



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 56 Summer 2021

www.wheelrights.org.uk

Cargo without Carbon

This BikeAbility e-cargo trike plus trailer was spotted on NCR 4 on its way between hubs to relocate Santander hire bikes. It can transport as many bikes as can a van; its CO₂ emissions are a fraction of that from a van, even an electric one.

Clearly this is part of the future. The Welsh Gov., in a proposed trial of e-bikes, are making a move in the right direction. You can read about this on p. 6



This issue

Our secretary kicks off noting the poor response to the request for feedback on the proposal for a new name. By telling us about his own experience he makes the point that something needs to be done to raise our profile.

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to David Naylor by mid August.
(Email: david@davidjnaylor.plus.com)

On p.3 Allyson whets our thirst (if that's the right expression) for the Cappuccino rides, now underway again thanks to the easing of Lockdown.

On p.4 I summarise how the Council plan to spend £3.3m on Active Travel. Then some local news, with more on p. 8.

The Strava article on p.6 will perhaps surprise – Strava of interest to Civil Engineers?

On p. 5 we have an article most pertinent to Active Travel from a new member. Then in the same vein on p.7 an article of particular interest to those with a young family.

Further to our secretary's plea could I also have feedback please? On the website and/or this Newsletter. I am happy to publish correspondence but rarely receive any.

David Naylor

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What's in a name?

Consider the following alternatives to *Wheelrights* for a name which describes who we are:

- Swansea Bay cycle campaign group (aka *Wheelrights*)
- Wheelrights*, the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group
- Swansea Bay Cycling (or Cyclists)
- Swansea Cycle (or Cycling or Cyclist) Forum
- Swansea *Wheelrights*

These are some of the suggestions I have had regarding a possible name change. I received just four responses to my recent e-mail requesting our members' views on this matter. These were three-to-one in favour of keeping our current name, i.e. *Wheelrights*. Attendance at the 18th May 'virtual' public meeting was rather low so it was agreed that instead of making a decision at the meeting (as originally intended), we should include an item in the Newsletter to generate the response needed to make an informed decision. Hence this piece.

Currently, my Google search of "Swansea Cycling" brings up a range of websites on the first page, none of which include <https://www.wheelrights.org.uk>; but it did appear on page 5. The thinking is that by means of a new name, and changes to the website, search engines should more easily find us, although our webmaster informs me that the code has recently been upgraded to address this.

As a newcomer to *Wheelrights*, rather than offer an opinion on this issue I will share my personal story which underlines the need for us to be better known. I moved to Swansea in 1985 and throughout the years I have greatly enjoyed the wonderful possibilities for cycling in and around Swansea. Admittedly, the demands of a busy academic career limited my ability to get involved in cycling in any serious way. I must also confess that I did not actively search for cycling organisations. After retiring from full-time work in 2016 cycling became a daily activity and I became more aware of the multi-dimensional benefits of cycling – not just to the individual but to society as a whole. I am now much more appreciative of the need to raise awareness among the local community, and to campaign for more and better cycling facilities – all the things *Wheelrights* is well placed to promote.

It was through a chance meeting with David Judd, and subsequent meetings with David Naylor and Nick Guy, that I came to know about *Wheelrights*. I would have happily joined many years ago had I known about it and therein lies the moral of my story. I cannot help thinking that there are hundreds of people like me (cycle along the Swansea foreshore on any sunny day and you will see some of them!) who would happily join such a nice club for the cost of two cups of coffee.

So, what can we do to raise our profile? Answers on a (digital) postcard please! And why do we need more members? Well, as with every aspect of society, wider participation increases the pool of ideas and talents, and enhances our ability to influence policy. These are good times for cyclists and cycling; the Active Travel agenda in Wales is beginning to take shape and we should make the most of the opportunities it will bring.

Dareyoush Rassi

—oOo—

Cappuccinos in 2021

A background to these rides are the classes *Wheelrights* used to give to "teach" adults to ride a bike.

I could understand why these were required for older people who maybe had never ridden when they were younger, or people who may have had a cycling accident and were now nervous to get back on their bikes, but it always surprised me when younger people turned up. I wondered why these kind of people seemed to need our help and couldn't just get on, and pedal away? Anyway, I think we did a really good job, but at the end of the day, we just sent people on their way to "enjoy their bikes."

