



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 38 Winter 2016/17

www.wheelrights.org.uk

Are things moving in Swansea?

Judging by recent road works motorised traffic is hardly moving. But what about cyclists? At least we are little affected by these road works; but what is disappointing is that most of them are not to provide better cycle infrastructure. A particular disappointment is on Westway where an opportunity to make it cycle friendly has been lost.

But some things are happening. You may have noticed the shared-use surface signs (pictured) which have been cropping up in places such as on the foreshore path and Princess Way. These discretely communicate that cyclists are welcome.



One road work which should benefit us is the new Morfa Distributer Road, expected to be open by New Year. This runs to the east of Hafod and, as it incorporates a cycle lane, will provide a direct cycle route between the city centre and Morfa. For this to work properly appropriate design of cycle crossings of junctions and at the ends of the new road are required. The Council's track record on these important details is poor. *Wheelrights* have already drawn their attention to this matter. We'll soon know the outcome.

Contents

- P. 2 Our Chairman writes
The sub-groups.
- P. 3 Local News.
- P. 4 Blackpill Crossings.
- P. 5 The Festival: a Nottingham perspective.
- P. 6 A safety issue.
Llethrid
- P. 7 Lessons from New York.
- P. 8 Future events.

Copy deadline

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

This issue

With new officers (See footer below.) *Wheelrights* enters a new phase. It is therefore appropriate to kick this issue off with a note from our new Chairman.

Thereafter it is a mixture which I trust will be of interest. Note that articles on pages 2, 3 and 8 invite a response from you.

As editor I look to you members for content and, once again, ask for your greater involvement in the form of articles, correspondence, poems or whatever.

I hope to see lots of you at our Christmas Social at the *Mumbai* on 1st December.

David Naylor

Chairman

John Sayce, 46 Lon Cadog,
Cwmgwyn, Swansea SA2 0TN.
Phone: 01792 537226
Email: john.sayce@ntlworld.com

Secretary

Nick Guy, 5 Belgrave Gdns,
Walter Road, Swansea SA1 4QF
Phone: 01792 476178
Email: nick.bike@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer

Chris Walsh, 8 Emily Court,
Swansea SA1 8RA.
Phone: 07941 823729
Email: c.walsh@ntlworld.com

Our Chairman writes ...

As the new Chair of *Wheelrights*, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the latest edition of the Newsletter. As many of you know, David Naylor has not only been the editor of this publication for many years, but has also been our Secretary, undertaking all those jobs behind the scene that no-one sees, whether it has been organising meetings, mailing the membership, raising issues with the local councils or running the Gower Cycling Festival. Wow! I feel tired just listing a selection of his contributions! But, wait a moment(!) David will still be the brains behind the Gower Cycling Festival as well as editing this paper.

The AGM also saw Colin Felder hang up his trusted red pen as treasurer. This is a job that has few people rushing forward; in fact most people just look at their shoes when the Chair asks for volunteers! People give you bits and pieces of money at various times and your job is make sense of it! Colin has smiled all the way through his 6 years and has overseen an increase in our resources. However, more importantly he has pointed out the need to spend our excess reserves on activities that support cycling in Swansea. We welcome Chris Walsh into his role and I am sure he will be drawing on Colin's experience.

Lastly there is a move at the top table with Nick Guy moving over from being Chair to a new role as Secretary. As Chair, your job is to try and keep everyone involved and happy. Not an easy task, but one that Nick has completed with some aplomb! He will be looking forward to a new challenge as Secretary but has plenty of good experience as an organiser to draw on. And to finish the changes, a big welcome back to Claudine Conway as Vice-Chair. She has been a vocal supporter of cycling in Swansea for many years. She can be spied cycling in all weathers along the Mumbles cycleway, so do stop her and chat about what activities *Wheelrights* should be pursuing!

John Sayce

—o0o—

The sub-groups

Following up discussions at the AGM our new Chairman is keen to get the three sub-groups up and running, with 'Conveners' (aka Chairs) established for each. The three groups are 'Campaigning', 'Routes' and 'Gower Cycling Festival'.

