

GOWER CYCLING FESTIVAL 2010

a report by

David Naylor (*Wheelrights* Secretary)

SUMMARY

The Festival was deemed a success, albeit in part thanks to good weather. Not only were the rides popular but also the party, with its good fare and excellent entertainment. The involvement of celebrities in the publicity and on two of the rides was another positive .

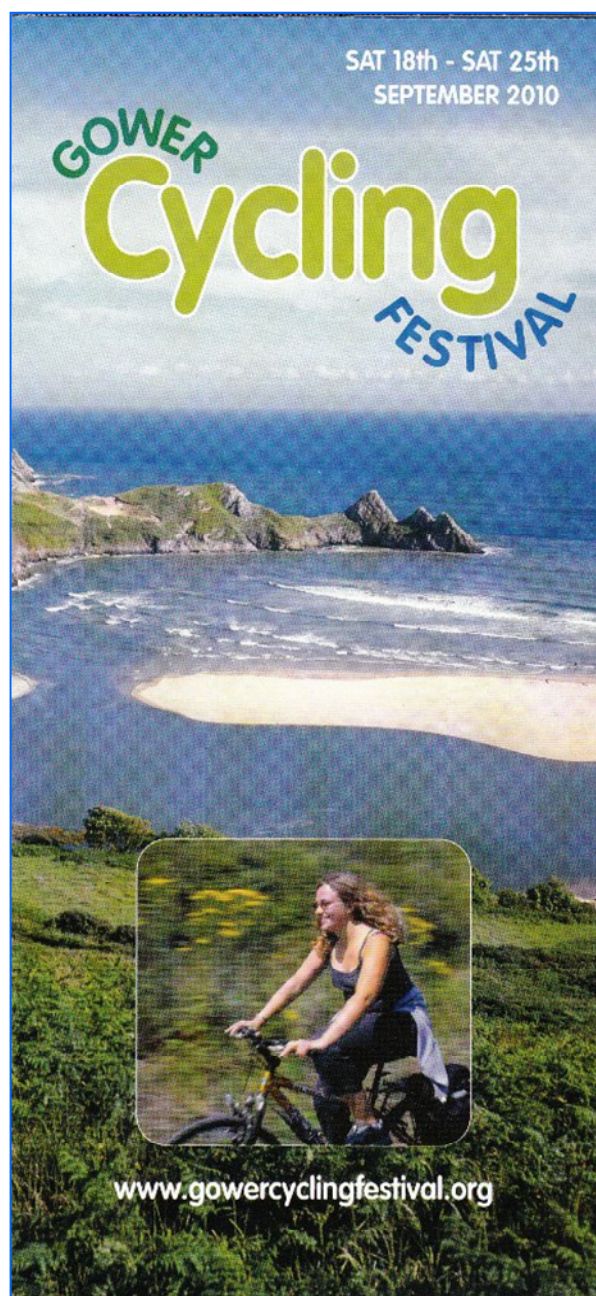
The feedback from the 10% of the participants who returned the feedback forms was very positive. It indicates that the ride programme was at about the right level but that there should be more rides at weekends. This provided lessons for the next Festival

By holding the event in September we had hoped to attract visitors. Few however came with about 90% being local. Related to this was the fact that most (79%) took part in just one ride.

The recommendations for the next Festival include measures to provide more rides at weekends and encourage people from further afield to stay longer, also to improve the publicity and simplify procedures.

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1. Introduction

This report provides a record of the first *Gower Cycling Festival*, held from 18th to 25th September, 2010. Its main purpose is as a source of information for use in organising in the next festival, scheduled for 10-17th September, 2011.

The Festival was the brain child of Nick Guy (*Wheelrights* chair). His idea originated from the successful *Gower Walking Festival* (GWF) which has been running for a number of years. Accordingly he, and the writer, had meetings in the late summer of 2009 with Mike Hollyman of Mumbles TIC (He is the chief organiser of the walking festival.) and representatives of the *Gower Heritage Centre* (also closely involved).

In this report the event itself – the opening, the rides and the Festival party – are described first, then the preparations and how it was publicised. This is followed by the sections: Finances, Feedback, Conclusions and Recommendations. There is inevitably some subjectivity in the last two sections for which the writer takes full responsibility.

