



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 50 Winter 2019/20

www.wheelrights.org.uk

Where are the diversion signs?



Wheelrights members have been proactive recently in drawing the Council's attention to blocked cycle routes like this one just up river from the Liberty Stadium. There was no diversion sign at this, the north end, although there was one at the other end.

While there is usually a good reason for the closure, diversions are not signed for cyclists as they are for motorists or even pedestrians. In fact I don't think I've seen a cycle diversion sign in these parts. (Just "cyclists dismount"!)

We just have to assume that pedestrian diversions also apply to cyclists.

STOP PRESS! Go to p. 8.

This issue

While (as usual) there are some worthy articles in this issue I am concerned that there is too little feedback from the membership; also that it would be good to have articles every now and then which entertain or challenge rather than simply inform. So to address the former could we have some letters please and for the latter something to entertain us?

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to me,

Articles on p. 2 & 3 relate to our AGM which is coming up on 2 December. A motion to change our name, described on p.3, should prompt correspondence.

New initiatives are the questionnaire on p. 2, which we hope you will complete, and a new tube style 'quality' map on p.4.

There follows Fes Simmons' description of *BikeAbility's* use of cargo bikes to relocate the Santander hire bikes, David Judd's experiences creating a greenway and my account of a ride to the Senedd to raise money. Of which, as John Sayce indicates on p.8, a lot is forthcoming.

David Naylor

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A Wheelrights Questionnaire

Both to help us tailor our activities to better suit the membership and to guide us how to attract more members we have prepared a questionnaire which we are asking you to complete. There are three ways to access it:

1. Go to <https://forms.gle/N7zGjx5ARHxSq5zU9> and complete it on-line.
2. Download either .doc or .pdf version from the Campaigns page of our website. The former is suitable if you prefer to complete it electronically by editing the file, the latter for printing and filling in manually. Both versions explain how to submit it.
3. Pick one up at the Green Fayre this weekend.

Please submit the completed questionnaire in time for our AGM on 2 December.

John Sayce

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Kingsway

The revamped Kingsway is expected to open soon. The “Urban Park”, which is part of it, is already open to pedestrians and cyclists, not only on Kingsway but also along Orchard Street, all the way to High Street Station. It just needs signing.

When the City and County of Swansea Council closed the previous bus lanes/bike routes *Wheelrights* started a campaign for new bike routes along the Kingsway. We were involved in consultations which have resulted in good provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

With a 20 mph speed limit and narrower lanes for motorists there should be a reduction in traffic using the Kingsway as a through route. There is increased space for walking and cycling, which is to be welcomed. They have also included more Advanced Stop Lines, which send a strong message to motorists that roads are also for bikes!

Where the new shared use path (illustrated) crosses minor road junctions ‘raised platforms’ have been provided, effectively making them speed humps.

Apart from lay-bys at bus stops buses will have to share the road, raising the possibility of traffic jams.

We can anticipate much discussion in the Evening Post and online, so lets get our cyclist’s voices heard! Please write to the Evening Post and/or your local Councilor to let them hear your thoughts.



Nick Guy

Looking east along the “Urban Park”.

Wheelrights AGM

This year's AGM takes place on Monday 2nd December from 7-9 pm at the Environment Centre, Pier St, Swansea SA1

This will be an important AGM for several reasons:

It will start with a presentation by Rhiannon Hardiman, Head of *Living Streets*. Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. They grew out of the 80 year old *Pedestrian Association* which successfully campaigned for zebra crossings and 30 mph speed limits.

Living Streets now helps local campaigns redesign streets and places to make them for people, not just cars; also to improve walking routes to schools, colleges etc. They are keen to link up and work with cycling campaign groups to promote Active Travel .

This will be followed by a motion to discuss at our AGM (as well as the usual formalities).

Longstanding member Chris Connick will propose the motion:

That the name **Wheelrights** be changed to **Swansea Cycling Campaign**.

Chris writes:

"Following on from the last newsletter and various conversations, I have been looking online at the ways in which cycle groups around the world title themselves, and the ease with which they can be found, especially in today's digital age.

