



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 60 Summer 2022

www.wheelrights.org.uk

Can the new administration deliver?

With the election again putting Labour in control of the Council *Wheelrights* are hoping for a continuation of their support for Active Travel and also that they will have taken on board the need for better consultation ... with us of course!

The construction of new cycle routes is continuing. A new shared use path now runs on the south side of the A48 east from J 46 towards the DVLA. And in the NW work is in progress on extending the Lliw Valley path towards Pontarddulais. The photo, taken in March, shows where it joins the north end of the existing path at Station Road near Grovesend.



This issue

Little, if anything, having been done to implement the recommendations of a May 2018 workshop on cycle provision on the Gower Peninsula another was held in March to follow this up. I kick off with a report on this.

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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)

There then follow two very different articles: first Caroline describes her new role as our planning informant, and then an article of scientific interest (for a change!) from our Secretary.

The issue ends with an account of our farewell to Mike Cherry who has stood down from *BikeAbility (Wales)* having run it effectively for many years.

In between, three pages are devoted to the Easter Bunny Hop ride organised by our President (with a Welsh translation on the Special Events page of our website). Two of the articles were written by children who were on the ride.

David Naylor

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Gower routes Workshop

This workshop was held on 12 March. It was a follow up to *Wheelrights*' 1 May 2018 Rural Routes Workshop, the recommendations from which have not yet been implemented. Its purpose therefore was to review and if necessary revise the previous recommendations and then look for ways to get them implemented.

The nine who attended included representatives of the Council, Gower businesses and ramblers. These were respectively cllr Lyndon Jones (Bishopston Ward), Roy Church (Gower Heritage Centre) and Bob Denley (Chair of Swansea Ramblers). Jenni Nellist, representing the British Horse Society, had hoped to attend but was unfortunately unwell. *Wheelrights* member Hamish Osborn, who had led the previous workshop, also led this one. He was wearing his Rural Development Board 'hat', which organisation he chairs,

We first reviewed the Peninsula routes we had recommended previously. The only change was to suggest the addition of an off-road route skirting Cefn Bryn west from Penmaen parallel to the busy A4118. This has been added as Route G06b to the map of Peninsula routes. This can be found in the "Rural Routes" section on the Infrastructure page of *Wheelrights* website, as can also notes of the workshop.

A key feature of the plan is that it would provide cycle friendly routes circling the Peninsula and provide north south links across it. This would include a route along the west side of Rhossilli Down, where there is no road, (The photo shows where it would go above Rhossilli beach.) and a north-south link between Llethrid and Parkmill.



The question: "Who are these routes for?"

was addressed. We concluded that they were predominantly for tourists and for leisure use. Some also had an active travel

role, and we identified routes to Swansea from Pennard in the south and Penclawdd in the north as high priority active travel routes. We had ordinary cyclists in mind when selecting the routes, not mountain bikers for whom there is a network of routes separate from those shown on our map. The routes should therefore have an acceptable surface, either tarmac or a surface suitable for both cyclists and horse riders. We accepted that a balance was needed between the use of existing roads and separate off-road paths. We recognised that off-road alternatives to the busier roads would be needed, in particular the B4295 on North Gower and A4118 on South Gower. We also noted the need to reduce car use on the Peninsula and supported a recommendation in a report by Capita that a shuttle service of small electric buses be provided.

To get our recommendations onto Swansea Council's agenda we have drawn their attention to the key points.

David Naylor

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Wheelrights and Planning

Back in September 2021 I agreed to John Sayce's suggestion to keep an eye on planning developments in Swansea in relation to cycling and Active Travel.

My task is to read through planning applications, assess whether they meet the requirements of national and local planning policy and submit comments to CCS's Planning department thereby preventing the development of buildings and sites which do not adequately take into account the needs of cyclists and pedestrians.

With up to about 50 planning applications per week keeping an eye on them is potentially onerous but CCS's weekly summary of registered planning applications (<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/5851/Weekly-planning-applications-and-decision-lists>.) made this much easier .

The vast majority relate to those submitted by or on behalf of householders, so I gloss over those and focus on large scale developments such as housing estates or variations of conditions, where a developer is seeking to amend a previously agreed planning proposal (eg to reduce of the number of cycle storage places).

