



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



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www.wheelrights.org.uk

Boulevard cycle friendly?



To say that the Swansea Boulevard is not very popular is perhaps an understatement. Motorists don't like being held up. It has not been widely publicised but actually it's not bad for cyclists. For some time there has been a shared use path along the south side of Oystermouth Road east from the foreshore to Somerset Place (the link to the foreshore being one of Wheelrights early campaigning successes) and now this has been extended to link to the Tawe Bridges. There are new shared use paths on both sides of Quay Parade. The picture, taken from near Wind Street, shows the one on the northwest side .

Contents

- P. 2 Correspondence
- P. 3 Prestigious award for John Grimshaw
- P. 4 In praise of fallen heroes
A message from the Midlands.
- P. 5 The Wheel Turns
- P. 6 Awheel at Swansea University
- P. 7 Government support for Cycling?
Llethrid Cwm
- P. 8 Book review and Future events

Copy deadline

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

Editorial

Again lots of variety in this issue: feedback on p.2; John Sayce's article on p.4 which throws new light on how to sell cycling; on the same page we are pleased to learn that the *Stourbug* cyclists again enjoyed our Festival; and then on pages 5 & 6 welcome contributions from two new *Wheelrights* members. Two articles from me on p.7; the second of which solicits your help.

Hopefully see lots of you at our Christmas Dinner at the *Mumbai* on 4 December.

David Naylor

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Correspondence

Wheelrights logo

In his article “Ambassadors for Cycling” in the last issue Nick Guy wonders if our logo needs changing. Being responsible for it let me give some background.

A competition had been set up to produce a logo; not sure just when but I think it may have been before *Wheelrights* was rebranded in January 2007. The current logo was the only entry and it was accepted. This was incorporated in our headed paper, website, etc. early in that year. It is based on a sketch provided by my artistic daughter.

Inspired by *Wheelrights* the cyclist on the left has got on his/her bike. He/she is seen disappearing into the distance up a winding road, thus symbolising the freedom of cycling.

David Naylor

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Tube map

I think that Alun [*Correspondence*, last issue.] has overlooked some advantages of the new Tube Map. Its very simplicity can appeal to new cyclists, who may not realise that we already have the makings of a realistic network of cycle routes.

The Map has led to a profusion of destination signs, which, like flowers popping up in Spring, are to be welcomed.

In addition *Wheelrights* is using the map to help prioritise new cycle routes in the north and east of Swansea. There are hundreds of potential cyclists living in these areas, where transport poverty is a real issue. *Wheelrights* is asking Swansea Council to prioritise completion of the Clyne Line and Bonymaen Junction, and we hope to use the Tube Map to create these routes up to the highest standards, so watch this space!



Nick Guy

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Cycle safety for women (and some men)

As a lone female cyclist I have a current concern for my safety and the safety of other lone female cyclists whilst cycling at night. A particular route of concern is the wooded area of the foreshore cycle route opposite Sketty Lane. I cycle to and from work in Swansea University every day and whilst the route is currently fairly busy, I know that as the light fails less people will use it.

For many years this area has been known as a hotspot and I can't understand why there isn't an increased police presence in the car park with officers walking the route to deter people from using the area in an inappropriate way. I don't know why the people of Swansea should have to put up with what is happening in this area, making us avoid using this particular stretch of the route after the sun has gone down.

I wondered whether the issue is or ever has been discussed in any groups and what the outcome has been, if any. If the answer is that it hasn't been (But I'm sure it has.), is there someone I could speak to or raise the issue with?

Siân Parker

Prestigious award for John Grimshaw

Sustrans founder, Wheelrights patron and originator of the National Cycle Network has been named by the Outdoor Writers & Photographers Guild as the recipient of its 2014 *Golden Eagle Award*. Extracts from the four page citation are as follows.

John Grimshaw CBE, has done more for the cause of environmental sustainability than anyone else in the UK

Under his leadership Sustrans became the UK's foremost sustainable transport charity. John's focus was on practical, cost-effective projects to enable people to travel by bike, foot or public transport, unhindered by traffic. Inextricably intertwined with Sustrans' story, the creation and development of the National Cycle Network is undoubtedly John Grimshaw's greatest achievement.

