



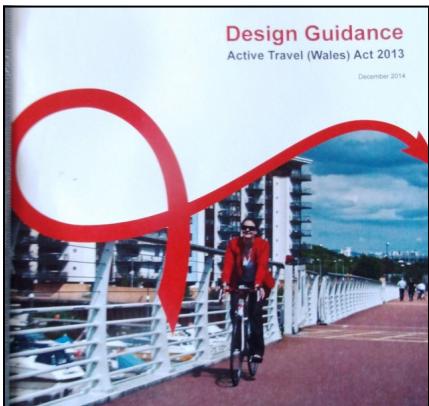
Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 39 Spring 2017

www.wheelrights.org.uk



Where's the Active Travel?

The picture is of the front cover of the 400+ page document which provides detailed guidance to Local Authorities on how to implement the Welsh Active Travel Act. This became law in 2013, so now, more than three years on, why do we not see more people active travelling in Swansea? Yes there are more people cycling but they are mostly leisure cyclists. Where are the work-clothes-wearing utility cyclists on their way to or from work or to shop? If there are more of them than there appear (to me) to be perhaps someone would let me know.

Maybe lessons need to be learnt from Cardiff or Scotland. Cardiff are seeking to emulate Copenhagen and plan to get half their commuters out of their cars by 2021. Measures to implement this include the provision of more cycle routes. In Scotland a *Cycling Action Plan* aims to raise everyday cycling journeys from 1.2% to 10% by 2032. And I read that in London sums well in excess of the recommended £10 per person per year are to be set aside for cycling over the next four years. So come on Swansea !

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Copy deadline

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

David Naylor and John Sayce

This issue

The local news about Westway, the Kingsway plans and, on p. 6, the news about the link north from Gowerton all indicate that things are happening in Swansea. With massive new developments planned, in particular the St David's revamp and new university buildings, this is a great opportunity to provide quality cycling infrastructure. The cost is peanuts compared with the billions to be spent.

Note the reminder on p. 3 that this year's sub.s are due. Not a member and wish to support what we do? Then please become one.

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Local News

Cenotaph

The work on the cycle diversion to the south of the Cenotaph is now complete (except that the triangular signs face the wrong way). It comprised the removal of the gravel mound on the diversion to the south and installation of barriers (the westerly of which is shown in the photo) to prevent cyclists using the old route.



This work was carried out because several cyclists had complained about the gravel hump and because of the danger of collisions on the old route. The barriers appear to be impassable not only to cyclists but also to wheelchair users so expect them on the diversion, which is shared use.

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Westway

Major changes have been made to the Westway. This work started late last year and is ongoing. It is mainly to accommodate changes to the bus lanes, but also there are measures to make the area prettier and more pedestrian friendly. A problem is that they seem to have forgotten about cyclists. We not having been consulted in the design stage it was rather late in the day before we had a chance to raise our concerns with the Council. In fairness we have not been completely overlooked and what we understand to be a shared use path has been provided on the east side, also some new crossings.



On 4 February our Routes Group made a detailed inspection of both Westway and the link to it along Paxton and William Streets, which is a signed cycle route. A report on it is being prepared and will be put on the 'Infrastructure' page of *Wheelrights* website. A draft has been sent to the Council with a request that they respond to the recommendations.

The picture, taken on the Routes Group's inspection, is looking north up Westway across the southern entrance to the bus station. It shows part of the path we assume is to be shared use.

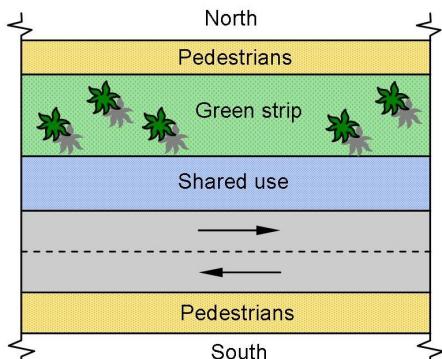
Our concern is that aspects of the development are not in accordance with Active Travel Act guidance.

David Naylor

Kingsway: a foretaste

I was privileged to be invited to represent *Wheelrights* at a Council workshop in January about the Kingsway. Its purpose was to unveil preliminary plans for its reconfiguration and involve stakeholders in the development of them. We were given the opportunity to comment and make suggestions. Here I summarise key points.