The relevant national policy framework which relates to how developers and local authorities take Active Travel into account in their planning applications is "Planning Policy Wales edition 11" (PPW). Its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The document "Building Better Places: Placemaking and the Covid-19 Recovery, July 2020" supplements PPW and increases the emphasis on placemaking and green infrastructure. On p.17 it states:

"With exercise and social contact so vital to our health and well-being, the pandemic has reinforced the need for well-designed, people orientated streets. This forms the basis of the 'active and social streets' policy in PPW, which is supported by Manual for Streets6 and its companion guide Manual for Streets 2. PPW is clear that the design of streets should be based on urban design principles and not the conventional engineering-led approach in the now superseded Design Bulletin 32.

Planners should continue to challenge orthodoxies, mind- sets and development proposals which are based on outdated practices and standards, such as those in Design Bulletin 32, and promote creativity, joint working and street designs that respond to the guidance in Manual for Streets. The Welsh Government will support decisions of this nature to help create better places."

The City & County of Swansea (CCS) has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance which, amongst other things, provides guidance on how the policies of the Swansea Local development Plan (LDP) should be applied.⁴

It is early days in my Planning Eyes and Ears role and I am still getting to grips with the system, but I hope that it will lead to *Wheelrights* further increasing its influence in ensuring that provision for cyclists and pedestrians is fully embedded in new developments.

Caroline Carter

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The Stability of bicycles (Part 1)

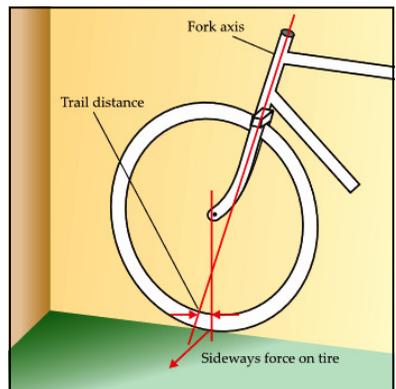
Have you ever wondered how 80 kg of muscle and bone (not to mention all the other stuff), arranged in an odd irregular shape, can remain balanced on two narrow wheels, travelling at various speeds on all sorts of terrain? As a physicist I cannot help trying to find answers to such questions. In physics, a proper answer to any question involves a full mathematical analysis but here I will try to avoid mathematics as much as possible.

Bicycle design has evolved over nearly two hundred years with numerous incremental improvements based on practical experience. Many components of the bicycle were added, modified and fine-tuned by craftsmen and enthusiasts around the world, mostly by trial and error. In many respects theory is now trying to catch up with practice and scientists have been carrying out interesting experiments to disentangle the many factors which make the bicycle such a stable and versatile machine.

Let's start with a stationary bicycle which, I'm sure everyone will agree, is impossible to keep upright. The condition of stability for an object at rest is that its centre of gravity must remain above its base. If you tilt a chair so that its centre of gravity (somewhere near the centre of the seat) moves beyond the area defined by the four legs, it will tip over. The narrow base of a bicycle (the area between the tyre contact points with the ground) is why a stationary bicycle is unstable.

A moving bicycle, however, is totally different and the faster the bicycle moves the more stable it feels, which tempts the explanation that bicycle stability is purely due to the gyroscopic action of the wheels. (Gyroscopic action is a consequence of the principle of conservation of angular momentum. A spinning wheel tends to maintain its axis of rotation; in order to change the direction of that axis a force has to be exerted.) Another factor which may be reasonably assumed to contribute to bicycle stability, is the humans' remarkable ability to maintain balance within a gravitational field.

However, scientists constructed a bicycle in which the gyroscopic action was cancelled by counter-rotating wheels and yet remained stable even without a rider. Clearly there are other important factors. For example, the ability to turn the front wheel is vital. Apparently it is impossible to ride a bike with a fixed front wheel. (I do not recommend you try it!) The forward tilt of the front fork causes the point of contact of the front wheel to be slightly behind the steering axis, illustrated in the diagram. This so-called castor effect is why the turning of the handlebars to retain balance is almost automatic, and indeed why 'hands off' riding is possible.



