



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 23 Spring 2013

www.wheelrights.org.uk

Is it safe to cross?



NO it is not! The green lights that face you as you are about to cross the west end of Fabian Way apply to the W-E crossing behind the white car in the picture and not to the S-N crossing. To cross Fabian Way safely you have to look at the box on your right on the south side. (White arrow.)

Three members of Wheelrights have reported being fooled by this. One person was only stopped from crossing by the cars on his right starting off as he was about to. In another case the cyclist was alerted by the screech of brakes after he had started to cross!

The latest is that, following prompts from us, the council are now taking action. The misleading lights have been turned so as to be less visible from across Fabian Way and cowls are being manufactured as a back up if necessary. Let us know if this is still a problem.



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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to the Secretary (address below) by mid May.

Editorial

It is always a challenge to find some new contributors so that these pages are not filled with stuff I have dug up from here and there. So I am grateful to Chris and Dawn who have written the articles on pages 5 and 6. And also to our Chairman, Nick, who can always be relied upon to come up with something relevant.

But it would be good to have more from the membership, if not an article then at least a letter – you surely have some views to share?

David Naylor

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Local News

NCR 43 closure

As many of you will have found out NCR 43 is closed for some distance from the motorway southwards. The red lines on the map show largely off-road signed diversions suitable for novices. Road alternatives are not highlighted.

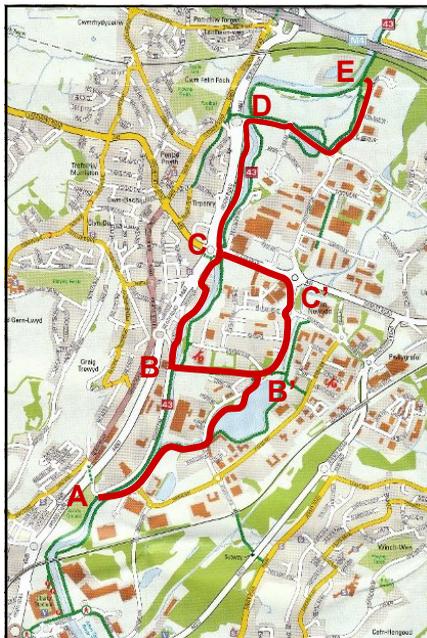
The section CC' is on the south footway of Clase Rd (A48). DE is on the north footway of Swansea Vale before it turns north along Mill Stream Way .

Construction work currently requires the use of diversion CDE. This work should finish in October.

Beaufort Bridge (B) is to be replaced between March and July. Diversion ABC'C will then apply.

Be prepared for different sections to be closed at different times during the year.

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Boulevard work

Some traffic disruption is expected between Princess Way and the Strand as work starts on Phase 1 of this work. This is expected to start early in March and be completed in November. Work on the second phase, between the Strand and the Tawe Bridges, will follow. This disruption should not affect cyclists using NCR 4.

The first phase will see the construction of a shared-use path along the south sides of Oystermouth and Victoria Roads. This will take cyclists to Somerset Place where they can cross to Wind Street on the recently constructed Toucan there. West of the Civic Centre the existing Oystermouth Road footway – widely but illegally used by cyclists – is currently being widened to make it shared-use. This will link the aforementioned shared path with the foreshore to the west.

The second phase should see the provision of a shared-use path along the west side of Quay Parade connecting Wind Street and the Strand to the Tawe Bridges.

Wheelrights have been working with the Council to try and ensure that these new shared-use paths meet the stringent criteria necessary to make them suitable for a wide range of users.

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Gower Cycling Festival (10-18 August)

Preparations for this are underway. A flyer is being prepared and copies should be ready for distribution by Easter. (Your help in distributing them would be appreciated.)

The website (www.gowercyclingfestival.org) is as up to date as it can be. In particular on-line registration for those who prefer to pay the fiver by bank transfer or credit card is fully functional. Previously this had been denied to Internet Explorer users.

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Wales could lead with Active Travel

Cycling and walking could receive a welcome boost with the Active Travel (Wales) Bill currently going through the Welsh Government.

Carl Sargeant (Minister for Local Government and Communities) says "This Bill is not a quick fix. It aims to shift attitudes and change minds so we all think about travel in a different way"

The following are key elements of the Bill:

1. *Local Councils will have a new duty to identify and map existing routes which are safe and appropriate for walking and cycling.*
2. *They will then have to compile a second aspirational map showing a future integrated network of enhancements and new safe routes for cycling and walking.*
3. *Local Councils will be expected to deliver continuous improvements, year on year, in order to deliver the above aspirations, and create a viable network of routes, subject to budget restraints.*
4. *Local Councils will have a duty to consider provision for walking and cycling when planning any new road scheme.*
5. *The Welsh Government intends to publish new "street design" guidance, which will be best practice and enforce the prioritising of non-motorised transport over cars.*

So this Active Travel Bill could see significant opportunities for our campaigning to move up a gear. Councils are understandably worried about taking on new responsibilities, especially in the current financial climate. However the Bill illustrates a new political will to prioritise cycling and walking, on which *Wheelrights* can build in our campaigning.

