Plaza on the Kingsway. They talk about restricting traffic to one lane each way and use the freed up space to expand provision for cyclists and pedestrians. We can anticipate opposition from the motoring lobby so it will be vital for *Wheelrights* to support these plans and get involved with the detailed design. Thirdly, discussions have raised the importance of improving cycle links from communities to the city centre and in particular to the High St Station.

On 1st December *Wheelrights* can pursue these issues at our regular Cycle Action Progress (CAP) meeting with the Council. I am recommending we adopt three main approaches at this meeting:

1. We press for a three month Review of the Kingsway. Should our continuing efforts at persuading them to provide two way cycling along the Kingsway fail we press hard to re-establish two way cycling along Orchard St since this is a desire line from the city centre (and the new Princess Way cycle route) to the train station. It also provides links via Kings Lane to the Strand and Hafod, and to Morfa via the planned Morfa Distributor Road cycle route.
2. We propose a “box” of cycle routes around the city centre. It would be bounded on the north by either the Kingsway or, depending on what happens there, on parallel routes to the north or south; on the east by Princess Way; on the south through St David's and along Wellington St; and on the west by Williams St. As part of this we could push for more cycle parking along designated cycle routes. The box idea would greatly improve cycle links between the city centre and surrounding communities: Sandfields, Mount Pleasant, Hafod, Manselton, Bonymaen, Port Tennant, etc.
3. We give qualified support for the Council's long-term vision for the Kingsway. My understanding of their “Green Plaza” idea is to restrict vehicles to one lane in each direction; establish a green area in the middle, and re-establish two way cycling by means of dedicated cycle paths. As always the devil will be in the detail, but *Wheelrights*, CTC and Sustrans will push for full involvement in the early design stages.



Nick Guy

Poynton designer to visit Swansea.

Ben Hamilton-Baillie (Pictured.), the urban designer behind the Poynton main road redesign (See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=-vzDDMzq7d0>) and Britain's leading safe streets/ streetscape advocate has been pencilled in for a two day speaker visit to Swansea in late January or February. *Wheelrights* will jointly sponsor a public event in the evening and there's to be a city centre walkabout and workshop sessions for council officers and councillors.



Watch our Facebook page for further details.

Readers may also be interested to view the interesting New York example at https://www.ted.com/talks/janette_sadik_khan_new_york_s_streets_not_so_mean_any_more?language=en. [Ed. This and also the link to the Poynton example are provided on the *Infrastructure page of our website.*]

Gordon Gibson

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Into the lions' den?

Cyclists are probably last on the Christmas card list of lorry drivers if you listen to them! Most of the ones we spoke to at a recent training event at BikeAbility in Dunvant just couldn't wait to unload their feelings ... and none of them seemed positive. Going through red lights, coming up on their inside at traffic lights, cycling on pavements, riding 2 abreast, the list seemed to be endless. It was so tempting to talk about lorry drivers' faults, but luckily in hindsight, impossible to interject in their cacophony of complaints!

Not that Mike Cherry was too surprised by this, having run a previous session. But how do you conduct a rational conversation when they demand that all cyclists should have licences and pass tests just as they have? So we offered them a multiple choice question, in which they ranked these situations in order of visibility from their cab when looking forward. Here are the results:

- 1 (and most visible) cyclist going through a red light;
2. cyclists riding 2 or 3 abreast;
3. cyclist riding on a pavement;
4. car driver on a mobile phone;
5. car driver/ passengers without seat belts;
6. car driver over the alcohol limit.

However when asked which situation poses the greatest danger of death or serious injury to an innocent person, the list was then completely reversed. Ah ha, slowly the truth started to dawn that cyclists pose dangers to themselves by poor cycling and not to others on the road.

And in another way it is really good news because cyclists really do appear visible as individuals on the road, whilst cars, vans and lorries are seen as objects up ahead of them. So keep making eye contact with the drivers behind you!

John Sayce

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Gower Cycling Festival 2015 – the Stourbug Experience!

Thank you for another wonderful week of cycling on your beautiful Gower!