John Grimshaw is a living legend. In this day and age, anyone who has had such an impact on getting our society up off the sofa and taking part in more healthy exercise is a hero.

A larger-than-life personality who refuses to be told that something is not possible, John Grimshaw led Sustrans for three decades. During that time the charity created more than 10,000 miles of the National Cycle Network, facilitating 232 million safer cycling and walking journeys for millions of people; today, the network he envisioned and inspired is 14,500 miles long: 75 per cent of us live within two miles of a National Cycle Network route. He was made a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours, "for services to the development of the National Cycle Network", as he relinquished his post as Sustrans chief executive in June 2008.

As John Grimshaw & Associates, he continues to help and inspire local authorities, universities, cycling groups, national parks, walking organisations, and others to negotiate and create inspiring traffic-free, sustainable walking and cycling routes, often enhanced by works of outdoor art.

The award will take the form of a painting of Barmouth Estuary, by guild member and respected watercolour artist David Bellamy.

John received an honorary MSc from the University of Bristol in 2007 and, as mentioned above, a CBE in 2008.

The picture, taken on the Devon Tarka Trail in 2012, shows him on the right with David Judd on the left.

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In praise of fallen heroes

It seems an eternity since Lance Armstrong came onto the 'Oprah Show', confessing to having lived the greatest lie in world sport. Most of the sordid details were there for our delectation, enough to be front page news for days. It should have been terminal for cycling as a sport and in particular the Tour de France. But roll the clock on a year or so and the 'grand depart' from Leeds was reckoned to be the best ever start to Le Tour. Cycling is one of the very few sports to have seen an increase in participation since the London Olympics. The numbers playing football, cricket, rugby and tennis have plummeted... with hardly a whiff of wrong-doing amongst any of them.

After the Second World War, the next most popular spectator sport to football was greyhound racing, with speedway not far behind. Both sports attracted millions with stadiums packed the length and breadth of the country. Yet what happened to both sports? They bored the population to death and virtually disappeared without trace. When did you last see anyone practising speedway riding or training greyhounds on the beach. Will the same fate befall cycling?

Perhaps Lance Armstrong's notoriety has helped to energise and personalise an activity that lacked a narrative: the battle of good versus evil played out across continents and discussed by men and women in sitting rooms and work places throughout the land. At last the sport got the oxygen of publicity with a tale of battle against cancer followed by stupendous success and a spectacular downfall. So whilst others condemn him, I for one thank him for providing a plot that the scriptwriters of 'Eastenders' would have rejected.

So, well done Lance, you've been just the spur we needed, riveting our attention. Watch the social media for the next episode of this soap opera – 'The redemption of Lance'!

John Sayce

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A message from the Midlands.

A big thank you from all the *Stourbug* cyclists, there were fourteen of us, who visited the Gower Cycling Festival 2014 and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. As you know *Stourbug* is a cycling club based in Stourbridge, West Midlands, and this is the second time we have come to the Festival.

There really is something for cyclists of all abilities to join in over the week from gentle short rides to long challenging ones and mountain bike rides all ably led by your club members. Those who didn't cycle could still join in with the varied organised visits by car, the long beach walks and the social events. The weather was variable at the beginning and improved greatly as the week progressed, however this did not detract from the glorious and stunning coastal scenery that we saw on the rides. The exhilarating descent from King Arthur's Stone on the first Sunday is still memorable now.



Well done to everyone who organised the Festival, who led and marshalled the rides and ensured that there was plenty of time to socialise and join in with activities. We all think that the Festival was a tremendous success, would love it to continue as an annual event and hope to see you next year. [Ed: 8-15 August 2015.]

Paul Radford

The wheel turns

Cycling has changed my life twice for the better! While in care as a youngster in the 1960s, my first bike gave me freedom to roam Dartmoor and the coastal lanes of Devon all day long; and now the *Gower Cycling Festival* has inspired me anew.