2. The event

2.1 Opening

A formal launch of the Festival took place at 10.30 on Saturday, 18th September by the Blackpill Lido. A gazebo was erected under which a stall was shared by Sustrans and *Wheelrights*. It was sunny. A decent crowd assembled. Nick Guy introduced Reena Owen, CCS's Director of Environment, who said a few words and in turn introduced Jane Davidson, WAG's Minister of Environment. Jane, after a brief speech, cut a tape to formally open the Festival. The event was well covered in the *Evening Post*.

The formalities were completed on time so that the first two rides, which started from Blackpill, set off on schedule.

2.2 The rides

The 18 rides took place according to plan except that the original intention of a day trip to Devon on the 22nd was replaced by the ride to Kidwelly because the ferry never materialised. This change was too late to incorporate in the programme on the Festival flyer.

With the exception of the afternoon of Wednesday, 22nd, the weather was fine and mainly sunny. The riders on rides 10 and 11 experienced heavy showers on that afternoon while those on Ride 12 in sunny Gower finished in time to escape the rain

Details of the rides are given in Table 1 (overleaf). The routes followed are shown on Figure 1 (on p.4). It shows the intended routes, except that the Kidwelly ride (11) has been omitted. In the event there were some minor deviations from the planned routes.

Back up to the rides was provided by David Judd and by the *Heritage Centre* who offered to rescue people stranded for one reason or another. Their services were called on at least once.

There were 154 participants, comprising 93 men, 42 women and 19 children. Of these most (79%) joined just one ride. Nearly all registered at the ride start with only 12 booking in advance; of these 8 were from outside Swansea County. It is estimated that about 90% of the participants were local and that, including those who did not book in advance, 12-15 were non local. The file *GCF10stats.pdf*, available from the writer, provides details of the participants.

2.3 Registration

The procedure for registering participants at the start of rides worked as planned. (See 3.2.) The steward armed with an A4 sheet (Appendix 1) recorded the name and contact phone or email of each participant, and, if they had not already paid, collected the fee due (£2 or £1 concession). In some cases the steward then joined the ride, sometimes as a back marker.

A lesson for the next Festival is that stewards should hand out feedback forms (Appendix 2). This was done on some rides but, crucially, not during the first weekend. We had not appreciated that most of the participants would only join one ride. Handing out the forms at the start is therefore a simple way of ensuring that they get a form. In the event only 16 were returned..

2.4 'Soft' events

By 'soft' is meant Festival events in addition to the rides. These comprised the involvement of celebrities, namely the poet Nigel Jenkins who acted as a guide on Ride 13 and the rugby star Colin Charvis who joined Ride 17. Both of them assisted with the pre-Festival publicity.

And there was the Festival Party. This took place on the evening of Friday, 24th, in the Gower Heritage Centre starting at 7.0pm. Entertainment was provided by the singer Scotty and a three piece band led by Jez Sampson. Then there was the group *Circus Eruptions* who not only performed circus acts, but involved the party goers in them: acts such as juggling and riding a uni-cycle. There was also a raffle to help defray Festival expenses and an auction; proceeds to Bikeability. An excellent home brew cider and very acceptable food was provided by the Heritage Centre. The number attending was less than hoped for, but it was a very good party.

Ride	Date	S/F	Description [Leader]	D	P
1.	18 th	BP	Family Fun Ride to Mumbles. [Nick Guy]	4 [G]	12
2.		BP	A Gower Taster. [David Naylor]	25 [M]	29
3.	19 th	RI	Weobley Castle. [David Ashman]	25 [M]	17
4.		RI	Lliw Valley Reservoirs. [Martin Brain (in lieu of Phil Jones)]	42 [C]	9
5.	20 th	RI	Mumbles Head. [David Whitehead]	12 [G]	5
6.		RI	Mumbles and Three Cliffs. [John White]	20 [M]	12
7.	21 st	HC	Off road on Cefn Bryn. [Claudine Conway]	12 [G]	7
8.		HC	Cefn Bryn. [David Naylor]	14 [G]	3
9.		RI	Swiss Valley. [Martin Brain]	42 [C]	8
10.	22 nd	DR	<i>Bikeability</i> ride for all abilities. [Mike Cherry]	4 [G]	13
11.		RI	Kidwelly. [JohnCardy]	48 [C]	14
12.		HC	A Gower traverse. [Don Ashman]	22 [M]	11
13.	23 rd	SB	Dylan Thomas Trail. [Nick Guy]	5 [G]	6
14.		RI	Swansea Valley. [Colin Birch]	61 [C]	7
15.	24 th	RI	North Gower. [Bob Smith]	17 [G]	7
16.		RI	Gower Circuit Plus. [David Naylor]	38 [C]	12
17.	25 th	CC	Teenagers ride. [Claudine Conway/Rachel Guy]	6 [G]	18
18.		HC	Heritage Trail MTB ride. [Roy Church]	30 [C]	≥25