In the second part [Ed: *in the next Newsletter, all being well.*] I will consider the forces involved in riding a bike and the interesting dynamics of going around corners.

As a teaser for part 2, here is a trick question: what is the force that causes bicycles to move forward? (Hint: it is the same force that causes cars to move forward.)

—o0o—

Dareyoush Rassi

Easter Bunny Hop Family Bike Ride (1)

We were fortunate indeed that in between days of poor weather the sun shone especially for us. At Blackpill our first group of 13 riders assembled (See picture overleaf.) and after a brief safety intro David Naylor led us off along the Foreshore to our town pick up (another 10) at the Sail Bridge. As on the Xmas Ride we had the benefit of our rescue Mad Hatters with a vehicle and bike rack to follow and encourage us, and *Wheelrights* members marshalling en route.

It was a fun ride, not too far (11miles each way), mostly flat and at a modest pace. We had only a few in fancy dress but a good mix of ages with family groups and solo riders. My Easter Bunny outfit (hastily sewn together the week before) was mottled black and white and whilst noticeable was not very rabbit like.

We rode up the Swansea Valley on the scenic Route 43 following the River Tawe and canal to our lunch stop at the Heritage Centre in Coed Gwilym Park , where refreshments were provided (and a lot of history of the area). After lunch and a chat we returned to Swansea along the same route. Whilst we had one puncture our rescue team, which provides backup (and encouragement), was not needed and all rode home safely.

I subsequently asked whether any riders would give a report back and we had three volunteers. Adda (7), Niamh (11) and Nic (who is a little older!). These follow in the next two pages and on the 'Specials' page on *Wheelrights* website there is a Welsh translation of Adda's article. I comment briefly on each below. They reflect the friendly ambience and enjoyment which was evident with lots of smiles ...and of course a real sense of achievement for those very young (and not so young) who don't normally cycle far.

Adda's family took part and he gave the ride 10 out of 10. It was slightly marred by wind blown sand on the seafront and his dad's puncture, but he said his dad, using mummy's tools and supervision (with Miri!) managed to catch up with him and brother Kenzie at lunch. He also added some advice for the next ride hopefully in the summer.

Niamh was full of praise for the ride. She was visiting her Uncle and Aunt (Chris and Dawn) in Swansea and with her parents joined us at the Marina. All the team were lovely she said and made us feel safe whilst riding. The route was scenic and the pace nice and steady, suitable for all ages. Arriving at Clydach they were ready for their delicious cheese and crisp sandwiches (!) and after refuelling returned home. Niamh really enjoyed the ride and hopes *Wheelrights* organises more amazing bike rides like this in future...hint!

Nic thought that after a winter of inactivity it would be a good idea to get his pedalling legs going. He enjoyed passing through the Copper Quarter and on to Clydach. The Heritage Centre and its display of plaques commemorating the former cottage hospital was of particular interest. He was complimentary of the ride as enjoyable with manageable gradients and a leisurely pace, allowing opportunities to socialise and chat; but wished he had worn his padded shorts...

In conclusion: another enjoyable event and my thanks to our marshals (and the Mad Hatters' backup) and of course all the riders who took part.

David Judd (Ride Organiser)

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Easter Bunny Hop Family Bike Ride (2)

So I dusted off my touring bike, after a long winter of inactivity. I thought the 'Bunny Hop' ride from Blackpill to Clydach on the riverside cycle path was the ideal opportunity to get my pedalling legs on and start to get my fitness back. Accompanied by the Easter Bunny (attracting curious looks) and the Mad Hatter marshalling the recovery team, we set off, at a leisurely pace from Blackpill to the Marina, along the riverside (Sustrans NCR 43) to the Copper Quarter and on to Clydach.



We stopped at the Heritage Centre in Coedgwilym Park (Pictured – I am on the right.), which has an interesting display of plaques commemorating various dignitaries and patrons from the old cottage hospital. The Centre provides tea and coffee and shortbread biscuits, sufficient to fuel the ride home.

