



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 31 Spring 2015

www.wheelrights.org.uk

WHEELRIGHTS 20th BIRTHDAY

Welcome to this birthday issue, and we are asking you to help us make the following events a big success:

GOWER CYCLING FESTIVAL

8th - 15th August 2015

Including our 20th Anniversary Party on the evening of 12th August at Dunvant Rugby Football Club.

DEFIANCE CYCLE RIDE

6th April 2015 (Easter Monday)

Wheelrights are supporting this ride which celebrates the 130th anniversary of a unique event. (See www.defiancecycleride.com and page 2.)

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to the Secretary (address below) by mid May.

Editorial

I am delighted that this special Birthday edition contains so many “visions” for improvements for cyclists over the next decade! Our challenges are to translate these ideas into reality, and we need to step up our public profile and campaigning work. The Active Travel Act will provide plenty of opportunities, so it's up to us to step up our work.

To follow up these visions for 2025 we would like your comments and ideas about how we can increase our public profile and improve our campaigning. Please email contributions for our next Newsletter to David Naylor .

Nick Guy (Guest Editor)

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130th Anniversary 1885 - 2015

Help us recreate this unique historic ride!

On Easter Monday in 1885, a momentous event took place in south west Wales. For the very first time, a modern, chain-driven bicycle was ridden all the way from Glanamau in the Amman Valley to Swansea and back. No-one had seen anything like it before, and thousands of people came out to line the route to see the strange machine pass by.

The bicycle was manufactured by William and Arthur Williams who had set up in business founding the Defiance Cycle Works at their farm, Gelli Fawnen, overlooking Glanamau in the Amman Valley. This was the first - and only - cycle manufacturing company ever in Wales.

Easter Monday in 1885 was on the 6th April, and Easter Monday 2015 is once more on the 6th April. So we are celebrating the 130th anniversary to the day of this unique piece of history by organising a ride from Gelli Fawnen Farm to Swansea and back, retracing as much as possible the original route taken by Arthur Williams on his historic ride.

The ride is approximately 36 miles in total and is a Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) event. It is not a sportive, or a race, but a touring ride to be enjoyed at leisure on a mix of roads, quiet country lanes and traffic-free cycle paths. We are aiming at about 300 participants so please spread the word!

Entry Fee £15 – includes lunch and free bottled water.

A commemorative mug will be presented to all participants.

All proceeds after expenses will be donated to “Hafan Dementia Care, Glanamau”

Period costume welcome – a prize for the best!

Come and join us in celebrating this remarkable achievement!

For more details visit www.defiancecycleride.com.

Rose Pritchard

(on behalf of Swansea & West Wales CTC)

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An Urban Designer's Vision

Swansea has all the ingredients for a vibrant and successful city, with its sandy bay, river Tawe, industrial heritage and surrounding hills.

Like cities all over Europe, let's prioritise homes and people in our city centre – families and kids as well as students and singles. Lets concentrate on our assets and strengths -- put social and cultural activity back in the heart of the city.

Think public spaces, trees, recreation and entertainment.

We should be proud – a Fairtrade town, a City of Sanctuary, Dylan's birthplace, culture and vitality.

Go up Kilvey Hill and look over our river, our bay, our history and our city and our people – proud!

Some aspirations for the foreseeable future:

- That a significant majority of city workers travel to work on foot, by cycle or by public transport.
- That a second major public transport axis is established, perhaps a tram but at the very least a bendy bus route, surely with some green credentials, to run from Mumbles to the new University Campus and ideally to Neath, on priority road space, as we begin to realise the Swansea Bay Region.
- That the overwhelming majority of children travel safely to school on foot or cycle, on routes, heavily restricted for motor vehicles at peak travel times for children.
- That Kingsway, preferably renamed Gower Street, is a people street – busy with shops, homes, businesses and leisure, with a very wide pedestrianised area on the south, city centre side, over that carriageway.
- That Kingsway and High Street are recognised in design terms as key access points to the city centre; that they are welcoming, easily accessible, especially to our inner communities and constructed as enticing, inviting, inspiring, exciting people places.
- That Sandfields, Mount Pleasant, Greenhill (Yes, lets give its name back to a renewed Upper High Street.), the new riverside residential communities (shall we call that 'Riverside'?) and, more deserving than any, St Thomas, are directly reconnected, in human terms, to their city centre.
- That there is not just one elaborate 'bridge' to connect to our bay but numerous ground level direct connections across Oystermouth Road, at the end of most streets, from our communities: The Strand, all the Sandfields Streets, along to the 'landmark' Bay View Hotel and beyond, for the 360, Singleton Park and on and on. And that applies for street connections from St Thomas to SA1 too.
- That pedestrians and cyclists have ample sharing pathways and routes up both sides of our beautiful river, properly fronted , where appropriate, by the front doors, front windows and balconies of riverside homes.
- That cycling – recreational, commuting, mountain biking, road racing – becomes a visible part of our public space culture. We have the resources to cater for them all.