Notes

S/F: Start Finish location:

BP: Blackpill Lido, SA3 5AS (GR 619907)

CC: Civic Centre (East car park), Swansea SA1 3SN (GR 652923)

DR: Dunvant RFC SA2 7RU (GR 593932)

HC: Heritage Centre, Parkmill SA3 2EH (GR 544893)

RI: Railway Inn, Killay SA2 7DS (GR 598924)

SB; Sail Bridge, Swansea SA1 1RR (GR 662929).

D = Distance in miles, followed by grade, ie **G**entle, **M**oderate or **C**hallenging in [].

P = Number of participants who registered. There were one or two more on some rides

Table 1 The rides

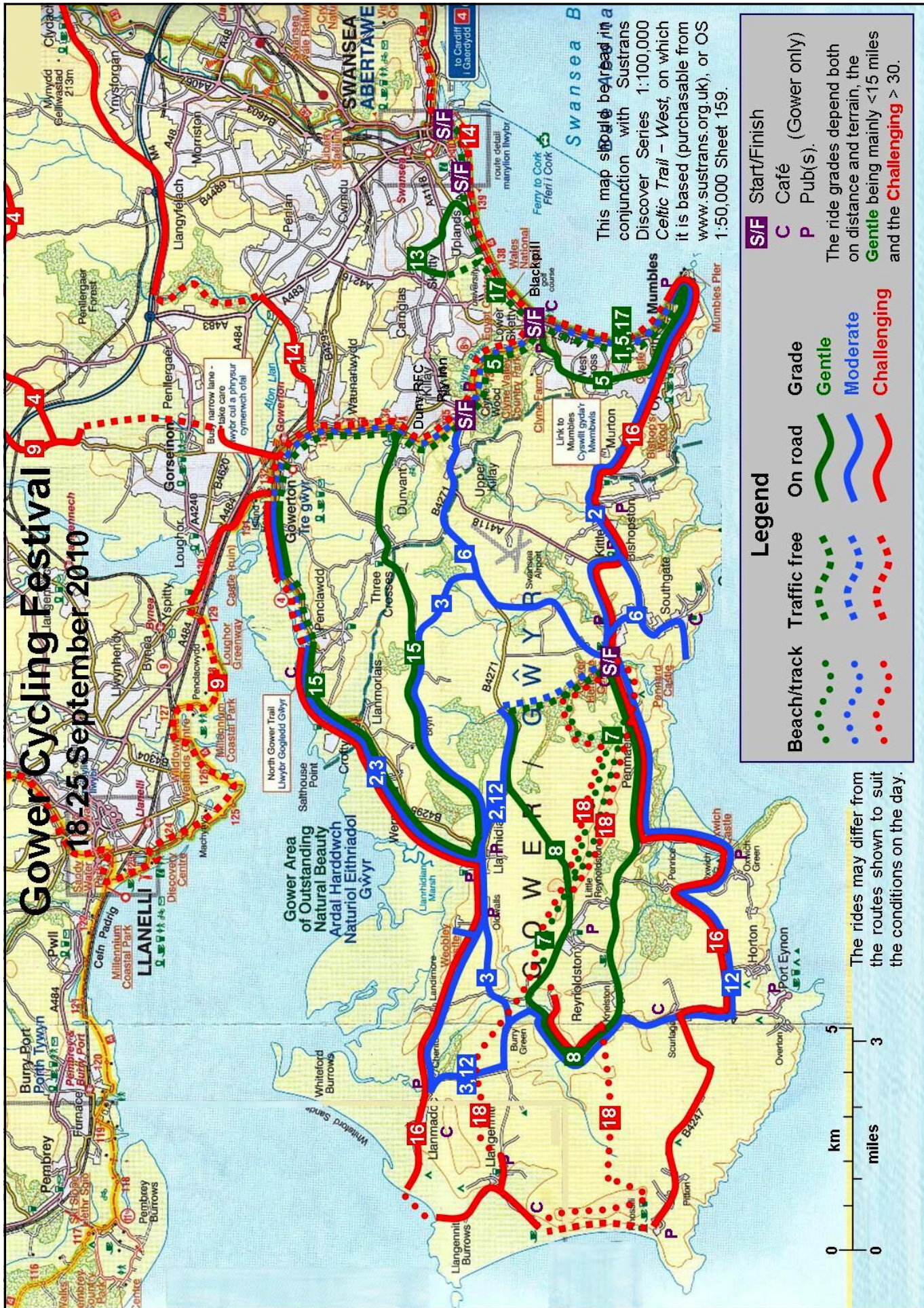


Figure 1 – Map showing routes

3. Preparation and Publicity

3.1 General

A Working Group was set up at a *Wheelrights* meeting on 18 January, 2010. This comprised John Cardy, Claudine Conway, Colin Fielder, Eifion Francis, Nick Guy, Phil Jones, David Naylor, Rob Wachowski and Geoff & Veronica Wood. David Judd and Richie Saunders subsequently joined the group. Ten meetings were held between February and October (the last being after the Festival). All, except for one in the Environment Centre, were in the Railway Inn.

From the start there was a tension in the group between those who would follow closely the GWF procedures and those who felt that many of these were not appropriate for a cycling festival. This tension for the most part, if not entirely, led to constructive compromises. The various issues are now considered.

3.2 Booking and Registration

Participants in the GWF are expected to pre-book using the Mumbles Tourist Information Centre (TIC) who on receipt of payment (£3 per walk) would be issued with a ticket. There was a limit of 25 per walk. Registration at the start was possible but because of the likelihood that at least some walks would be oversubscribed pre-booking was strongly advised.

Our concern was that we would not have enough people rather than too many so we decided not to put a cap on ride numbers but planned to subdivide into separate groups should more than 25-30 turn up. In the event this worked out fine with just the challenging mountain bike ride (No. 18) requiring subdivision.