There are very few who use clever word plays like *By-cycle*, or indeed *Wheelrights*. Those do not show up well in online searches, trying to be too clever perhaps. (Although I am quite attached to our name.) Even the webpage link to our organisation from the *Cycle to the Senedd* this year had us as *Wheelwrights!*

So let's keep it simple. Let's improve our visibility. Who we are, and what we do.

The advantages of **Swansea Cycling Campaign** are:

- Swansea implies Greater Swansea, ie Swansea Bay (including NPT).
- "Cycling" as opposed to "bicycles", covers the activity of CYCLING in all its aspects.
- "Campaign". This is what we do; working to lobby and raise awareness of issues which affect cycling, and promote cycling, in Swansea.
- Anything else (such as ' Bay' or ' Group') is redundant and detracts."

I believe a change of name would help us to reach out more effectively to a wider (younger) range of new supporters, and recruit more members.

No doubt there will be some discussion! Please come to the AGM and HAVE YOUR SAY.

Nick Guy

A Cycle Quality Map

This is the *Wheelrights* Swansea Cycle Network Quality Map (or Tube Map as we tend to call it) which was officially unveiled at the Council Cycling Action Plan meeting in October.

It was inspired by a presentation made in the Cardiff 'Space for Cycling Conference' which *Wheelrights* attended. One speaker had created such a map for Bath. He outlined how it can be used as a lobbying tool and encouraged us to develop our own.

Its purpose is to assess the quality of the current network, using a simple graduated colour scheme, where blue represents best and red worst. The objective is simply to 'turn the network blue'. Incidentally blue was chosen over green to make it colour blind friendly.

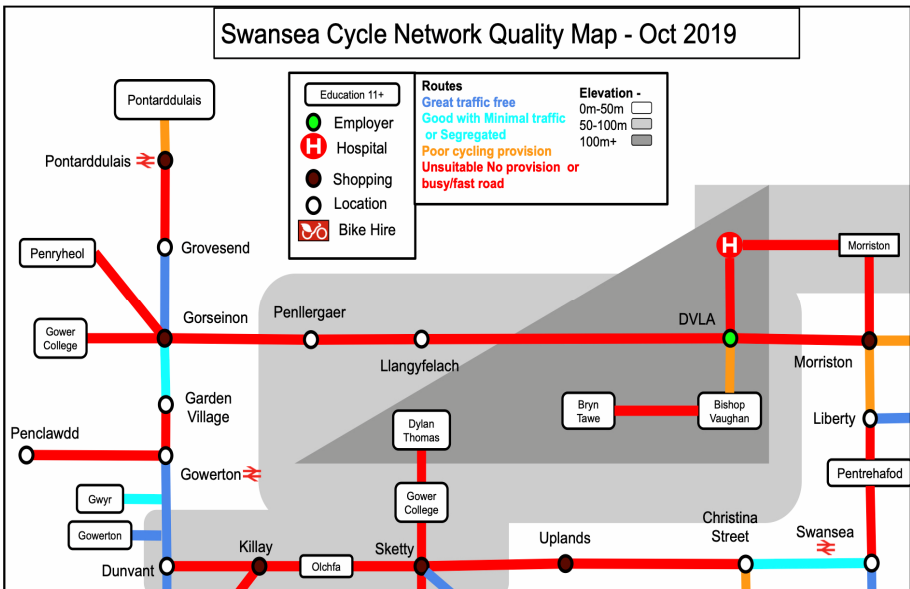
It should prove a useful tool in identifying priorities on the existing network and give a quick overall quality assessment that can be shared with decision makers or interested parties. It is intended to update the map as improvements and modifications are made.

The 'nodes' or stations have been chosen to align with 'Active Travel' destinations. The focus is on places people travel to eg educational establishments (over 11), business & residential areas, large employers, and hospitals.

The challenge is how to get a significant modal shift from cars to cycling and walking. A key barrier is the perception that the existing cycling infrastructure is unsafe.

Recent statistics from the European Cyclists' Federation found that 1% of the population were enthusiastic and fearless cyclists, 6-8% expressed confidence and 60% are interested but concerned about safety. They also found that 33% are just not going to cycle! To get that 60% on their bikes quality segregated infrastructure will be needed.

