



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 41 Autumn 2017

www.wheelrights.org.uk

New contraflows in Swansea



Cycle contraflow lanes have been added to a couple of one-way streets in the city centre this summer: Park Street and Singleton Street. The former is pictured. Should not the driver of that car get a ticket both for parking on double yellow lines and blocking a cycle lane? Perhaps the cycle lane should have been Mandatory rather than Advisory, ie bordered by a continuous rather than a broken white line. Active Travel Guidance recommends this if there's space. There would appear to be on this road.

These contraflows serve the useful purpose of facilitating two-way cycling between Westway and the Kingsway. They also serve the purpose of sending the message that the city centre, specifically the area around the Quadrant, is also for cyclists. This process will be taken further when the whole of the "Box", ie the area bounded by Westway, Kingsway, Wellington Street and Princess Way is made cycle friendly. Apart from the Kingsway and the south side it already is.

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to me:
davidjohnnaylor@sky.com by mid November.

This issue

On p. 3 our chairman reports on progress made with the Council and our secretary updates us on the INM. P. 4 provides feedback on the Gower Cycling Festival. The articles on p. 5 and 8 reflect a growing interest in cycling from people who mostly don't fit the image of lycra clad roadies. if the p. 6 titles baffle you open the page! Finally a bit from me about cycling in Europe.

Once again readers: I need copy from you - please!

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

Local News

Roots

The problem of the roots across the Gorseinon – Grovesend cycle path, illustrated in the last issue, has now been sorted. In fact the Council have done a thorough job, also surfacing the previously rough section of road to which that path connects at its north end.

Clyne Path

The petition requesting a shared-use path across Clyne Common on the south side of the B4436 mentioned in the last issue has now had over 1000 signatures. A small group involving local councillors has been set up to promote this. There's more about this on p.6.

Kingsway

A request from *Wheelrights* to have the shared-use path along Kingsway located south of the carriageway rather than between it and the green strip has been rejected by the Council. (See the article on p.3 in this year's Spring Newsletter.) The logic behind this request is that with the cycle path on the south side of the carriageway it would not have to cross a number of side turnings. A counter argument is that as the carriageway is designed to be suitable for experienced cyclists and would be a through route for them it would be better for the shared path to be integrated with the green strip. This would enable novice and none-through-route cyclists to access this strip. Were the path to be on the south side the carriageway would have to be crossed to get to it. With the crossings on the north side we have asked the Council to make them safe for both cyclists and pedestrians. Readers views would be welcomed.

Morfa Relief Road

This is now open. It provides a link from New Cut east of the railway to the roundabout SW of the Liberty Stadium. It has a cycle path along its east side. This provides a useful S-N alternative to the cycle path west of the railway, Maliphant Street and Neath Road. Cycle access at the ends is not good and unfortunately the Council ignored our request to give the new path priority across minor junctions.

—o0o—

Troublemakers Festival



This Festival took place from 13 – 16 July. Swansea's High Street was closed to traffic. Its purpose was to promote the High Street as a place for people. There were festive events focussing on art and culture. These included, activities for children and the general public.

Wheelrights supported the Festival and the picture shows Nick Guy towing the mammoth poster which the organisers had prepared to advertise it. He towed it round the city centre. Just as well the route was relatively flat as this trailer was heavy!

Despite rain which persisted for most of the event it went well. Full credit to *Volcano Theatre* and *Coastal Housing* who organised it.

—o0o—

Our Chairman writes ...

We all know that when an election is due political parties rush out a manifesto saying what they will or will not do if you elect them. The politicians read them all and mostly the promises are bounded with clauses and conditions. But recently you may recall the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, was made to retract a National Insurance hike as it went against his own party's commitment.

So if you can't beat them *Wheelrights* decided to join them and issued its own manifesto about a year ago which it sent to all the local political parties before the 2017 local elections. Mostly there was an eerie silence, but just after we had given up, thinking it was a poor use of time, the Labour Party published their own election manifesto and – hey presto! – the party, if elected, committed to implementing the *Wheelrights* manifesto.

Well, as some of you will recall, the Labour Party's best election results in May were achieved in Swansea, so we appear to be in business. And what exactly did *Wheelrights* call for? There were two items that were on our shopping list: firstly a comprehensive city centre cycle route from the rail station to the bus station, and secondly safe cycle and walking routes into the city centre for another 10 wards, other than areas like Gowerton and Mumbles which are already well served by off-road paths.

The Council have just received money to enable a complete redevelopment of the Kingsway and Orchard St. which will mean a separate cycle lane from the rail station down to the Westway end of the Kingsway, and the new cycle lane along Singleton St and up Union St. So hopefully by this time next year – fingers crossed – there will be a cycle route from the Quadrant to the railway station!