At the AGM those interested in joining one or more of these groups were invited to put forward their names. If you have not already done so and would like to join a group please let our Secretary (Nick Guy, not me!) know by the end of this month.

By the end of this month because our next Routes Group meeting/ride is scheduled for 3 December (First Saturday in the month.) and this group is thin on the ground. Also we have our Christmas do on 1 December which, although this is a social event, could be an occasion for informal exchanges of information.

David Naylor

—o0o—

Local News

Cenotaph

A number of people have complained about the new arrangements which take cyclists round the south side of the Cenotaph. There are two issues: the gravel hump, which as



can be seen in the picture causes flooding, and that the triangular signs (One is shown in the photo.) warning pedestrians to look out for cyclists face the wrong way. Many cyclists still go round the north side of the Cenotaph which, because pedestrians no longer expect them there, increases the danger of a collision. This has been raised with the Council but at the time of writing no action has been taken.

We understand that, to remove this hazard, barriers, permeable to pedestrians (and wheelchair users), will be installed to complement the signs.

—o0o—

Foreshore puddle

The puddle on the foreshore path immediately west of the beach access opposite Sketty Lane reported in the Summer issue (36) has now been drained.

—o0o—

Integrated Network Map (INM)

In the last Newsletter your attention was drawn to Lindsey Brown's presentation on 26 September on the *Active Travel Act (Wales)* in which she explained how Sustrans were involving the public in identifying routes for the INM by getting them to indicate their desire lines for cycling to work or for other utility purposes. The potential routes are marked on maps at public events at which Sustrans have stalls. Wheelrights are doing likewise and did so at the recent *Green Fayre* in Swansea.

In September we made a submission to the Swansea Local Development Plan. This comprised a map which shows potential routes, most of which would be candidates for the INM. This map can be viewed on the Campaigns page of our website. Since the routes on it are not indexed it has been supplemented by a map on which they are. It is on the Infrastructure page. The routes are overlaid on a 1:50,000 OS map. It will be updated periodically as routes are amended or added. Your assistance with this is requested. So please contact me (Email: davidjohnnaylor@sky.com) if you have comments or suggestions for new routes or amendments to those shown, or to their description.

David Naylor

—o0o—

Blackpill Crossings.

During the past year there have been letters in the Evening Post complaining about the traffic interruption on the Mumbles Road due to the two crossings. Various solutions were proposed ranging from building a bridge to removing a crossing; one letter even suggested that this should be the cycle crossing! This set me thinking and I realised that the lights could be phased to make the existing crossings operate as if there were just one, with reduced waiting time for motorists and even for cyclists and pedestrians as well.

I am no traffic engineer but enjoy a challenge, so I set out to look into this problem from first principles. This resulted in a short paper (It's a little technical but not unduly so.) which I have put on the Infrastructure page of our website. It's the last under the heading 'Swansea Bay cycle routes'. The Council are currently looking at doing something with this crossing and I have sent them this paper. Let me now attempt to explain, without going into the technical details, how the phasing would work.



The picture (taken from the paper) shows the crossings. It is about 200m between the two. A car travelling at 30 mph (ie at the speed limit) would take 15 seconds to traverse this distance. This is the key to the proposed phasing.

The lights across the Swansea lane (Left in the picture.) of the southerly crossing to the Junction Café would change 15 seconds *before* those at the pedestrian and cycle crossing to the north. Conversely the lights across the Mumbles lane of the southern crossing would change 15 seconds *after* those at the northerly crossing.

When any of the nine buttons – on both sides the road and in the centre of the three crossings – were pressed the phasing sequence for all the crossings would be initiated.

There would be a 15 seconds difference in the wait time between the south and north crossings. The wait time would be longer if the lights had recently been red for motorists. Supposing they had not, the wait times would be as follows.