To view the full map visit <http://www.wheelrights.org.uk/SwanNwkMap.pdf>. Here we show just part of it. If you have any comments or suggestions please send them to the editor.



A new use for Cargo Bikes

Most cyclists will know about bike share schemes, which exist all over the world. Most readers will also know about Swansea University's successful bid for such a scheme to come to Swansea last year. The bikes are a great transport option and have proved popular with riders of all kinds: Students travelling between Singleton and Bay Campuses, commuters, tourists heading to the Mumbles, and people out and about of an evening are all using the bikes.

This year *BikeAbility Wales* has become the local managing organisation for the Swansea Santander Cycles, which means maintaining the bikes and checking the docking stations, and moving bikes from station to station, or into our workshop for repairs.

Bike shares are a great way of promoting cycling, and as getting more people onto two wheels is at the heart of *BikeAbility Wales'* aims, we are really excited to be able to contribute to this cause in a new way. After considering all the pros and cons, we decided the best way to move the bikes around would be ... on a bike! Swansea University's sustainability team, led by Jayne Cornelius, agreed and we have been provided with a Carla Cargo electric trailer. This can be fixed to any bike (illustrated), with the power

supply connected to pedal sensors on the bike, and can carry up to three bikes along with our tools. E-trailers are a really versatile way of transporting small to medium loads around the local area, and with a little extra power, it's really easy to ride. We calculated that as a result of using the e-trailer (powered by 100% green energy at Swansea University) instead of a van to carry out this work, we will contribute zero emissions to Swansea's air, and avoid driving around 7,000 miles per year which would mainly be in heavy traffic with multiple stops and starts at each docking station every day.



It is common to see this kind of transport being used in other countries around the world, and we believe Swansea really needs these kinds of alternatives to be visible to people in order to change deep-seated behaviours and improve local people's health and our environment. With the interconnected problems of poor health, environmental degradation and increasing poverty in mind, we hope that more people will be inspired to start using this kind of transport in the years to come. It's time to change!

Fes Simmons

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Wye Valley Greenway – a Phoenix arises!

Plans for a route between Chepstow and Monmouth along this beautiful Valley on the former railway have been long awaited. This difficult lower section was included in Sustrans Connect 2 programme over 10 years ago when planning permission was obtained from Monmouthshire County Council but, much to the angst of local supporters and no doubt pleasure of the objectors, the project failed to materialise.

John Grimshaw with his charity *Greenways and Cyclerroutes Ltd.* in partnership with the *National Diving and Activity Centre* (NDAC) took it on free of charge. The scheme comprises construction of a path from the National Diving and Activity Centre at Dayhouse Quarry, Tidenham, 4 km north towards Tintern, to connect with the 3km forest riverside path which leads to the Wireworks Bridge at Tintern.

This project is not one for the faint hearted! The work includes lifting 2km of track (half in a tunnel), re propping a road bridge, safety fencing on the nearby A48 bridge and drainage works at the Tintern end.

Complications included bats in the tunnel and a SSSI north of it with rare grasses.

A planning application in January has not yet been approved largely because of the bat licence procedures. It will hopefully be approved in December, so the planned work camp this September had to exclude work on the tunnel and SSSI and concentrate on vital safety and maintenance work. In this project I was delighted that John Davies of *Pembrey Plant* (who lifted the track on the Swiss Valley scheme around 20 years ago) was taken on and expertly removed the track just in time to enable this project to proceed (See picture). Without planning permission grants could not be sought, so this preliminary work has been funded by donations from volunteers.



I recommend the work camps as a totally rewarding experience. Around 20 volunteers at any one time and expert leadership can achieve remarkable progress. We had volunteers from all over the country, some for the whole 9 days and some for just a few. All meals were provided by John's brother Chris and wife Claire (for a small daily charge) and camping, which included a few wigwams, was provided free. We worked all day from 8am to 6 pm so that after dinner it was dark and we were ready for bed by 9pm.