Gordon Gibson (Urban Designer with Trilein Regeneration)

[Ed note for the full versions of Gordon, Sustrans and Wheelrights contributions to the City Centre consultations visit the campaigns section of Wheelrights website or for more on Gordon's city centre campaigning views see his blog at www.4cities.wordpress.com.]

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Swansea – a “cycling city”

It's 2025 and *Wheelrights* is proud to be present at the ceremony to name Swansea as the first Welsh “Cycling City”.

Swansea won the award due to its extensive network of cycle routes which cover the whole city. By using a mixture of high quality cycle paths and signed routes on quiet residential roads it means that everyone lives within 500 metres of a signed cycle route.

Most residential streets are now called “living streets”, which are streets where people can walk, linger for a chat, cycle, and children can once again discover the joys of outside play in safety. Cars are restricted to parking lots, and the whole city has a 20 mph limit, with exceptions for dual carriageways like Mumbles road and Carmarthen road.

The local centres (like Uplands, Morriston, Gorseinon) and the city centre have been redesigned to prioritise people over cars. They are thronged by pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and genders. The urban parks, wifi cafes, and kiddies playgrounds are well used and it's hard to find space on Swansea beach on a fine day.

The monorail around Swansea Bay, has just been extended up the Tawe valley to celebrate the Swans winning the European Champions cup.

The “Gordon Bikes” scheme is a great success, for locals and tourists alike.

Motorists feel like a persecuted minority, and it's a brave car driver who dares to drive a journey of under 3 miles! They are launching their own campaign group called “Car rights”.

The main contributor to all this progress has been the Active Travel (Wales) Act, which the City and County of Swansea embraced both in spirit and detail thanks to the public campaigning work of *Wheelrights*, Sustrans and others.

Nick Guy

To get more women cycling

My main ideal is to see a full network of connected, clearly signed, city centre cycling lanes developed over the next 5 years. We have some good ones already, along Alexandra Road, and along the bay, for example, but it would be great if more roads could include space for cycling. A good pictorial map of the centre's cycling network would help too. I'd also like to see more widespread and visible bicycle parking, with more covered stands. I hope that developing safe and clearly designated cycling lanes will encourage many more women to take their bicycles to town.

Alice Saville

Message from Swansea Council

The City and County of Swansea is grateful to *Wheelrights* and its members for their invaluable service in promoting cycling across Swansea. It has been a pleasure to work closely with *Wheelrights* in recent years, and the insights gleaned through this partnership have been important in forming a number of infrastructure investments in recent years.

I look forward to the continuance of our joint working in coming years, as we seek to deliver the requirements and expectations of the Active Travel (Wales) Act.

Ben George
(Transport Strategy Officer – City and County of Swansea)

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Newsletter

of The Swansea Bay Cycling Campaign
Issue 1 May 1995



A Cycle Campaign - Why?

Cyclists always knew it, Policy Makers said it, Transport Planners worked it out but left it out. What? That cycling can make a valuable contribution to transport.

It is environmentally friendly, low cost, unbeatable for short trips (less than 3 miles), and requires little infrastructure.

It is inherently safe (except where mixed with motor vehicles) and suitable for almost all ages.

It provides healthy exercise (now missing in most people's lives) and is, with swimming the least damaging of exercise regimes.

Why on earth, then, is a campaign needed?

1. lack of Government Direction over the years, although now they are making "noises" following the Royal Commission's findings, S.A.C.T.R.A. assertions etc.
2. lack of funding opportunity especially in Wales. Unless provided for in unhypothecated..... (i.e. not earmarked by Welsh Office) local capital expenditure.
3. lack of awareness by elected Members and Officers.
4. Cyclists like to ride their bikes and not make a fuss.