While there were voices in the group who would have the rides free (as is the case with similar events organised by the CTC) it was decided to charge £2/ride (£1) with a cap of £10 (£5). () = concessions for children under 16 and the unwaged. A £10 (£5) "Festival pass" entitled the holder to unlimited rides. The idea was to encourage people to stay the full week. In the event only 4 passes were sold (of which 2 were to *Wheelrights* members) and a handful of tickets. Most simply turned up and paid their £2 at the start of the ride. Figure 2 shows the tickets



Figure 2 – Tickets

3.3 Flyer

While it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to produce a multi-page booklet (at considerable expense) as do the GWF we did decide to produce a flyer. The group however were divided as to whether this should be an A4 or A3 flyer. This was debated at meetings on 15th and 22nd February. Following deadlock at the first meeting there was a 7:4 majority at the second in favour of an A3 flyer, so it was decided to go for this.

In essence the arguments in favour of A3 were that there would be space for a complete description of the rides and that it would be worth paying for the flyer to be produced professionally. The A4 advocates favoured its simplicity, that it could be produced in-house (and that there was expertise within *Wheelrights* to do this) for much less than a professionally produced A3 flyer (£140.50 was quoted for 2500 camera ready A4 flyers compared with the £650 actual cost of 3000 A3 flyers.) A full description of the rides which could not be fitted on the flyer would be provided on the web page.

Claudine Conway found a designer to design and produce the A3 flyer, and Nick found advertisers and sponsors to pay for it. This took them from February to May (when it was printed).. They put in a lot of time and effort liaising with sponsors, etc. For various reasons, one of which was price, they changed from *Design Print* to *Riddler Webster*.

A proposal from the writer, which after much debate was adopted, was that the flyer should contain a map on which the ride routes would be marked. He produced this on his PC using “Publisher” to add the routes. These are as in Figure 1 except that they are overlaid on to a plain (yellow) background with just key landmarks added. The purpose of this was both to provide an uncluttered map and to avoid possible copyright issues. It was with difficulty that we persuaded the printer to incorporate a map sufficiently large to be readable, but we did, even though it was smaller than the map proposed by the writer for the rejected A4 alternative.