The shortest would be for a west-east crossing to the Junction Café. Here the wait would be just the amber period for motorists: some 5 seconds. A cyclist crossing either way at the cycle crossing would have to wait 15 seconds longer, ie 20 seconds on pressing the button. At the moment it is nearly twice as long as this. A pedestrian crossing east-west at the southerly crossing would have to wait a further 15 seconds, ie some 35 seconds after pressing the button. Also, depending on the length of the green phase, slow west-east pedestrians may get stranded on the centre island. East-west pedestrians would not be thus delayed as the east lane lights would change in their favour 30 seconds after the west.

The question now is: will this to be implemented?

David Naylor

The Festival: a Nottingham perspective.

This was the second time I came for the full week of the Gower Cycling Festival, thanks to the ability to camp at Dunvant. Many of the teething niggles of last year had been solved (thanks to the new showers). It is a great base for the Festival as well as for exploring the area generally.

Great to be part of such a diverse range of cyclists and meet up with friends made previously as well as meeting those new to the Festival.

The ride leaders created so many interesting rides from such a relatively small area and their enthusiasm and knowledge added interest to events and places. This was especially enjoyable for those of us not local to the area and, of course, they know the best cafés to keep us well refreshed. So much good ice cream too.

As a Midlander living about as far from the coast as it is possible to get in the UK, I am drawn to the sea and I appreciate the ability to share the day between joining in for part of a ride and a visit to a beach for a swim if the conditions are right. [*Ed: She was one of the four who entered the sea on the Grand Gower Circuit.*] The trouble is I am now torn between the coastal rides, the beach and the rides that go inland. Having such a range and variety of events really creates the holiday feel during the week rather than it being just another cycling holiday. I've also enjoyed the cultural rides, Copperopolis and the Lifecycle rides as well as the visit to the folk club at the Loughor Boat Club. What a spectacular sunset we saw this year.



Being involved in my local cycle campaign group and having organised rides and events myself, I have some understanding of the complexities of bringing things all together so I hope we managed to show our appreciation and enjoyment.

It is also good to see the results of your campaigning work and to be able to share our experiences. *Wheelrights* have

obviously had a positive effect in the Swansea area though there is always more to be done. If only we had the money per head for cycling as have London!

The work done by BikeAbility (Wales) is also impressive as is their collection of bikes. I have seen similar before but rarely such a diverse range to have a go on. As a cycle instructor I'm quite envious of their set up.

I hope to see you all again at next year's Festival, especially if you can again arrange good weather.

Susan Young

—o0o—

A safety issue

Early this year there were reports of near misses where cyclists heading for the Bay Campus cross the road on the north side of Baldwin's Bridge (which goes under Fabian Way). *Wheelrights* Routes Group audited this part of the route in the spring and came up with a report which suggested alternative solutions. This report is on the 'Infrastructure' page of *Wheelrights* website.



We came up with three options, the third of which is to provide a link from Elba Crescent to the Campus main entrance so that cyclists don't need to use the road under Baldwin's Bridge.

The Council are still considering what to do. As this may include changes to Baldwin's Bridge itself there may well be better options to the first two we proposed. Our third, ie the alternative route via Elba Crescent, would be cheap and easy to implement, so should in any case be implemented.

—o0o—

Llethrid

At last there is some progress on the application to get the short privately owned section of public footpath at the north end of the path between Parkmill and Llethrid upgraded to a *restricted byway*. The story behind this application can be found on p. 7 of the Summer 2015 Newsletter (Issue 32.) Briefly it is as follows.

No-cycling signs were put up at both ends of this 200m section some years ago apparently because a local land owner who has a problem with cyclists (who doesn't actually own the land in question) persuaded the Council to put them there. Were this path a *restricted byway* cyclists would have the same right to use it as walkers have on a public footpath.

Accordingly, two years ago I set in motion the process to have this path upgraded. This involved finding witnesses who had cycled on it in the past 20 years or more to complete and sign a two page form. I found 29. The application was submitted to the Council in January 2015.