I know that some people just won't walk or cycle by themselves, partly because of safety but also as some just don't like exercising alone.

There has always been a gap in shorter local led rides so we decided to set up the Cappuccino rides with the title partly explaining what we were about. They are usually around 20-25 miles with at least one cappuccino along the way.

Over the years we've had a regular group of people joining us, but then Covid struck and because of the on/off of restrictions last year we never really got going. So Tuesday, 18th May, saw them re-launched, when 6 of us ignored the showers forecast and ventured out on our bikes.

We cycled up the Clyne path to Gowerton and on the new path to Kingsbridge and on to Grovesend. After a quick huddle to discuss if everyone would be happy to do a short bit on the road, we turned left at the main street in Grovesend and on to Penyrheol. Continuing through Loughor brought us to the beautiful Loughor foreshore with it's picnic area where we had lunch. (Pictured.) Then we cycled back on NCR 4 with the aforementioned cappuccino being consumed at Blackpill.

Our ride turned into a 24 mile round trip with a few doing slightly more as they continued to ride home. It was a great start and a perfect cycling day with NO RAIN!

These rides are normally on a Tuesday or Wednesday every two weeks or so with the next one planned for Wednesday 2nd June to the Neath canal. Everyone is most welcome. Please get in touch, my contact details are on *Wheelrights* website.

Allyson Evans



The Council's Plans

At the last CAP (Cycle Action Progress) meeting (on 18 May) we learnt how the Council plan to spend a total of £3.3m on Active Travel in the next year. Their allocation comprises funding for the construction of four new routes and for the survey and design of a number of others.

Since the Council's name for a route often differs from Wheelrights', in the following I give their name first followed by Wheelrights in (); then in [] the acronym identifying the route on one of the four maps on the Infrastructure page of Wheelrights website, with the relevant map indicated in (). The four new routes are as follows:

- Clasement Road (Llangyfelach – DVLA) [LD] (ne).
- Townhill Northern Link, aka Ravine (Gors Ave. – Townhill) [GT] (se).
- Morriston South Link (Tirpenry) [TI] (ne).
- Jersey Road (Jersey Road) [JR] (ne).

The survey and design routes comprise:

- Pontarddulais Link. (Gowerton – Pontarddulais) [GP3] (nw).
- Penllergaer – Gorseinon. (Penllergaer – Gorseinon) [PG] (nw).
- Penllergaer – Fforestfach (Penllergaer – Cadle Mill) [PC] (ne).
- Upper Forest Way (Samlet Rd – NCR43) [SA] (ne).
- Morriston North Link (Not sure which WR route.).
- Walter & Sketty Roads (Uplands) [UP] (se).
- DVLA – Morriston Hosp. (Morriston H. – DVLA) [MD] (ne)
- Pont-y-Cob Road (Culfor Rd – Elba?) [CE?] (nw).
- Cwm Level Rd – Clase (Cwm Level Rd – DVLA) [CD] (ne).
- Gors Ave. Improvement (Gors Ave.) [GA1] (se).

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Mayals Road progresses

This photo, taken in mid May, shows the foundation for the north side hybrid cycle track near its upper end. What looks like granite sets comprise the 125 mm kerb which will separate the track from the carriageway. The kerb is interrupted between the crane and the more distant workman. This is odd as there is no property entrance at this point.



David Naylor

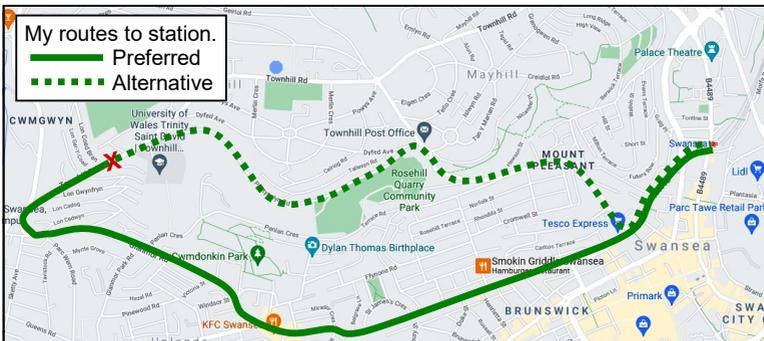
A Townhill - Station commute

My regular trip to work pre-Coronavirus involved travelling from just off Townhill Rd to the train station shortly after seven each morning and returning about 12 hours later. I've experienced a key theme for cyclists – the need to plan my journey in detail to manage my interaction with traffic and so reduce my chance of injury. This has led me to try a variety of options, and so I've acquired a broad knowledge of cycling around Townhill, Mayhill, Cwmbwrla, Uplands, and Mount Pleasant!