If the extra cycle routes to the 10 wards are delivered that would mean about two-thirds of Swansea wards would have a safe walking and cycle route into the city centre, and also into the Enterprise zone now that the Morfa Rd shared use path is in operation. So which wards will be picked for the new routes? That's currently up for grabs, so if you think your ward deserves a route, give me a ring on 01792 537226 or text on 07518 141727.

Enjoy your next ride!

John Sayce

Integrated Network Map

Swansea Council currently have an online consultation on their draft INM which closes on 8th September! They have called in private consultants (Capita) who have produced a set of maps showing their preferred routes. These are shown on www.swansea.gov.uk/activetravelact. To contribute to the consultation click "Complete the survey now" on the same page and an on-line form will appear. Note that *Wheelrights* proposed routes are shown on the "indexed map" on <http://www.wheelrights.org.uk/infrastr.htm>.

There are several problems with Capita's routes. *Wheelrights* Routes group are currently comparing them with ours in order to come up with recommendations to present to the Council. If you know of routes which might be candidates please email details to either David Naylor (davidjohnnaylor@sky.com) or Chris Walsh (c.walsh@ntlworld.com)

Swansea Council have to submit their INM to the Welsh Gov't by November. It should be a guide to route development over the next 15 years, so it will be of great importance.

At last we are seeing a real commitment to improving cycle routes in Swansea, and I believe the other important outcome of the *Active Travel Act* will be a culture change leading to better attitudes to cycling, much as the drink driving and smoking laws have led to radical changes in attitude over the past decades.

Nick Guy (*Wheelrights* Secretary)

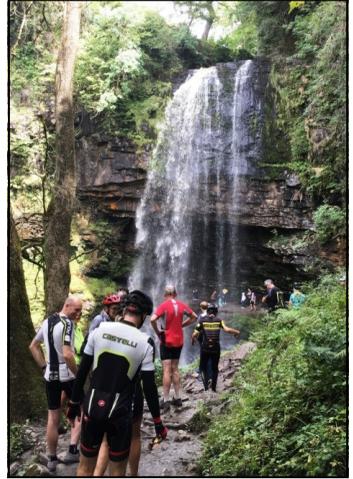
Festival feedback

This took place from 12-19 August. In the context of this rather miserable summer the weather was good with sunshine for the first weekend and much of the following week. There was however light rain on the Monday, heavy showers on Friday and rain on the Wednesday evening, but that didn't matter as we were indoors for the party. Not so good however for the campers who had to brave the rain to get to their tents.

Analysis of the attendance records is in progress so we don't know yet how many participated. But it seems that this was comparable with previous years, most of the rides being well attended with 10 to 20 or more. The *Henryd Falls* ride, which the picture features, had 33. Attendance of the previously popular *Llanmadoc and Pots* and *Port to Pottery* rides was disappointing, presumably because they were on the two wet days.

The family rides appear to have worked out as intended. We were impressed by the Selway family. Lucy, Esta and Rebecca, aged 5, 7 and 8 respectively, had their own bikes. On the *Campus to Campus* ride the two elder children cycled the full 20 miles while Lucy cycled a bit but then used the tag-along (pictured) to push her dad along. (Except that she wasn't doing much pushing when I checked! She was just enjoying the ride.)

Our customers seem to have enjoyed the Festival as the following quotes testify.



MW & JW: *This is the fourth year we have joined the Gower Cycling Festival. We always look forward to meeting up again with the friendly and welcoming organisers, Wheelrights and fellow cyclists who are also on repeat visits.*

It's an ideal holiday for us. We bring our caravan to the beautiful Gower and enjoy the varied rides with like minded visitors. It's educational too with this year's visits to historical Swansea's Copperopolis, the Rhondda tunnel project, St Teilo's ancient church site on the Pontarddulais marsh and the new Bay University Campus.

Plus it's great exercise and long may it continue.

SY: *There was a lovely balance of longer and shorter rides and routes and the rides up to the waterfalls and Rhondda tunnel were excellent additions to the programme. Not too taxing with generally decent surfaces and gentle gradients.*

Having some of the rides where families with young children or anyone new to cycling can join part of a ride, especially if it can include one of the café stops, is ideal and helps make the rides open to all.

LR & JR: *Just wanted to say thank you for such an enjoyable week. It was both friendly and well organised. It was also appreciated by the campers, that the other David [Judd], visited regularly to see that we were alright and always had a smile.*

—oO—

David Naylor

U3A ride to Melincourt Falls

Despite a dodgy forecast a record group of 13 cyclists met on the Sail Bridge on 31st July for a trip to the Melincourt Falls and Aberdulais.