I languished in position 10 on a waiting list for the rest of that year and much of this. At the last Council CAP meeting (in October) I raised this with Cllr Mark Child (Cabinet Member for *Wellbeing and Healthy Living*) and he took prompt action. The result was that it jumped to position 3 in the queue. At the AGM on 7 November, we learnt that the application has been placed before *National Resources Wales* for 'consultation'.

So, things are moving; but don't hold your breath!

—o0o—

David Naylor

Lessons from New York

When I was planning a trip to visit my sister in New York, I was surprised to hear advice from Chris Walsh and Gordon Gibson to try out the excellent cycle routes in Manhattan! I thought surely not; I was used to hearing about the great provision in Holland and Denmark, and surely USA was addicted to the motor car.

So armed with Chris's copy of the free New York Bike Map I arranged for my sister and I to hire their Citti Bikes to explore the cycle route around Central Park. This turned out to be a beautiful traffic free circular route, as wide as a car lane, and as this was a Sunday was full of roller bladers, skateboarders and cyclists of all kinds from Lycra speeders to families and all ages.

A couple of days later I became more adventurous. Again using a Citti Bike (only 4 dollars for 4 hours) I used a 1.5 yard wide cycle lane down a busy street to the Hudson River. The Bike lane was a yard away from the parked cars, and I gained a thrill from passing the usual grid locked queues of cars and trucks. I was pleasantly surprised to find that most cars treated cyclists with respect, giving plenty of space. Reaching the Hudson River Park I joined commuters cycling along this lovely high quality cycle path, which runs almost the entire western length of Manhattan. I rewarded my success with a gigantic hot dog, and visit to the "Intrepid" Air & Space museum on a US Aircraft carrier, with an actual Concorde alongside. (Thanks Chris for recommending this.)

I asked my sister how all this recent progress had been made for cyclists. She told me that recent New York Mayors had really pushed these measures, partly to tackle the grid locked traffic, but also to improve air quality. On my return I then read the article about Leicester in *cycle* magazine. This concluded that the key to improving cycling provision in UK cities was a combination of political will, and getting urban designers involved (rather than Highway engineers).



Segregated cycle lane in Manhattan.

So maybe for Swansea we should learn more from London, New York and Leicester – all cities starting from a low cycling base, where town planning has been dominated by car users for decades, and all making huge step changes for cyclists and pedestrians. In Swansea there are new opportunities for radical change with the *Active Travel Act* kicking in, and we need to gain greater political (with a small "p") support for cycling – now is a good time with Council elections coming up.

We are lucky having our own urban designers in Swansea, Gordon Gibson plus Lindsey from Sustrans, and the discussions around St David's development together with a new "Green Plaza" on Kingsway provide us with the chance for radical improvements in Swansea.

Nick Guy

Future events

Wheelrights Christmas Dinner

7.00 for 7.30pm, on Thursday, 1 December, in the **Mumbai** on Mill Lane in Blackpill. If you plan to attend please email Dawn Aplin: dawnaplin@hotmail.com.

Wheelrights Routes group meeting/rides

10.00am Saturday 3 December, Civic Centre Café, SA1 3SN by south entrance. All interested welcome.

Saturday, 7 January. Instead of the usual meeting in the Civic Centre Café a visit to Cardiff to attend the **Space for Cycling roadshow** from 10.00-16.30 is planned. Details on the Events page of our website.

Swansea Bay Cycle Forum meeting

6.30pm Thursday 12 January in the Environment Centre, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY. For representatives from local cycling organisations including of course *Wheelrights*.

—o0o—

This little book has just come out: £7.99 from www.eyebbooks.com. It is a sequel to *Crap Cycle Lanes* which was published ten years ago. It is a *must read* for those in LAs who design cycle infra-structure and, indeed, for us who seek to influence them.

Is there crap cycle infrastructure in Swansea? If so send me a pic. or two of it and maybe it can featured in a future issue.



—o0o—



Let me introduce you to Dai. He likes to think that he represents a not-in-lycra *Wheelrights* cyclist!

Normally he adorns the wall of our Living Room, but he is taking a break to wish you all a

Merry Christmas!

David Naylor