As well as delivering quality infrastructure the Bill recognises that behaviour change requires far more than just new routes. This is where *Wheelrights* (with our active partners: CTC and Sustrans) can play a key role. So if you want to improve the chances of this Active Travel Bill becoming law please contact your Assembly Member and ask them to give it their support.

Nick Guy

Editor's Postscript.

Since receiving Nick's article this snippet appeared in the 22 Feb. CTC *cycleclips*.

'During the consultation [*on the Active Travel Bill*], the Welsh Government had suggested changing the law around footpaths, arguing that "many of the footpaths regularly used by walkers, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas are of a quality and type which would allow cyclists to use them safely."

Although not spelt out in the Bill itself this should make it much easier to get appropriate footpaths made accessible to cyclists.

A case in point is the path through Park Woods (aka Green Cwm) which links Parkmill in South Gower with Llethrid to the north. It comprises a two km length of gravel path, wide enough for access vehicles and is a key cycle (and pedestrian) link between south and mid Gower. There are 'No cycling' signs over a 200m stretch of private land at the Llethrid end. The legality of these signs is actually questionable. However out of respect to the owners (who were not responsible for the signs) we push our bikes across this stretch on organised rides. This path is a prime candidate for re-designation.

“Careless” or “Dangerous”?

For many years drivers who have killed or seriously injured a cyclist have been charged with *careless* rather than the more serious charge of *dangerous* driving when in fact their driving was dangerous. This has resulted in penalties being too light. Recent examples in each of which a cyclist was killed have involved a driving ban of a year or 18 months, a modest fine and community service. *Dangerous* driving carries a much heavier penalty, eg up to 14 years in prison compared with 5 years for *careless* driving.

The Crown Prosecution Service have recently been reviewing their prosecution guidelines and last November CTC's Roger Geffen attended a meeting organised by *RoadPeace* to consider what revisions are needed. A particular concern which he highlights is that the latest CPS guidelines classify pulling out of a side road into the path of another road user as *careless* driving when in most cases it would be *dangerous*.

The need for tightening the guidelines is reinforced by a reduction in the number of convictions (for all road accidents, not just cycling) well in excess of the reduction in accidents over the corresponding period. The number of convictions fell by nearly 50% in the decade 2001-2011 when there had been a 35% reduction in accidents.

The All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group (APPCG) is also supporting a tightening of the law. This is helped by the latest Early Day Motion: EDM 679 “Get Britain Cycling” At the time of writing this has 134 signatories. Local MPs Martin Caton (Gower) and Geraint Davies (Swansea West) have signed it. If he or she has not done so already you might invite your MP to sign it too. Amongst other things it calls for the provision of resources to promote cycling and a strengthening of road traffic law.

While we await a change in the CPS guidelines it is encouraging that the government is making significant moves to support cycling.

David Naylor

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The CTC again eat cake

It began in 2010, two years after Trevor Boylan, the much respected Chairman of the Swansea and West CTC Member Group, died. Cake was often on the menu when the club stopped for refreshment on a ride and Trevor was partial to, in particular, carrot cake.

Each year at their first meeting the group have remembered Trevor by ending their business with a cake competition.

This year a Caribbean speciality got the prize. The winner was lucky to have any left to take home!



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A Day in the Life of a School Cycling Instructor

The day can start early and a pre 7am cycling departure into a dark dank winter morning is not unusual.

Working in pairs and on arriving, we introduce ourselves to head/year teachers. Then paperwork, even in this job the bureaucratic and 'elf and safety' demons grab tightly about the throat. Consent forms to be checked, health conditions noted and risk assessments completed.

Next we set about checking and in most cases making minor adjustments on up to 30 bikes. A wide spectrum materialises from the unusable/unloved to the new one purchased yesterday especially for the course. You quickly learn to treat the "Dad checked mine over the weekend" with a little more scrutiny, as the cycle is pushed on a flat tyre. Occasionally we hear about a bike even beyond a Dad's ability, "Sir, Sir, Grandma is bringing mine in later from the bike shop". On checking where the child's helmet was I was told "Oh yeah Mum is waiting for the postie from Ebay".

Introductions next, as we size up the kids literally and metaphorically and begin adjusting seats and attitudes respectively.