As a youngster, cycling was ‘play’ – we’d say, *We’re going for a ride-out*, and go anywhere (to journey without a destination) just to be in motion (the faster the better); it was adventurous fun, daring sometimes as we overtook cars (a big ambition) while descending long hills off Dartmoor – a reminder of how much less traffic there was then and how cars (or their drivers?) were slower. But thrilling speed was what we wanted, and we’d climb the steepest hills with our three-speed Sturmey Archer gears for the excitement of racing down. What were we racing? Not each other, for there were no ‘winners’, but perhaps, unknowingly, we were racing time itself for an exhilaration that seemed like immortality.

Cycling then was ‘exploration’ and ‘adventure’ as we pushed the limits of our world beyond Lustleigh, Manaton and Haytor right across the moor or to the coast at Teignmouth and Dawlish. Sometimes we’d spend a day at the beach and still be home for tea; other times, we’d sleep fitfully and damply overnight on the beach. That was an adventure without danger then, but the innocent past is another country and things were different there.

With a busy career, I hardly cycled for half a century. In recent years my wife and I enjoyed short cycling holidays (along the Normandy beaches; from the Hook of Holland to Ghent; across Mallorca (well south of the mountains!); and between walled medieval towns north of Madrid); but I always looked for ‘easy to moderate’ rides, with an emphasis on the easy. They were wonderful trips, but I didn’t cycle regularly and cycling wasn’t really part of my life.

But the wheel turned by chance when I came across the *Gower Cycling Festival* just in time to join its inaugural ride. The company was cheerful and varied, and the ride was a pleasure, so (having just semi-retired) I joined the Festival’s daily rides, doing 300 miles over a few days – hardly an epic, I know, but a big change for me.

The rides were easy to moderate, but hills were hard: bowling along on the flat was effortless, but gravity had strengthened since those green days in Devon! So the sight of people my age, and in some cases more than ten years older, climbing effortlessly ahead was impressive – particularly on two punishing ascents from the Gower Heritage Centre to Penmaen, and from Fairyhill up Cefn Bryn. But, if the hills were intimidating, the example of my fellow riders was inspiring. If they can do it, surely I could!

So, with regular riding and practise on hills, I’m improving; cycling will never again be as effortless as in those golden heyday Devonshire days, but it’s definitely more ‘play’ than work; and, like the Wheelright and CTC riders, I’ll keep going on ‘ride-outs’. The wheel turns still.

Dale Hall

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Awheel at Swansea University

I am pleased to be able to say that Swansea University has been experiencing a period of improvement in relation to cycling in the past few years. Universities, and Swansea is no exception, have always supported lively cycling communities and the image of the prof or student cycling between lectures, digs and the pub is a familiar trope. However, at Swansea we have recently seen a number of material enhancements to the lives of university cyclists.

After many years of pressure from staff the university introduced the Cycle to Work scheme in October last year. There has been strong take up from staff who have benefitted from the wide choice and strong customer service of the Swansea based partner *Cyclesolutions*. I personally have taken advantage of the scheme and am enjoying riding to work on my new cyclocross bike.

The university has also introduced a free loan bike scheme - Bay Cycles - where staff and students can borrow bikes for a few hours. The bikes, mostly recycled frames left on campus or single speed Mango bikes all painted in the university blue, have proved popular with staff and students to nip into town on errands or head out to Mumbles to take in the sights. Plans are underway to extend the scheme to the new Bay Campus when it opens.

As ever cycle security is an issue with thefts continuing on campus. However, university security have been working proactively to target thieves with some success. Security have also been working with campus police to postcode mark staff and student bikes to reduce thefts.

The University's new Bay Campus on Fabian Way which opens in September 2015 will have facilities for cyclists with dedicated cycle parking and showers. The campus itself will be pedestrianised with cars kept to the edges of the site. The campus will be connected to National Cycle Route 4 by an improved section of path from St Thomas along the north side of Fabian way with the access under Baldwin's bridge and onto the site on the south side of the road. Funding for this was provided by the University.