For the third year running, a group of Stourbug cyclists (from Stourbridge in the West Midlands) participated in your Festival of Cycling, August 2015.

There were seven of us this year, including three intrepid campers and a campervan couple, who 'lodged' at the Dунvant Rugby Club, which provided an excellent and convenient venue for the start of the rides. The weather was variable again, but fortunately most of the heavy rain fell at night and we all emerged with a smile on our faces each morning, ready for any adventures that *Wheelrights* had in store for us that day!

Most of us participated in the family friendly, shorter rides with only a couple tackling the rides aptly listed as 'challenging'. We all thoroughly enjoyed the week, provided by the friendly and informative ride leaders supplied by *Wheelrights* and the CTC Swansea Group. Great local pubs and cafés visited for refuelling were much appreciated, new friendships forged, and personal challenges met.

Thank you too for the social activities, the music and the Club House midweek evening 'do'. Well done to your amazing 'French' cyclists on their successful tour from Paris.

Comments from Stourbug group members:

"Despite the weather we had a wonderful time, much of this down to the helpfulness of the ride leaders who gave their time freely, sharing with us their intimate knowledge of the area, both their cycling routes and history of the area." *Denise*

"I particularly enjoyed the visit to the Cheriton Bridges Pottery and the community café at Llanmadoc. The final day's ride/walk was lovely, such a good idea!" *Jacqui*

"Lovely people, great rides, friendships old and new." *Kaye*

"Best ice cream at Castella Mare!" *Paul*

"Our second time at the Gower Festival, really enjoyed it, and made some lovely new friends. Looking forward to 2016 and some possible new rides?" *Jan and Colin*

"Getting the opportunity to cook bacon and eggs for all and sundry at the Rugby Club's camp site!" *Gary*

"All in all a particularly enjoyable week spent exploring Gower on well-paced rides with time to appreciate the beautiful countryside and coastline, led by knowledgeable ride leaders prepared to impart the many interesting facts about the local history." *Mark*



As members of an active cycling club we all know and appreciate how much work is involved in organising something on this scale so we would like to congratulate *Wheelrights* on their tremendous organisation of a very successful week of cycling and social events. Thank you very much to you all.

We'll be back!

Jacqui McGinn

Fietspad and Radwege

You may well have guessed from the title that this article is about cycle touring in Holland and Germany. I cycled in these two countries this summer and thought I would pass on some experiences and tips which might be of use if you plan to do likewise.

I like cycling by myself but also enjoy the company of a group. In recent years I have achieved both by cycling to the start and from the finish of an organised tour. This year I had hoped to join such a tour down the Mosel, but unfortunately it was cancelled for lack of participants. So I decided to go on my own.

As in the past I used train and ferry to get to the Continent. This year it was train to Bury St Edmunds, bike to Harwich (a rather pleasant 45 mile ride) and then overnight ferry to Hook of Holland. From there I took three days to cross Holland to its SE corner where Holland, Belgium and Germany meet, then a further three days down the west side of Germany to Trier and finally four days down the Mosel to Koblenz. From there it was train back to the Hook. Let me tell you about the ferry. For me it's a mini-cruise – part of the holiday.

Stena provide this service. They welcome cyclists. You board with the cars and lorries. Usually you have to wait until the lorries are loaded and then cyclists and motor bikers board before the cars. This wait is a sociable occasion as you get to talk with the other cyclists. Once on board after finding my cabin I head straight for the restaurant. (In my old age I do like good food and a good night's rest.)

How to choose a route? I used the internet to take me across Holland. I highlighted the recommended route on a paper map. (No GPS for me!) It was an excellent route on *Fietspad* throughout. Only problem was to keep to it there being so many *Fietspad*. In Germany I used the 1:150,000 ADFC maps. They show cycle routes as red and green lines; red for the key routes, many of which have names.

A bit like the NCN a certain skill (or luck) is required in deciding whether or not to follow an identified cycle route. I followed the Rör and Kyll Radwege in west Germany and routes on one side or the other along the Mosel (There are cycle paths on both sides of the river.) I particularly liked the Kyll Radweg. It winds its way down a peaceful wooded valley through Gerölstein then south to Trier.