Teams were set up to clear vegetation, erect field and safety steel fences, do pointing, replace masonry on the wing walls of Bishton Lane Bridge and replace the props. The most urgent work was to excavate foundations for permanent bridge props (Pictured over page.) to replace the temporary ones which prevented access under the bridge. This had to be ready Monday morning for a concrete pour to give time for curing before the props could be replaced. I was engaged on this work, hence the focus on it here. The two machines did the site clearance and access work in the main. John (*Pembrey Plant*) assisted in the prop relocation with great accuracy on the telehandler (Forklift truck with telescopic forks.). The



teams on the safety fencing had to dig around 50 holes for steel posts in difficult stony ground, no mean feat as the location was near inaccessible.

A whole raft of materials had to be ordered including steel for the safety fence in advance ready for use. For this Caroline, a fellow trustee of the charity, did amazing work both before and during the camp. The volunteers' work was hugely appreciated by John and Caroline and indeed Darren Bryce of NDAC who provided the accommodation and some materials.

It was a memorable week that all who took part will treasure in the future. Whilst the route is not ready for use, we have made great progress by carrying out these preliminary works and have transformed the site ready for the start proper once planning permission is obtained. Some work will be by contractor and a further work camp is planned for next May, so make a note and join us in this exciting work.

The southerly section towards Chepstow from NDAC's centre is being planned for early construction and is more straightforward than heavens. NDAC show films on their outside screens (for drive in) and host a variety of activities including Zip wires and a 3G swing as well as offering diving experience, well worth a visit if you have not been there already.

Details of the project can be found on www.greenwaysandcycleroutes.org.

David Judd

Cycling on the Senedd

Despite the publicity given by Nick Guy in the last Newsletter only John Sayce and I from *Wheelrights* joined this ride. It was on 2 October and went from Pedal Powers' base in Bute Park to the Senedd. Its purpose was to lobby the Welsh Government for more money for a range of sustainable measures (Spelt out in Nick's article.) It was a fine day, there being a break in the late September - October 'monsoon'.

We took the train to Cardiff Central from where it is a couple of miles up the Taff Trail to Pedal Power's HQ. From there, soon after 12.00, a peloton of more than 100 cyclists slowly pedaled the five miles to the Senedd. We were led by Huw Irranca-Davies AM, chair of the Cross Party Active Travel Group. Lee Waters, AM and Deputy Transport Minister, was also on the ride.

At the Senedd there were short speeches, first by Huw followed by others, a key one from Health Minister Vaughan Gething AM (pictured) who emphasized active travel and the need for people to get out of their cars. Gwenda Owen and Friends of the Earth also spoke. 14 organizations attended the rally, including several from Cycling UK, Duncan Dollimore amongst them.

David Naylor



STOP PRESS

It has just been announced that the Welsh Government has doubled the amount of money it gives to Swansea Council for Active Travel this year. That's an extra £2.7m on top of the £2.8m awarded earlier in the year. This will be spent on new shared use paths including:

- Gors Ave. to Gower College.
- Widening existing shared path on N. side of Loughor Bridge..
- Llangyfelach to Penllergaer alongside the A48.
- Redesign of the new bridge over Oystermouth Rd (to St David's) to allow cycling.
- Improvements to the Mayals Rd/ Mumbles Rd and Gors Ave/Carmarthen Rd junctions to allow safer crossing

Swansea thus becomes the first Council in Wales to spend £20 per head of population on Active Travel this financial year!

This is

FANTASTIC NEWS

John Sayce

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Forthcoming events

(See also the 'Events' page of www.wheelrights.org.uk.)

Green Fayre

10.00am – 4.00pm on Saturday and Sunday, 23/24 November. *Wheelrights* have a stall.

Wheelrights AGM

7.00pm on 2 December in the Environment Centre, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY. There will be a presentation by Rhiannon Hardiman, head of *Living Streets*.

Wheelrights Christmas Dinner

7.00 for 7.30pm, on Thursday, 5 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 7 December, Environment CentreCafé, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY. Thereafter first Saturday in the month (but check the 'Events' page).

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Merry Christmas!