In terms of participation and encouraging cycling the University has had a very strong engagement with the Swansea Cycle Challenge in recent years coming in the top organisations for participation. The Dylan Thomas ride from Laugharne to Swansea, organised by University staff and Wheelrights also attracted significant numbers.

All these developments have been in large part due to the excellent work of the Sustainability Team within the university's Estates and Facilities Management Directorate. This team, which now includes the new Travel Plan Coordinator, have been working hard to deliver these improvements and we look forward to further developments.

As ever with cycling there is still more that could be done. In particular connectivity between the current campus and cycle routes on the seafront would speed up transfer time for cyclists. However, with the good progress being made I am hopeful of a bright future for cycling at Swansea University.



A Bay Cycle bike

Phil Brophy

Governmental support for Cycling?

The All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group (APPCG) recently prepared the report *Get Britain Cycling*. It was debated in the House of Commons on 16 October. Were the recommendations of the report to be implemented there would be major improvements for cyclists, at least in England. Those who contributed to the debate were supportive; however it seems that the coalition government are not prepared to make available the necessary funds. Ian Austin (Lab.: Dudley North) moved the motion to support the APPCG report.

Ian Austin highlighted the key recommendations: There should be a target of 10% of all journeys by bike by 2025 and 25% by 2050. The figure for the UK for 2011 was less than 2%. To achieve this £10 per head per year should be allocated across the country (ie England) rather than just to eight cycling cities over two years. Also recommended are lower speed limits in urban areas, better enforcement of the law, more segregated cycle lanes, cycle training in schools and cycling to be properly considered in urban planning.

He also noted the potential benefits to the NHS. The proposed funding could bring about an increase in the number of trips from 3% to 10%. This should save the NHS nearly £1 billion/year. The wider benefits would prevent heart disease, reduce strokes and cut diabetes and colon cancer. The requested level of funding – some £600 million/year – would only be 3% of the transport budget.

A wide ranging debate followed with about 25 taking part. There was general support for the recommendations with concern expressed that there was not a commitment from the government to provide the necessary funding. The motion was supported.

David Naylor (with thanks to Phil Brophy for sending him the transcript of the debate which Phil had received from Martin Caton MP.)

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Llethrid Cwm

As this goes to press I am in the process of gathering evidence from people who have cycled across the short length of path between the north end of Green Cwm (aka Park Woods) and Llethrid that they have done so in the last 20 or more years. This is to support an application to have the status of the path changed from *footpath* to *restricted byway*. If this application is successful cyclists will have a right to use it. At present, because the path crosses private land, the permission of the landowner is needed, even to push a bike along the path. Unfortunately this is not forthcoming.



The picture shows the path in question. It is looking south from Llethrid. If you can help by providing this evidence please get in touch. My contact details are on page 1.

David Naylor

Book review

Roads were not built for cars by Carlton Reid (publ. 2014, cost £19.95)

This excellent new book attempts to break down the peculiarly British antagonism between cyclists and motorists.

With a wealth of fascinating historical facts, it demonstrates that cyclists were originally in the forefront of campaigning for better quality roads in Britain before cars were around.

The book is lavishly illustrated with beautiful photos, posters and paraphernalia from the pioneering days of British cycling. It contains a history of some early CTC campaigns.

Professor Cox (chair of CTC Council) describes the book as “a major and original piece of work, and a significant contribution to social history. It is also an underpinning for current debates about the urban realm”.

I strongly recommend it, and could be a useful addition to one`s Xmas gift list.

It has its own website www.roadswerenotmadeforcars.com.

Nick Guy

[Ed: *This book was presented to Rob Wachowski as a leaving gift from Wheelrights.*]

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Future events

Green Fayre

This takes place in the Waterfront Museum on 29/30 November (10.0 am – 4.00 pm). *Wheelrights* and Sustrans will have stalls.

Wheelrights Christmas Dinner

7.00 for 7.30pm, on Thursday, 4 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, 6 December, Civic Centre SA1 3SN by south entrance. This will be the first of monthly rides to check cycle routes. Simply turn up if interested.



They would normally be on bikes, but not on this December!

Merry Christmas readers!