The guiding principle is that the Kingsway should be a place for people. There would be residential and business development along it, but it would be made attractive with trees and other greenery so that people would want to go there. While cars would be allowed, through traffic would be discouraged. Key to this being achieved is a plan to make the existing clockwise gyratory along Christina Street, Mansel Street, east to Orchard Street and back down the Kingsway two-way, ie as it used to be. In addition there would be a reduction in the number of traffic lights (but at which junctions was not made clear). The effect of this would be that most of the west bound traffic would use the alternatives to the north or south. The new Morfa Distributer Road would result in more traffic by passing the Kingsway to the south along New Cut Road.



The sketch illustrates the present thinking. The green strip would be a sort of linear park with space for stalls. South of this there would be a shared use path and then two 3m wide traffic lanes. These would be for cars, buses and confident cyclists, the thinking being that the less confident would use the adjacent shared use path. A design speed of 12 mph for the road was mentioned. A total carriageway width of 6m would make the road suitable for cyclists as this would restrict overtaking to when the opposing lane was clear, there not being space for two cars and a bike.

Lindsey Brown of Sustrans was also present and we both welcomed the broad concept of what is planned. We expressed our appreciation at being involved at this early stage and requested that we continue to be involved as the detail is worked out. These include such important matters as the treatment of junctions, access for cyclists and pedestrians to the ends of Kingsway/Orchard Street and to the central shared use path, etc.

David Naylor

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Wheelrights sub.

This will (if necessary) remind you that this year's sub. is now due. Our new Treasurer/Membership Secretary, Chris Walsh will be pleased to receive your £5.00. He has already sent an email to members spelling out how to do this. This information is also on the 'Join us' page of our website.

Note that of the five options our first preference is for you to set up a standing order. We would also prefer that you don't pay by PayPal as this both costs you more and causes us extra work.

Space for Cycling

This has been a theme which has been high on *Cycling uk's* agenda for some time. They recently held a series of road shows across the UK, and Chris Connick, Chris Walsh and I represented *Wheelrights* at one in Cardiff on 7 January. Here are my impressions.

There were about 27 there. It was chaired by Roger Geffen, *Cycling UK's* Campaigns Officer and Policy Director. His remit covers the UK but recently he has paid particular attention to Wales as *Cycling UK* needs strengthening here. We do however have Gwenda Owen, who was at the meeting and is standing as a Cardiff City Councillor, Also present were Phil Snaith and Geoff Rhone representing Carmarthen Cycle Forum.

The meeting started with a ten minute talk by Chris Weaver who is a Cardiff Councillor and assistant Cabinet Member for Active Travel and Wellbeing. He said all the right things: the health benefits of cycling; that by getting people out of their cars it can ease air pollution in Cardiff; and etc. I guess he is behind the positive developments reported on page 1.

Roger Geffen then gave a presentation. He noted that our aim is to create conditions where anyone can cycle anywhere. He is seeking to strengthen local groups. Wales has an advantage over the rest of the UK in that it has the Active Travel Act (ATA). However, in contrast to some parts of England, the funds to implement it are insufficient. A network of cycle-friendly routes is needed. These should provide protected space on major roads; traffic free routes are needed to complement rather than replace on-road routes. In residential and urban areas traffic speeds need to be restricted and volumes kept down. Developing a dialogue with councillors is key to achieving these aims.

A point raised by Roger, which has resonance here, is that it is better to provide for cyclists in areas where there already is a demand *before* providing it in areas where a demand needs to be created. The reasoning is that a successful scheme can be used as a precedent to show that such provision works. Do it the other way round and there is a danger of creating a white elephant. (In Swansea this has implications for the proposed cycle link across Clyne Common to Bishopston and Pennard.)

Tube maps featured strongly in the meeting. An Adam Reynolds showed us how to use some clever software to produce these, using a tube map of Bath as an example. This was impressive. However Swansea and NPT Councils produced a tube map covering these counties two years ago so it's questionable if we will have a use for this software. The role of these maps is not like that of a conventional map but is to set an agenda for where cycle routes are needed.