Another feature of the flyer was the use of one panel as a booking form. This was difficult to design because its main purpose was to give us an idea of how many would be coming and what rides they would be joining. At the same time we wanted to provide flexibility by allowing people to decide on the day which rides they would attend. Also it was intended to encourage people to buy Festival passes. (A purpose which it singularly failed to achieve! See Conclusion 5. and Recommendation 4. below) Figure 3 shows the booking form as it appears on the flyer.

3.4 Website

The writer (who is *Wheelrights* web master) had set up a GCF page on our website (www.wheelrights.org.uk/gowercyclefest.htm). It included a five page pdf file which provided basic information about the rides, a detailed programme (the same as on the flyer) and the route map of Figure 1 (the same map as on the flyer except for the background.) The programme was updated as necessary. The intention was that this file could be downloaded by interested parties or sent to them. It was to one or two.

In addition the page contained (and still contains) detailed route descriptions of four rides: 6, 8, 12 & 15. These are each single A4 sized pdfs which can be downloaded.

There was also a downloadable booking form. This again was the same as that on the flyer with only the format differing. There was not however provision for on-line booking – the form had to be printed out and mailed to the TIC with cheque enclosed.

During the Festival photos of it were added. These now provide a pictorial record.

To better publicise the page a separate website: www.gowercyclingfestival.org was set up (by Claudine). A click from it linked the visitor to the web page above.

GOWER Cycling FESTIVAL BOOKING FORM

Name (Party leader if applicable.) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

In case of emergency contact
Phone _____

Number in party; Adults Children (under 16)

To help us plan please circle the numbers of the rides which interest you.

September:	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 nd	23 rd	24 th	25 th
Level								
Gentle	1	-	5	7,8	10	13	15	17
Moderate	2	3	6	-	11,12	-	-	-
Challenging	-	4	-	9	-	14	16	18

Prices. Child prices shown in []. Festival Passes are non-transferable.

Festival Pass £10 [£5] (entitles you to an unlimited number of rides)

Rides: £2 [£1] per person per ride. Payable either at the start or in advance. (Applicable if you don't have a Pass). Note. To ensure a place provide a list of the ride numbers and who will be on each below or overleaf.

Festival Party on 24 September: £5 [£2.50]. Price covers entertainment; food and drink may be purchased on the night.

I enclose a cheque payable to "Mumbles TIC" for £.....

This covers Child Adult Passes Child Party

Adult Party tickets and £..... advance payment for rides.

Signed _____

Please return to: Mumbles TIC,
Mumbles Methodist Church, Swansea SA3 4DH
Enquiries: Tel: 01792 361302 www.mumblestic.co.uk

Figure 3
Booking form panel of A3 flyer.

3.5 Mumbles TIC

The plan was that in exchange for appropriate payment the TIC would handle our bookings, as they do for the GWF; in addition they would distribute our flyers and help publicise the Festival. On receipt of a booking form they would respond to the applicant by cashing their cheque and sending them the necessary tickets, ie those in Figure 2. They would keep appropriate records, including the preparation of riders lists of who wanted to go on which rides. (See 2.3 and Appendix 1.)

They did this except that it appears that they did little to promote the Festival other than stack our flyers on their shelves, nor did they prepare the riders lists. This was done by the writer who collected the booking forms from the TIC so that he could add those who had pre-booked to the lists. This was not a big task as there were not many of them. It would however have been simpler had the booking forms in the first instance been sent direct to the writer. The TIC's role would then have been simply to stack the flyers. Also we would have been spared the 10% of the fees which we paid to the TIC.

3.6 T shirts

Shortly before the start of the Festival it was decided to produce T shirts. 50 Fairtrade red T shirts were obtained from Francis Hanney of *Grafix Design Print*. Pontardawe. Figure 4 shows the motifs on the front and back. They cost £10 each and we sold 34 of them at this price. The T shirts were worn by some of the ride leaders and several were signed by our celebrity supporter Colin Charvis.



Figure 4 – T shirt motifs

4. Finances

4.1 Funding sources.

Application was made in March for a *Swansea Bay* Tourism grant of £900, but this came to nothing as due to budget constraints this source of funding was withdrawn

Since then funding was obtained from various sources. The main ones were the City and Council of Swansea (courtesy of Reena Owen) and the Flyer advertisers. Details are given in Table 2.