And so Level 1 training commences on the playground. With the emphasis on 'Skill and Safety' the lesson is made highly interactive, fast paced and fun. Time permitting we even finish with a race, albeit a 'Slow-one' testing the kids bike controls to the limit and at the same time introducing greater skill for later use on the roads.



A little later the decision point is reached. The majority will obtain Level 1 but we must sensitively deal with the wobbly ones, not yet ready to progress onto the roads. And then occasionally with the parents demanding to know why their progeny has not inherited their innate cycling skills.

A welcome lunch break is shortened by the need to cycle around the locality to find and risk assess suitable sites for Level 2 on road training. However situations change. Returning later we were about to cross a road with a group when a horse and rider stopped directly in front of us. The former chose to make a large natural deposit on the road. I was left pondering how I was going to explain this on the risk assessment!

Most kids enjoy the novelty of learning a largely physical skill outdoors with all that that entails. As training takes place through the winter and spring terms we experience plenty of cool and wet weather neither of which bother the kids unduly and in fact seems to focus their minds.

Hopefully our efforts puts the kids literally on the road to safer cycling and maybe even ignites a passion And who knows where that might lead?

Chris Walsh

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Cycling the Gloucester Canal

Sunny days in 2012 were few and far between. So, when in September Derek the weatherman forecast two were about to come along together, we took the opportunity to take our bikes a bit further afield. Our destination was the Gloucester canal. Only an hour and half drive away from Swansea, the canal stretches nearly 30 km (18 miles) from Sharpness in the south to the docks in Gloucester.

Our starting point was to be Slimbridge, a small but very pretty village perched on the edge of the canal and, being mid week, The Tudor Arms had room at the inn for one night.

From the pub car park, we headed off along the tow path into the blazing sunshine. Construction of the canal first started in 1794 but, after several delays, it wasn't opened until 1827 after the famous engineer Thomas Telford took charge.

Some way up the path it detours into the large village of Frampton on Severn with its lovely green and duck pond. Cycling on tarmac roads brings a bit of relief to the bumpy path. Heading out the other side it's back onto the path.



Our first stop was at Saul Junction, a hive of activity with a working boatyard and a lovely café. The nice weather had brought out the local community of sailors, rowers, fishermen and walkers; many of the houseboat residents also having the rare opportunity to sit on the canal bank with their morning coffee and newspaper.

Next stop was lunch at Hardwicke, in a pub called The Pilot overlooking the canal. From here, it's fascinating to watch the road bridge being manually opened and closed to allow boats and traffic to pass on their way in turn.

Eventually we end up at Gloucester Docks. Like many areas around the country, this has developed into a thriving metropolis with the usual cafés and bars. If time permitted, several hours could be whiled away here.

Retracing our steps there is still enough heat in the setting sun to enjoy the real ale and good food in the beer garden back at the Tudor Arms.

The following morning was a short 10 km ride to explore the route down to the terminus of the canal at Sharpness. The canal runs alongside the River Severn on this stretch, giving magnificent views over the Severn Estuary.

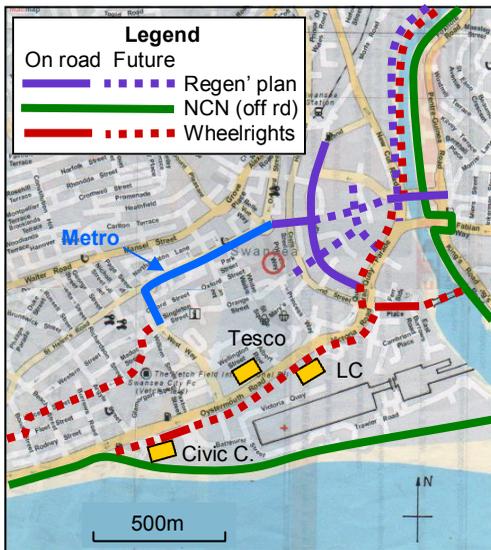
Our return route takes us inland back to Slimbridge. As the sun is still shining, time for a quick visit to the famous Wetlands Centre to finish off our trip. Cycling here might not suit those who like to huff and puff up hills, but for a wonderfully scenic, historical day or so cycling, it would be difficult to beat.

Dawn Aplin

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Swansea: a Cycling City?

In last September's *Evening Post* three articles by *Wheelrights* member Gordon Gibson were published. They outlined a ten point plan for the regeneration of Swansea which would make it a city for people rather than for cars. He followed this up with a presentation at our AGM in October and an article in the last Newsletter. Here I complement the vision conveyed in his article by focussing on the implications for the centre of Swansea



The purple lines on the map show the key links proposed by Gordon. The east-west links pass through the middle of the existing Parc Tawe retail development so they are for when this is redeveloped.