The above occupied the morning, then after lunch (a tasty savoury selection) Richard Keating from Anglesey gave a presentation on the ATA and Integrated Network Maps (INM). He explained that by means of the latter LAs are required to set out their plans for Active Travel routes for the next 15 years. These maps, showing both existing and new routes, would require approval from the Welsh Government, and would have to be resubmitted every three years. The ATA guidance document (Pictured on p.1) provides detailed technical guidance which should be adhered to. It was noted however that Highway Departments lacked suitably trained people. A role for volunteers?

Finally we walked to the nearby Taff Trail and had a demonstration of a new app: the 'Cycle Environment Access Tool' (CEAT). Feed it information about a cycle facility, in this case a cycle lane across a bridge, and it comes up with an assessment of it. Hmm! An old cynic like me wondered if something so high tech was needed for this.

David Naylor

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A Kiwi dilemma

You won't credit it, but the Kiwis have been complaining bitterly about the poor summer, with temperatures in Hawkes bay dropping down to the early 20s and no rain for about 5 weeks! What more could you want, I ask! One thing we cyclists could ask for is for cars and other vehicles to give us a bit more room on the roads. Even though there is a 'campaign' in the U.K. and N.Z. to get drivers to stay at least 1.5 metres away from us when overtaking, many seem to take pride in seeing how close they can get. Perversely It may be that, because of the abundance of cycleways in Hawkes Bay, there are few N.Z. cyclists on the roads. This means that it is unlikely any tipping point is reached as in Holland where most drivers are also cyclists and drive with great care for the mass of cyclists around them.

So what is the Kiwi answer to this dilemma? Well, rather than improve matters with more cycle lanes and speed calming measures, the N.Z. parliament is seeking to get bicycles off the roads all together. Currently, postmen and women are allowed to cycle on the pavement, as well as newspaper deliverers. I have seen several close shaves as drivers back their cars down their driveways and onto the road. So now one of the M.P.s in parliament is putting forward a bill to allow youngsters under 11 years of age and pensioners over 65 to ride on all pavements.

Is this a measure that we should be campaigning for in Swansea and the UK? Would it encourage more former cyclists to get back into the saddle to go down to the local shops or would this lead to pavements punch-ups between walkers and cyclists? Do let us know your thoughts!

[Ed. Any views from readers? Does this have relevance over here?]

John Sayce

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Deliveroo in Swansea

Not a type of kangaroo, but a new cycle courier scheme delivering high class restaurant food to your door, by bike! You may have seen the distinctive green and grey cyclists around the city centre and Uplands area lately, with large boxes strapped to their backs. Well I chatted to one of them at their regular meeting point outside MacDonalds in Castle Square to get the low down. He was a local youngster who loved cycling and is enjoying being paid to cycle around Swansea for Deliveroo. He said you only need a smart phone and good bike to get started, plus a lot of energy!

They are self employed and earn a basic £6 per hour, plus a pound for each delivery. If the customer gives a tip the cyclist keeps it. Currently he told me they cover the central Swansea area plus Uplands and Sketty, mostly catering for the student population. Customers have to place a minimum order of £15, and they deliver ready cooked meals from a range of select restaurants (rather than the usual take aways).

So if you live in the centre of Swansea and fancy a treat, why not give them a try (and don't forget a tip). Lets hope this is another sign of our long awaited culture change with this new business giving the thumbs up to cycling as a means of transport in our city.

Nick Guy

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A Gowerton – Bont update

We have real progress to report at last. At the January CAP meeting with Swansea Council, Ben George showed us a plan of a new section of the above route from Gowerton Station to Kingsbridge.

The negotiations with the three land owners have gone well, and the detailed plans seem to show that a high standard traffic-free cycle path will be created mostly along the disused railway line.

It even includes short sections of boardwalk over marshy parts of Stafford Common, and it connects with the existing cattle creep under the fast A484.

At the northern, Pontarddulais (aka Bont), end more good news. Sustrans have gained funding for a local community participation project, and plan to establish a Stakeholders group to take this forward.

Basically Wheelrights has successfully contacted a range of local cyclists and supportive organisations in Bont, and we are ready to hand the baton on to Lindsey Brown of Sustrans who will explore options for a network of cycling and walking routes in this area. These will link with the current end of the existing cycle path at Grovesend, with potential in the north to link with the Amman Valley cycle network in Carmarthenshire.