Sponsor	£
City and County of Swansea	100.00
Lodge Cycles (ad)	50.00
Schmoos (ad)	50.00
Salthouses (ad for Sally Lyme's accom.)	25.00
The Greyhound Inn (ad)	15.00
Baguette du Jour	45.00
Action Bikes (ad)	40.00
Uplands Book Shop	15.00
Heritage Centre	100.00
Three Cliffs Café	15.00
Total:	<u>455.00</u>

Table 2 – Sponsors

4.2 Finance summary

See Table 3.

<u>Receipts</u>	£	<u>Expenses</u>	£
Sponsors	455.00	Flyers	650.00
Ticket sales	286.40	Postage	95.00
Raffle	53.00	Banner	37.00
T shirt sales	340.00	T shirts	500.00
<i>Wheelrights</i>	<u>169.15</u>	Expenses	<u>21.55</u>
<u>Total receipts</u>	<u>1303.55</u>	<u>Total expenses</u>	<u>1303.55</u>

Table 3 – Finances

5. Feedback

16 feedback forms (Appendix 2.) were returned. The following is a summary of their content.

Qu 1. How did you find out about the Festival? .

- (a) By word of mouth: 8 (with details from flyer or website)
- (b) From a flyer: 8 (1 each from: BHF ride, library, bike shop, Three Cliffs Café, Heritage Centre, and 2 from Tourist offices.)
- (c) From the internet: 1 (from another website. Not known how many of the other 15 got details from the GCF website.).

Qu. 2. How was the Festival?

All 16 gave positive responses, such as: “Well organised and enjoyable”. Only negative comment was by email from David Judd (*Wheelrights* President) who commented that the Haiti ride (No. 17) was “chaotic”.

Qu. 3. How might we improve it?

In () are the numbers who made the following suggestions:

- More family rides (1)
- More weekend rides/more weekends (2)
- Better advertising (2)
- Party on [the last] Saturday (1)
- Earlier start. [Applies just to Ride 14]. (1)
- Separate MTB ride for teenagers (1)
- Go faster! (1) [But another implied ‘go slower’.]

Qu. 4. Further comments

- Red Café in Mumbles not open for Ride 1.
- Should advise helmet use and leaders should wear one.
- Several accolades: thanks to all, especially the leaders

6. Conclusions

- (1) The Festival was a success judging by the positive feedback and our ability to cope with the numbers. The good weather clearly contributed to this. Lessons were learnt for the next.
- (2) The level of the rides was about right with approximately equal numbers taking part in each of the three grades, ie 66: Gentle, 75: Moderate and 74: Challenging. Allowing that Ride 15 should have been graded 'M' rather than 'G' the distribution of rides was roughly even (6±1 for each grade).
- (3) A weakness was that we had not catered for the larger demand at weekends.
- (4) The 'soft' measures (See 2.4) were good. The party, judging by some of the feedback, would have been better on the final Saturday rather than the Friday
- (5) A Festival Pass, while a good idea, should not require the holder to join more than five rides for it to be cost effective. (See Recommendation 4.)
- (6) Local people, who accounted for some 90% of the attendees, learnt about the ride from the 'grapevine'. There were a variety of sources: our website, tourist offices, libraries, bike shops, cafés, etc. (See 5., Qu. 1.)
- (7) There were disappointingly few people from outside the County.
- (8) We slipped up by failing to get feedback forms to all the participants only 10% returned them.
- (9) The flyer was key but it is not clear to what extent it was the means by which people learnt about the Festival or whether people picked one up having learnt about the event from other sources.
- (10) There is a lack of evidence to show that an A4 flyer, costing some £500 less than the A3 (See 3.3.), would not have been equally effective. If however the ads. actually caused people to attend the Festival rather than just help make up the funding shortfall then this would provide some justification for the A3 flyer. But can this case be made?
- (11) The setting up of www.gowercyclingfestival.org as an alternative access to the web page was a good idea. Some information on the hits received indicate that it was effective.
- (12) The web page served its purpose but could be improved. (See Recommendation 5.)
- (13) The large amount of time and effort put into the organising of the Festival – particularly on the A3 flyer – was at the expense of other *Wheelrights* activities.
- (14) *Mumbles TIC*, while providing helpful advice and encouragement, did not fulfil our expectations of them. We would have been better off without them except for the stacking of flyers. (See 3.5.)
- (15) The *Gower Heritage Centre* by providing back up (See 2.2.), leading the MTB Ride 18 and hosting the party (See 2.4) were key to the success of the Festival.
- (16) T shirts are a good idea, but earlier planning would have allowed them to be ordered before the Festival thereby avoiding so many being left over.
- (17) Expenses exceeded receipts resulting in a *Wheelrights* subsidy of £169.