This was the *Cycling Leisurely* arm of the Swansea U3A, a small group in this large organisation which covers many varied activities. We meet once or twice a month year round and ride 15 - 50 miles. We are a mixed bunch of retirees with varied equipment including electric bikes. I organise the rides and then rely on Monsieur Le Guide, David Naylor, and his micro knowledge of every lane, track and path, to explore the wider reaches of Swansea and its nearby valleys. David knits an intricate web of routes, avoiding traffic and hills where possible. *[Ed: Pete didn't mention in the bullshit above that this guide specialises in taking wrong turnings! We do however manage to put a programme together which seems to meet a need. See www.wheelrights.org.uk/rides.htm for details.]*

Now the activity is 'Cycling Leisurely', but as the core of regulars have become fitter and David has sought out pastures new, our distances have increased and the terrain sometimes tips up more than is desirable. No worries though as I play shepherd at the rear and check the pace substantially unless of course it's downhill.

We rode away from the docks at full steam (U3A style) and headed out along the Tennant Canal. Already black clouds were homing in on us and the dithering begins – anoraks on, anoraks off? Will it, won't it? Intermittent sprinklings of rain harassed us before we passed the well behaved swans and joined the road. Here, big drops of the wet stuff forced the issue and the 'anoraks on' camp won.

Around Amazon and over the bridge found us steaming, literally, into Briton Ferry's McDonalds. Hot coffee was very welcome but we had to say farewell to two new returning cyclists who had only wanted to ride halfway. Two more were concerned about their skinny tyres on the Neath canal and opted for a different route back. Allyson too made for a shorter route, so a reduced party wiggled our way onto the Neath canal and sped up the Vale of Neath eventually joining the B4242 to take us over the canal and into Resolven.

Resolven looked very sad and grey in the steady rain, but not as sad as we were when there was no café to be found. Pressing on we soon came to our first target - Melincourt. Locking our bikes against a convenient railing we slithered up to the Falls. Here we were unusually thankful for the rain as the Falls were in full spate and made our journey well worthwhile. Back at the railings we were relieved to find our bikes still waiting for us. We mounted and embarked down the somewhat lumpy B4434, finally arriving at our second destination Aberdulais Tinworks. Here we were greeted by bowls of lovely soup and finally sunshine. It remained to return to Swansea, but via Skewen and then back along the Tennant Canal for a final 'top-up' at Coast Café. An excellent sociable outing.

Thanks to David for a very enjoyable circuit of 32 miles, visiting two delightful points of interest and lovely, varied countryside.



Pete Clarke

A GAP to fill

“GAP” stands for “Gower Access Path”. This is the name given to the small campaign group set up to get a shared-use path constructed across Clyne Common. The picture shows the team; from left to right: Patrick Tribe (Chair), Adam Gilbert, David Naylor and Barry Cooper (Secretary). Susan Rodaway who took the photo is the fifth member.



This campaign to have a dual use (cycling and walking) path across Clyne Common is gathering pace. The online petition (See www.wheelrights.org.uk/campaigns.htm.) has been extremely successful with over 1030 signatures. In addition to this 176 signatures were collected at July’s Pennard Carnival, meaning that over 1200 people would like to see a safe means of crossing the common provided as soon as possible.

We have met our recently elected Gower MP Tonia Antoniazzi, Councillor for Bishopston Lyndon Jones, Wheelrights and community activists, who are all behind the scheme and are providing all the support they can. We are planning to deliver the petition to the Council and meet the Highways and Planning Departments this month to discuss how a path, suitable for all users, can be delivered.

We are delighted with the level of support we’ve already had from the community and will be looking for ways people in the area can help ‘fill this gap’, ie get the safe means of crossing the Common we all need.

Patrick Tribe

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Is this path for cyclists?

In the Summer 2015 Newsletter (Issue 32) I spelt out the saga of why we are not meant to cycle across the short (200m) section of public footpath at the Llethrid end of Green Cwm on the Gower Peninsula. An update is due. I’ll also take this opportunity to comment on the no cycling signs at the ends of this section.

Well, actually, there is not much to update. The application to have the footpath upgraded to a *restricted byway* has been languishing in somebody’s in-tray in the Council’s legal department for over 2½ years. Last year I discovered it was tenth in a waiting list. Thanks to the intervention of Councillor and Cabinet Member Mark Child it got upgraded to position three in the queue. That was nearly a year ago. A ‘deafening silence’ has reigned since!