This cycle route has been discussed for over 20 years and I believe the current progress is a result of the excellent work of our Routes Group in prioritising 5 key routes, and then lobbying hard with the Council.

If anyone wishes to see the detailed plans or knows anyone living in Pontarddulais (or local businesses) who could be interested, please contact me.

Nick Guy

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About Sustrans

I became involved with Sustrans in 2000 when I returned to cycling after a break of more than 20 years. When looking for safe and convenient local cycle routes that I could try I contacted Swansea Council and was referred to Rob Wachowski who had just taken up the post of Cycling Officer in Swansea and it is due to Rob that I discovered the National Cycle Network Routes 4 and 43 in Swansea. Having enjoyed using both these routes and having rekindled my love of cycling I contacted Sustrans to find out how I could help out in the future development of the NCN.

"Cyclebag", formed in 1977 by John Grimshaw, was the precursor of Sustrans. It comprised a group of cyclists and environmentalists who were motivated by doubts about our dependence on cars. In the early 1980's they collaborated with British Waterways to improve towpaths along some canals to enable cyclists to use them. This led to the idea of a national network of routes. A grant of £43.5 million from the Millennium Lottery Fund in 1995 was key to the development of the NCN which grew from 10,000 miles when I became a supporter in 2000 and currently stands at around 20,000 miles.

The role of a Sustrans Ranger is to help look after a section of The National Cycle Network by becoming the eyes and ears for Sustrans and the Local Authority. Their responsibilities include monitoring the route, inspecting signage and maintenance. Group workdays are arranged which give rangers the chance to meet and deal with these problems. I am currently Swansea area Group Co-ordinator. This involves:

- Hosting welcome sessions for new volunteers and introducing them to the group.
- Reporting problems to LAs and/or Sustrans.
- Organising regular route maintenance workdays and meetings.
- Encouraging volunteers to take part in training.
- Setting up stalls and information stands at events to promote Sustrans and inspire people to change their travel behaviour.



A Sustrans workday

In Wales there are currently 350 Sustrans volunteers. Despite there being no financial reward they look after the Network, raising awareness of the brilliant network of routes available both locally and nationally. Doing this has its own rewards.

If you're looking to develop your skills and experience, meet new people, or improve the NCN locally you might consider getting involved. I can only say I've found the experience rewarding.

Visit www.sustrans.org.uk for further information on Sustrans and the NCN.

If you would like to take an active role in helping to develop and maintain the network please email: volunteers-cymru@sustrans.org.uk providing information about your skills and interests, the time you would like to give and your location.

Mike Lewis

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Forthcoming events

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

BikeAbility (Wales) Companion Rides: Wednesdays from 8 March.

10.00-12.00 from BikeAbility's Dunvant RFC base. These are gentle rides, suitable for beginners. Free but bike hire is available. See the 'Rides/Commutes' page for details.

Wheelrights Routes Rides.

Meet 10.00 in Environment Centre café when route will be decided. (But check 'Events' page of website for possible changes.) First Saturday in month: **4 March, 1 April & 6 May**.

U3A Rides.

10.00am starting at various locations. Last Monday in month: **27 Feb., 27 March, 24 April & 29 May**. See the 'Events' page for details and confirmation of dates.

March

13-18 March: Cycle to Work week.

Check 'Events' page in case anything special has been organised, otherwise, if this applies to you, simply cycle to work and let others know about this week.

June

BIKE WEEK: 11-19 June.

Check 'Events' page for details. The annual 43-2-C ride will probably be on Sunday 11th.

August

12-19 August: GOWER CYCLING FESTIVAL.

Full details on our 'Cycling Festival' page: www.wheelrights.org.uk/GCF17. Note that we would like you to register in advance. (It is only £5.)

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Environment Centre Café

It's been open weekdays from 10.00 till 4.00pm for some time but now it's open on Saturdays as well: from 10.00 to 3.00pm.

The Dutch Reach

Here is a tip for if you are either driving a car or are a passenger in one. You can see from the title where it comes from.

It is simply that when you open the car door to get out you use the hand furthest from the door to open it. Thus if you are the driver (in this country) you use the left hand, and right if the front seat passenger.

The reason for doing this is to prevent the 'dooring' of cyclists. By opening the door in this way your body is turned so that you can see if a cyclist is coming up alongside.