Cyclists in the Swansea Bay Area

You now have a Campaign to promote awareness and press for a fair share of resources. We hope it will grow and perform a useful function in putting forward the cycling case. Already on matters included in this Newsletter, the campaign is involved in discussions and hopefully your needs will be included in the various plans.

Give your support by joining the Campaign, lobbying your elected Members and Officers at all levels, County District and Community and take part in activities organised or by writing in to the Campaign. We are supported by many other campaigns in the UK (one other in Wales at Cardiff) and the Cyclists Touring Club and other transport interests and environmental groups. Together we hope to achieve a sea change in attitude.

This was the leading article in Issue 1 of Wheelrights (2000 as it was then) first Newsletter following its launch in May 1995, and some of the above arguments are valid today 20 years on. However we also seem to be at the start of a sea change in attitudes. We now have the interest and support of several Councillors, and several Council Officers are now regular cyclists. Parliament is discussing cycling issues and the CTC campaign for spending on cycling infrastructure to increase to £10 per person per year is supported by many MPs. Above all we now have the Active Travel Act here in Wales, which at long last puts duties and obligations on local councils to improve and increase routes for cyclists.

So we still need our campaign, there is still a long way to go, but we are now able to gather more support, and our ideas for a network of cycle routes throughout the Swansea Bay area, are at last being taken up!

Nick Guy

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Make cycling kool for kids

I grew up as an avid skateboarder in Birmingham, and moved to Swansea mostly because of the great surfing opportunities and lovely beaches. I now work as a “Life Guard” for Swansea Council at Penlan Leisure centre.

Your Gower Cycling Festival, encouraged me to start cycling more and I’ve bought 2 bikes through the Council’s “Bike to Work” scheme. However my journey to/from work by bike (Uplands to Penlan) is dangerous, unattractive and hilly (but a great work out on a fine day)! So I’m dead keen to see more cycle routes which I know *Wheelrights* is pushing for.

But I also know that most of my mates are into fitness and trying out new sports, and different ways of cycling. I love trying the new “Pump Track” (near the Railway Inn) and excited to see the growing network of Mountain Bike routes in the Clyne Valley, but there could be much more around Swansea.

How about Mountain Bike trails over Kilvey Hill? A Cycle Cross circuit in Penllergaer Forest? More skate parks and pump tracks around the city?

Youngsters are looking for more active experiences, and Swansea is an ideal location to provide these. Get kids cycling young and they are more likely to keep it up!

Best Wishes to *Wheelrights* and making Swansea a Cycling City in the next ten years!

Scott Fisher

(A new *Wheelrights* member who has taken on our Facebook page: *swansea wheelrights*.)

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BikeAbility Wales in 2025

Am I in Swansea or Holland? Its great to see so many kids and families out on their bikes. Most shopping trips are made by bike, and cargo bikes used for deliveries.

Children cycle or walk to school, and new trendy bike shelters are back in fashion.

Streams of older people are cycling, and common sights are tricycles, companion bikes and recumbants as well as electric bicycles. Buses are equipped with bike racks to assist cyclists to the tops of Swansea’s steeper hills. The average lifespan of Swansea residents is increasing by around 5 years, through healthier modes of active travel.

Swansea cyclists are the best behaved in Wales: considerate to others, never jumping red lights, cycling safely and carefully.



I am pleased that BikeAbility Wales has contributed to all of this both by making people of all abilities aware of the range of cycles that are available and our successful Cycle Training programmes. By 2025 we have taught over 10,000 adults and kids up to National Cycle Standard 2, which takes place on quieter residential roads and gives a real cycling experience (see photo).

[Ed note: *BikeAbility Wales* are currently expanding their Cycle Training programmes, assisted by 3 *Wheelrights* members now accredited as National Standards Instructors: visit www.BikeAbilityWales.org.uk for details.]

Mike Cherry

Swansea in 2025

I borrowed the Tardis from Dr Who and rode it into 2025 from when I send this report. It landed me in my own home in Pennard and to my pleasant surprise I found my 1993 Nigel Dean bicycle still in good nick. I decided to ride into Swansea.