7. Recommendations

- (1) A similar programme of rides should be provided for the next Festival except that more should be provided on Saturdays and Sundays, probably three on each with one or two on each weekday. It should again occupy an eight day slot in September from Saturday to Saturday but with the following Sunday kept in the programme but left open so that a ride (or rides) can be planned for it during the week or even on the night before.
- (2) Care needs to be taken to ensure that all participants receive feedback forms. This can probably best be done by stewards handing them out at the start of each ride. (See 2.3.)
- (3) The 'soft' side of the Festival, ie the involvement of celebrities, the party and the entertainment provided at it (See 2.4), should happen again this year. The only specific recommendation is that the party should be on the Saturday evening rather than the Friday.
- (4) Measures should be taken to attract more people from afar. One of the reasons for holding the Festival in September was to extend the tourist season. While the Festival did provide custom for the Gower pubs it did little for accommodation providers. Two means of achieving this are recommended:
 - Provision of a Festival Pass that makes it more attractive to take part in several rides.. Rather than the £10 (£5 concession) Pass, which was only cost effective if the holder joined more than five rides a £5 Pass with the alternative of £3 for individual rides should be provided. This would mean that it would pay to buy a Pass for two or more rides. (Concessions could be half this or rounded up to £3 and £2 respectively.) It is likely that this would bring in more money than the 2010 pricing structure.
 - Find ways of publicising the event across the UK, in particular by more effective use of the internet. The writer had made various attempts to get links on to National websites – for example it got on the home page of CTC's Cymru site – but little came out of this.
- (5) Revising the web page so that the detailed two page programme and the map associated with it can be downloaded as separate pdfs rather than being part of a five page pdf. This would enable those interested to have the detailed programme on two sides of an A4 sheet with the map on a separate sheet. The other more general information, currently on the five page document, would appear on the non-downloadable part of the web page.
- (6) Unless a case can be made that flyer ad.s bring in participants, an in-house designed A4 flyer rather than an A3 should be produced for the next Festival. This should be on the lines proposed for the rejected 2010 flyer; ie with on one panel a list of rides (with a single line description), on another an application form and on two a map showing the routes (as on the A3 flyer). There would not be space for ad.s, nor would they be needed. A budget of £150 should cover the cost of 3000 (See 3.3.). Being produced in-house there would be no design costs (nor would there be any loss of quality as the necessary skills are available within the membership!).
- (7) Mumbles TIC should not be involved except to stack flyers. Completed booking forms should be sent to a *Wheelrights* member (not necessarily me but I would be happy to do it again) who would respond to enquiries and pass payments to the Treasurer. Although more advance bookings than in 2010 can be expected this is not likely to be a big task. (See 3.5)

Appendix 2

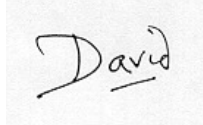
Gower Cycling Festival (18-25 September 2010) Feedback Form

Dear Participant,

After your last ride please complete this form and return it either

- by hand to one of the organisers,
- by post to me at Copper Roof, 45 Pennard Road, Southgate, Swansea SA3 2AA, or (if form downloaded from our website):
- by e-mail to me at davidjohnnaylor@tiscali.co.uk

Thanks in anticipation.



David Naylor (*Wheelrights* Secretary)

1. How did you find out about the Festival? Tick one box.

- (a) By word of mouth: (Tick if this led you just to turn up, to pick up a flyer or download details from our website.)
- (b) From a flyer If so how did you obtain the flyer? Circle source: Tourist office; library; surgery; bike shop; other
- (c) From the internet: Circle how: web search; another website; Facebook; a publication; e-mail advice; other.

2. How was the Festival?

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3. How might we improve it?

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4. Further comments

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5. Your name and means of contact. But only if you would be happy for us to get in touch for advice or to let you know about future events such as a 2011 Festival.

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