It might interest readers to know that the profusion of signs at the ends of the section in question can be interpreted to mean that you *can* cycle across it. Travelling from north to south you will encounter a sign such as in the upper picture on the gate by the road through Llethrid (the B4271). You duly dismount and wheel your bike the 20 or 30m past the house on the left. You then come to the gate at the north end of the 200m of public footpath. The sign in the lower picture is on this gate. The diagonal through the bicycle cancels the *no cycling* which would be the message were there no diagonal. So with a clear conscience you hop on your bike to cycle the short stretch to the next gate at the north end of Park Woods! Cycling is allowed on the path through these woods which are administered by National Resources Wales.



David Naylor

Bavaria by Bike

It's been my habit in recent summers to go cycle touring in Germany. This summer was no exception; this time from Augsburg to Passau in Bavaria and then down the Danube to Vienna. I cycled alone to Passau, taking five days; there I joined a group with whom I cycled to Vienna over the next six. This account focuses on the first part of my trip.

I set off on my bike for Swansea Station in late June. Three trains took me to Bury St Edmunds from where it's a pleasant 45 mile ride, mostly on quiet roads, to Harwich. The change of trains in London involved cycling between Paddington and King's Cross. Once you've found the route this is not a bad ride: relatively lightly trafficked side roads with some dedicated cycle paths. It took me about 20 minutes.

The overnight ferry trip from Harwich to Hook of Holland is part of the holiday. It is a mini-cruise; the only problem being that it's too short with disembarkation promptly at 8.00am. Stena welcome cyclists and this time (It doesn't always happen.) we, together with motor cyclists, were let on board before the cars and lorries. This enabled me to get to the restaurant in time to find a table and enjoy a good meal after that 45 mile ride.

From Hook of Holland it was 38 miles on the bike to Gouda from where I travelled by train to Cologne. It was cycle paths all the way to Gouda. The challenge is to find the most appropriate ones, particularly through the Rotterdam conurbation. I have made this journey several times but seldom repeated a route. I stayed in the quaint old Hotel Stapelhäuschen in Cologne. It is by the Rhine, a few minutes by bike from the Cathedral and *Hauptbahnhof*. Here B&B (and the breakfast was excellent) cost a little over €40.

Five hours in a comfortable and fast IC train took me to Augsburg. It is necessary to book your bike on these trains. I had booked mine well in advance. I noted that 15 of the 18 bike spaces were occupied. Arriving in Augsburg in the early afternoon it was a pleasant 17 mile cycle ride to my first hotel. (Being a softy in my old age I stay in hotels or B&Bs if I can find one.) From there it was 155 miles to Passau, which I took in gentle stages over four days.

This was a lovely ride. Nearly all of it on cycle paths, many of which ran alongside roads, but separate from them. The picture shows one.

The first half of my route followed the Isar Valley, the second the Vils. These were mostly flat but were separated by a hilly but scenic section which added to the interest.

I was mostly cycling through peaceful countryside, past fields of wheat and barley, interspersed with small villages and the occasional town. The largest was Freising: a bustling centre with lots of shops and cafés.



I used 1:150,000 ADFC (The German equivalent of the CTC.) maps. While this scale is OK in the country it is too small for towns. Asking locals the way adds spice to the journey.

In Passau I joined *Mercurio's* led tour to Vienna (Google: 'Mercurio Bike Travel'.) There were 14 of us plus leader and Samuel who drove the support van. There followed six days of gentle cycling down the Danube with lunch time picnics prepared by Samuel. There were sightseeing tours and a wine tasting at the Dürnstein winery. We stayed in nice hotels.

The wind was behind me from Passau to Vienna and it hardly rained!

David Naylor

Cappuccino Rides

After a hesitant start these rides are proving quite popular. They take place usually twice a month starting from the Coast Café in SA1. (See the 'Events' page of the website for when.) They are gentle mainly off-road rides aimed at new or returning cyclists.

As can be seen in the picture dancing round a Maypole is a means of limbering up for the ride!

[Ed: Men are actually welcome on these rides and every now and then a brave fellow or two does!]

Allyson Evans



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Forthcoming events

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

Wheelrights Routes Rides (meet 10.00am in Environment Centre café.)

Saturday, 7 October (and first Saturday in the month thereafter.)

Cappuccino rides. (1.00pm in the Coast Café, SA1 3SN. See the Rides/Commutes page.)

Tuesdays, 5 and 19 September (Check the Events page for subsequent dates.)

U3A rides. (10.00am various venues. See the Rides/Commutes page.)

Mondays, 11 and 25 September (Check the Events page for subsequent dates.)

September

Tuesday 5th: Commonwealth Games Baton Relay ride.

7.30am(!) at the Nab Rock, Mumbles. Join a ride along the Foreshore to support the baton bearer.

Details of more October and later events on the 'Events' page when known.

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