What about accommodation? In Holland I joined *Vrienden op de Fiets* (Friends of Cyclists). It costs €10 to join. For that you get the addresses and phone numbers of over 5000 private homes who will provide you with B&B for a fixed price, this year €19. I stayed in two of them in Holland. In Germany I stayed in a mixture of B&Bs (*Fremden Zimmer*) and hotels. I actually pre-booked most using the internet. This is not generally necessary. Arrive in a village or small town around 4.00pm, find the info. office, or if there isn't one ask in a shop or café, and you can usually find a decent place for €30-40.

The weather was good and I had no punctures, but I could have done with some company in the evenings. No space to tell you about the complimentary glass of wine on the Mosel or how the German trains are less punctual than the British ones. As usual I came back all too aware of how much needs to be done here for cyclists. Maybe it would help if mums here followed the example of the lady with her two little ones pictured on my first day in Holland?



David Naylor

Swansea University Cycling

With the opening of the Bay Campus which houses the College of Engineering and the School of Management in September 2015 we have seen some real changes in relation to cycling at Swansea University. Whilst cycling has always been a part of the transport options for any university the opening of the Bay Campus has created new transport needs for students and staff at Swansea.

The cycle path has been upgraded along Fabian Way and this is now a much quicker cycle route between the campuses. Cycle counters installed along it have shown 700 cyclists a day using the route in one direction from around 200 prior to the opening of the campus.

Both Neath Port Talbot and Swansea councils have been keeping a close eye on safety on the cycle route particularly where it crosses the bus lane to the west of the Sail Bridge and where the cycle route passes under Baldwin's Bridge and crosses from one side of the road to the other. Safety reviews of both these crossings have been undertaken and recommendations are in place or being made to improve visibility of cyclists.

The Bay campus also has extensive covered cycle parking enabling staff and students to keep their bikes locked and in a dry place. There are showers on the site, and lockers for students to store their wet gear and cycle equipment are being explored.

The sustainability team have secured a 15-20% discount for students at independent bike shops across Swansea which will hopefully encourage more to get bikes and to get out there and cycle. The University and the Students' Union will be running a cycle safety day on 30th November highlighting the problems of bike theft, cycling without lights and good cycle maintenance. Lights and puncture repair kits will be available and there will be a practical demonstration of the value of a decent cycle lock as opposed to the cheap ones for sale in some shops.

A staff cycling club - *Unicyclists* - has been set up complete with kit with the aim of getting groups of staff out cycling together. So far group rides have been out around Gower and up into the Brecon Beacons. The cycle to work scheme also continues to be successful with many staff taking advantage of the tax incentives offered to get themselves bikes for travelling to and from work.

Phil Brophy

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Bay campus under construction
(July 2015)

Future events

Green Fayre

This takes place in the Waterfront Museum on 21/22 November (10.0 am – 4.00 pm). *Wheelrights* and Sustrans will have stalls.

Wheelrights Christmas Dinner

7.00 for 7.30pm, on Thursday, 3 December, in the *Mumbai* on Mill Lane in Blackpill. If you plan to attend please email Dawn Aplin: dawnaplin@hotmail.com.

Wheelrights Route Ride

10.00am, on Saturday, 5 December, Civic Centre SA1 3SN by south entrance. Come along if interested. City Centre cycling and the Bay Campus are high on the agenda.

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Payments for cycle commuting?

Apparently, in the Italian town of Massarosa, north of Pisa, cyclists are paid to cycle to work. The amount is 25 cents per km up to a maximum of 50 euro per month. This is paid for out of fines for traffic offences.

A local councillor said in support of the scheme: “The Bike to Work scheme will offer incentives to citizens to ensure the area becomes more liveable, adding that it will naturally mean less traffic on the streets, and will have health benefits.” The idea was promoted by the Italian Federation *Friends of the Bicycle*, who hope to see it spread to other towns.

So how about Swansea taking up this idea?

Merry Christmas readers!