The journey in the morning is relatively straightforward. Join Glanmor Rd, straight through Uplands, down to Walter Rd, and straight onto the station. (See map below.) The new road layout in the town centre makes it easier to take the lane by the police station and make the right turn. I have however received admonishing blasts of the horn from car drivers for being in the centre of the lane on Walter Rd. I've adopted the primary position as twice I've had car doors open in front of me on that stretch. An alternative route is to head slightly up the hill and then turn down Pantycelyn Rd. The expansive view across the Bay makes one feel glad to be alive, and I would recommend it to anyone. The onward journey through Mount Pleasant is a fast adrenaline rush downhill. 'On platform' bike storage at the station is safe – I haven't had an issue in nearly 20 years of using it.

The journey home in the evening is far more challenging. Taking the outward journey in reverse is difficult, with heavier traffic. I've tried several other routes, including via Carmarthen Rd, with a variety of dangerous surfaces, poor driving, and concerns about personal safety. I haven't yet found a route that I'm comfortable with, and that's before you have to contend with the west wind blasting rain into your face! My experiences contrast strongly with those of car drivers. No wonder so many people choose to drive around Swansea. It's the simple option – you jump in your car without any planning and take the shortest route possible to the destination. It makes sense on an individual level but clearly doesn't in aggregate, as the bumper-to-bumper daytime queues testify.

Fortunately, there are many other journeys in which the bike is by far the best option, and with a little bit of practice I've got the routes honed. Within about 10 minutes I can go from my garage door to my doctor, dentist, the Ashleigh Rd sports centre, and the seafront. The routes generally go through Singleton Park and some of the quieter local roads. In the Park I'm just one of the many people using and enjoying the space. It would be difficult to do these journeys faster by car, more stressful, and then there's the issue of scarce parking space at the end. Instead I arrive relaxed and in a very predictable and short time. There's



always the challenge of cycling up the hill home, but I'm battle hardened now, it's great cardio, and there's always the option of an electric bike!

John Britton

Strava for Active Travel

Strava is best known for its use by cyclists, runners and walkers to record their routes together with times and compare these with others who have used the route. What is not so well known is that it can also be used by local authorities to plan active travel routes.

Strava Metro provides a free service which LAs can use. The city of Frankfurt in Germany provides an example. Strava Metro data gave vital insight into the number of pedestrian and cycle trips on a busy footpath connected to a cycle path in the centre of the city. Based on this data changes were made including a decision to drop the kerb in places to improve access for cyclists.

The data can provide information about flows and usage at different times, thereby allowing before and after comparisons to be made. It allows the success or otherwise of schemes to be assessed. It is much more comprehensive than that provided by traffic counters.

Because the data is so extensive analysis of it is a challenge. Strava Metro are apparently addressing this.

A spokesman says that they get requests from advertisers and coffee shop owners who have a vested interest in the data. He claims that those who want to use it for financial gain won't get access. He makes the altruistic claim that it is purely for the benefit of society. He also advises that the data is anonymous, even though demographic breakdown according to age and gender can be provided.

It appears that Strava can be used to help provide safer infrastructure, improve access and increase active travel. It's not just for fun use or for those with a competitive bent.

This note is based on the article "Strava Metro" in the "Innovative Thinking" section of *New Civil Engineer*, April 2021.

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Welsh Gov. supports E-bikes

In a Zoom presentation to *Wheelrights* on 18 May Tim John, Sustran Cymru's Development Officer, described a Government scheme for the introduction of e-bikes and e-trikes.

Sustrans have obtained funding from the Welsh Gov. for a pilot scheme for a year from March 2022 to provide e-bikes and cargo e-bikes to a number of Welsh LAs. These bikes, which will comprise a variety of makes, will be loaned free of charge (to suitable people decided by the local community) for the purpose of assessing both their role and the make. Swansea is to have 20 e-bikes and 8 cargo e-bikes.