The red dotted lines show the routes for which *Wheelrights* have been campaigning. The section along Oystermouth Road from the Civic Centre to Wind Street is part of the "Boulevard" development and is expected to be constructed in 2013. An important achievement of *Wheelrights* has been to get agreement for the existing footpath west of the Civic Centre to the foreshore path to be made shared use by widening it to 3m. Also a 5m wide shared use path has been agreed for the west side of the main road linking the crossing at Wind Street to the Tawe Bridges. Details of this are not yet available.

Central to the Boulevard concept is that it should be easy for people to move between the Marina and the City Centre. The recent works have provided generous crossings at Wind Street and at the south end of Westway. What is lacking, and these are highlighted in Gordon's regeneration plan, is a crossing opposite Tesco and across Oystermouth Road to link the Sandfields to the foreshore. These crossings would complement the east-west cycle route. Although primarily for pedestrians cyclists would also use them.

Sympathetic development on the banks of the Tawe is central to the regeneration plan. Parks and gardens would front the paths which border it – not the backs of buildings as so often is the case in Swansea. A shared path on the west bank of the river has been on the Council's agenda for some time. *Wheelrights* will continue to work with them to try and ensure that it meets quality criteria, in particular continuity and adequate width. It will need to be suitable for pedestrians out walking their dogs and young children as well as cyclists.

Another area central to the regeneration plan is the Kingsway. The area where the roundabout used to be would be developed into a hub for people to meet: somewhere attractive with gardens and seats, with priority for pedestrians and cyclists. There should be a cross-town Metro to complement the existing one. This would link Port Tennant to Duvant or Killay via the Kingsway and Sketty. Like the present Metro this would also be a route for cyclists.

Gordon has spent time in New York where he has drawn inspiration from the pedestrian and cycle friendly infrastructure on the waterfront in Brooklyn and on Manhattan Island. His article in the last issue drew on these experiences.

David Naylor

Forthcoming events

(This information and more is provided on the 'Events' page of www.wheelrights.org.uk .)

Adult Beginners Classes from **April to August** on

Saturdays 13 April, 11 May, 15 June, 13 July and 31 August.

9.30-11.30 in Civic Centre East car park click. See the 'Novices' page of www.wheelrights.org.uk for how to register, etc.

March 2013

Monday 11 March: Wheelrights Meeting

7.00pm in the Environment Centre, Pier Street. All welcome.

June 2013

15-23 June is BIKE WEEK

Saturday 15 June: Blackpill and Liberty Stadium Mass Cycle Rides.

Both rides start at 12.15 and will converge on Castle Square at about 1.00pm. Their purpose is to promote cycling. (And in the process have a bit of fun!) Details can be found on the 'Events' page of our website, alternatively phone David Naylor (01792 233755) about the Blackpill ride or Mike Lewis (01792 795933) about the Liberty Stadium one.

Saturday 15 June: BikeAbility Wales Fun Day

11.00-15.00 Duvant RFC, Killay. A cycling fun day for people of all abilities and ages. Try an amazing range of specialist and unusual cycles, such as tandems, recumbents and kick bikes. For more information phone Mike Cherry on 07968 109145.

Sunday 16 June: Cycle Ride to Pembrey

Meet at 10.00 on the coastal path outside Swansea's Civic Centre. This is a gently paced ride with local CTC members. An *en route* coffee stop is planned. Leader: Don Ashman; phone: 07816 472571.

Thursday 20 June: Cycle Ride to Aberavon

Meet at 10.00 at the Railway Inn, Killay (on the Clyne Valley path). Another gently paced ride with local CTC members with an *en route* coffee stop. Leader: Don Ashman.

Friday 21 June: Wheelrights Midsummer North Gower Cycle Ride

Meet at 6.30pm at the Railway Inn, Killay (on the Clyne Valley path). This classic 18 mile North Gower circuit being on the longest day fancy dress is encouraged. So come disguised as a *Druid*. Bring lights in case we dally in a pub. Leader: David Judd: 07967 613920.

Sunday 23 June: CTC's annual 100 Miler, also a National TriVets ride.

Meet at 8.00am on the Sail Bridge, Swansea. A moderately paced ride with local CTC members. Allow 12 hours for this long ride.

Sunday 23 June: Cycle ride to Aberdulais

Meet at 10.00 on the coastal path outside Swansea's Civic Centre. This is a gently paced ride with local CTC members to Aberdulais and the canal basin. Leader: Don Ashman.

August 2013

10-18 August: GOWER CYCLING FESTIVAL.

Full details on www.gowercyclingfestival.org (which links to the Cycling Festival page on our website). Note that we would like you to register in advance (It is only £5.) and if you are planning to stay in the Gower this will entitle you to discounted accommodation.

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