The *Wheelrights'* rides are occasional but most enjoyable events with a strong accent on inclusivity and enjoyment. The age range was 7 to 87. The routes are always enjoyable with manageable gradients and pace, providing opportunities to socialise and chat.

I wish I'd worn my padded shorts but it got me back in the saddle in time for the better weather. Thanks to those who organised it.

Nic Bowler

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Easter Bunny Hop Family Bike Ride (3)

On Sunday 10th April, the amazing team at *Wheelrights* organised a wonderful family bike ride from Blackpill to Clydach. At the time, I was visiting my Uncle and Aunt in Swansea and joined the ride at the marina with my mum and dad. One of the organisers, David, turned up in a rabbit/cow costume which was hilarious! All of the team were lovely and made us all feel safe whilst riding. The route was beautiful and scenic. The pace was nice and steady.

When we arrived at Clydach we were all very hungry and ready for our lunch. I had a yummy cheese and crisp sandwich (which many people disagree with - crisps in a sandwich, but I found it particularly delicious!).

After refuelling, we set off again on our journey home, somehow I managed to get right to the back behind David the rabbit. It was a very warm day and I could barely keep up with him – how did he manage the ride in that costume? I will never know!



Niamh Burke (age 11)

Adda's report follows; it is in Welsh on the "Specials" page of Wheelrights website.

We rode down from Sketty, we stopped at Blackpill. Then we went to Clydach. We went along the front to start with. I liked going on the mtb track. But it was very windy and it blew sand in our eyes which my sister (Miri) didn't like and she cried a bit.



My dad got a puncture, so my brother (Kenzie, age 16.) rode with me behind the 83-year-old rabbit (Daddy thought he looked like an Old English Spot rabbit!) and helped me on the ride because daddy had to fix his puncture and mummy (and Miri) stayed with him to supervise. And daddy was using mummy's tools. But they didn't catch up with us until we were AT CLYDACH! Which was annoying because they had all the sweets and the lunch. I think Kenzie was happy because he saw his friends at Clydach. And we saw grandma and grandad and Bruno the dog. Grandad didn't do the ride with us this time because he's got a bad leg because the nurse took a big chunk out of it! Riding back was hard but I was happy because mummy and daddy were there. I wasn't sad that I didn't have a costume this time because they make me hot. If you do a summer ride it should be beach themed so people could dress up as sharks, seagulls, crabs, ice creams, sandcastles and buckets and spades. I give the hills 8/10, some were very steep but none were very difficult. This whole ride was 10/10! .

Adda Norris (age 7)

Mike Cherry's Farewell

Those of you familiar with the excellent Bike charity *BikeAbility* in Dunvant, would doubtless have had dealings with the Manager, Mike Cherry.

Mike announced last year that the time was coming to finally retire. Of course, *BikeAbility*, along with *Wheelrights*, came up with a bike related event to send Mike on his way.

The day began at Ripples café at 10:30 where the group of cyclists gathered for the start of the day's events. The convoy proceeded along the promenade to the official Boules area in the Marina. Here numerous games of boules were played and to get really into the spirit, a few of the participants had dressed in the obligatory French attire.

18 of us finally ended up at the Belle Vue bistro for an excellent meal. All too soon it was time to bid farewell to Mike for one last time. A good day was had by all and we wish Mike all the very best in his retirement.



To ease Mike into his new lifestyle, *Wheelrights* and members had a very generous collection, presenting Mike with a joint National Trust membership. The picture shows him taking advantage of his new membership in a visit to the National Trust Gardens at Coleton Fishacre near Dartmouth. We are delighted to see that Mike has already made use of it and we hope there will be many more such visits.

Chris Walsh and Dawn Aplin

Forthcoming events

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

Wheelrights meeting.

7.00pm on 31 May, in the Environment Centre, Rob Penn author of "It's all about the Bike" will give a talk by Zoom. Contact our Secretary for the link to view it on Zoom.

Wheelrights Routes Group meeting/rides.

These are usually at 10.00am monthly and alternate between the Environment Centre and Ripples Café. The next is scheduled for early June.

Cappuccino Rides.

These are now underway. Details on the Events page.

Other

Bike week is from 6 to 12 June. A Wheelrights ride is planned for 8 June.