In the Spring Newsletter we learnt from Leonie Ramont how the Mount Pleasant E-bike project received funding for two e-bikes and an e-trike, and a bike shelter and charging point in Montpellier Terrace. A formal opening is expected in the near future. (Check the Events page.) Also in that issue Hamish Osborn tells us how his cargo e-bike allows him to leave his car at home.

David Naylor

For sale: Custom build Revolution Country Traveller Touring bike. 19" frame to suit individual between about 5'9 to 6'2. Hand built Dave Hinde Mavic 319 wheel set. High quality components, Deore XT and Tiagra 24 speed integrated brake gear shifters. Serviced locally in May 2021. £400. If interested email wheelrights32@gmail.com.



Transporting a Child

I've been transporting my son Llywelyn by bike since he was nine months old, and since he is now 11 it is probably a good time to take stock about lessons learned.

The first purchase was a second-hand *Croozer* trailer (Pictured.) for about £100. These still exist, but are now £574 new. Ouch! Since I ride on the road, the important thing was that it was not a 'tent on wheels', but had a proper tubular frame. The second purchase was a kick-stand for the bike, because I couldn't keep looking round for a bench every time he started crying! The trailer was a huge success, and he spent a large part of his time in it asleep. It carried all of his baby stuff, and we used to leave things in the pockets for him to find, like books and treats. We only stopped using it when he was five and he started rubbing his shoes against the rear wheel. The *Croozer* has a water-proof window, which means he stays dry when it rains. It also has a flyscreen underneath, which is mandatory because anything you ride through goes straight in his face. We sold it for £80, therefore total expenditure £20.

After the trailer came the tag-along, but the choice was limited because my bike has a rack. Therefore I had to get one with a hump – the *Raleigh Avenir tag-along* pictured. This was hopeless, verging on dangerous, as the child often shifts their weight from one side to the other. As a result we often nearly hit parked cars. I would have preferred a *Weeride Pro Pilot*, which was specifically developed by someone to avoid these issues, but it didn't clear my rack. Where else could I put the swimming kit?



By this time Llywelyn had his own small bike, so we bought a *Trailgator*. This held his front wheel off the ground, and in theory it's detachable so he can switch between solo riding and towed, but that never happened. Sadly it has pretty much the same problem. The mobile joint was between the bar and Llywelyn's bike. Replacing this eased the problem but did not solve it. This shows how difficult it is to connect two bikes together when the passenger weighs over 20kg. These things are not designed for a 7 year old.

Fortunately it wasn't long until Llywelyn's legs were long enough to reach the pedals of the tandem, and this brings us right up to date. It would have been sooner if the tandem had originally been bought with a child in mind, or had been fitted with kiddie-crank, but it is the correct way to carry a 20kg+ 'passenger'. If I had the time over again, I would go straight from trailer to child-back tandem. Not only is it much safer, and therefore enjoyable, but you only have to lock *one* bike.



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Bill Gannon

Cycle Stands in Pennard

These cycle stands were installed earlier this year. They are in the forecourt of the Outlook Café; that is the café near the roundabout in Southgate landward from Three Cliff's Café. I don't know whether or not it's restricted to customers, but I'm sure the proprietor, Steve Lancey would be pleased to serve you a coffee, or whatever, if you leave your bike there.

David Naylor



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Forthcoming events

With the Covid restrictions eased some return to normality is possible: Cappuccino rides have restarted, and *Wheelrights* Routes Group and other meetings can now take place face to face.

As usual details can be found on the 'Events' page of www.wheelrights.org.uk. Note: Santander Bikes are offering a free first 60 minutes on the hire of their bikes during Bike Week (30 May - 4 June). To register visit www.santandercycles.co.uk/swansea.

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Now that Lockdown's eased

No longer need we stay at home
And meet on Zoom or ride alone;
No more do things all on or own,
Now that Lockdown's eased.

Wheelrights can meet in pub or bar
And find new routes both near and far
To help us all avoid the car,
Now that Lockdown's eased.

Cappuccino rides can once more,
Coffee fuelled, new routes explore,
Just like they used to do before,
Now that Lockdown's eased.

Covid, it seems, is here to stay;
It simply will not go away.
Let's hope that there'll come the day
When Lockdown's gone for good.

Rolyan