My first impression was how quiet it was on the road outside my house. Indeed there were less cars, but then many of them were electric, thus making less noise. It seems that there has been a breakthrough in battery technology in the past ten years. Also two buses passed, suggesting a more frequent service than the one per hour in 2015.

Most of my ride to the city centre was on either a cycle path or lane. The first was climbing up the hill from Bishopston Valley to Northway. As I approached the bottom of this hill I was guided off the road on to a 1.5m wide shared use path which took me to the Murton turn off. Here I found a mini-roundabout which eased my crossing to the south side of the B4436 where I joined the recently completed cycle path across Clyne Common. Here I passed several cyclists going the other way and a couple overtook me. All were enjoying the peace and safety of this traffic free route.

There was no cycle lane descending Mayal's Hill – not necessary here because cycling speeds approach the 30mph limit. I did however notice that the footway had been upgraded to shared use on the other side of the road.

At Blackpill instead of crossing over to the foreshore path I found that there was now an adequate shared use path on the north side of Mumbles Road. At about 4m it was wide enough to have separate bike and pedestrian lanes, with the bike lane on the road side to be well clear of the driveways it crosses. Thanks to lobbying by *Wheelrights* this route is now up to standard all the way to St Helen's Road, having priority across minor junctions, this made clear by dragon's teeth and a raised table. Not unlike the Dutch crossing illustrated.



There was no cycle path along St Helen's Road, there being alternative cycle routes through Sandfields. I however continued along it, as of old, and was pleased to find it resurfaced and not heavily trafficked. The Kingsway is no longer a through route thus resulting in reduced traffic on St Helen's Road.

I hardly recognised the Kingsway! There were shops on the south side, alternating with cafés and business premises. There was also residential accommodation in the form of apartment blocks, some above the shops. Vehicular traffic was restricted to one lane

each way, shared by cars and buses. Not sure if the bendy buses still use this route as I didn't see any. A cycle lane wove it's way across wide pedestrian precincts. I followed it to find a mini-park opposite the Dragon Hotel.

I continued my journey to the Railway Station and then along a new cycle route to the Liberty Stadium and from there to Bonymaen. Circling Kilvey Hill I found my way to the Bay Campus from where a super new cycle route took me via Langdon Road back to Swansea's foreshore. The only hazard was cycling students!

The Tardis was waiting to take me back to 2015.

David Naylor

View from the saddle



I had a dream Way back in 1980, West Glamorgan , in common with most County Councils, was preparing its first Cycling Policy and Strategy. It was to be a brave new world where planning for cycling was to be up front in all activities embracing highway improvements, planning development, traffic management, etc., etc.

Better facilities would reverse the decline in cycling over the previous 30 years, making it easier to cycle for all trip purposes and tackle the disgraceful accident rate to cyclists, largely due to motor vehicles. Our safety would be paramount and it would not be rocket science, there were classic examples of what could be done with a will just over the English Channel.

Studies were carried out, new routes identified, specifications written, audits guaranteed ... but in new development, new roads, traffic management schemes, etc. you would hardly notice provision for cycling included. The policies and promises were largely ignored by both politicians and professionals, resting on shelves gathering dust. Of course there were exceptions, but by and large getting around on a cycle remained a dangerous activity, not for the faint hearted and in particular, not a part of our national culture.

In 1995, under the inspirational leadership of John Grimshaw, Sustrans were awarded around £43million by the National Lottery towards the development of a National Cycle Network (NCN) of around 2000 miles, around 20% of the estimated cost. This set in motion strategic thinking to link large centres of population with a high quality route and gave a huge impetus accelerating to 5000miles, then 10,000 miles and now around 15,000 and growing. The routes were developed largely in partnership with the local authorities, some better than others, but if you have a trip from A to B, for whatever purpose, it is likely a good part of it will not be on the NCN. So the development of a finer network linking with the NCN is crucial, and it is here the major shortcomings are apparent, very little has been done. The list of schemes remains largely as it was in 1995, new development largely ignores cycle provision and its still dangerous.

Fast forward 20 years...in Wales we now have the Active Travel Act **requiring** local authorities to provide for cycling (something they already had the power to do but didn't by and large) by preparing maps of existing Active Travel Routes, logging their intentions for the future and actually planning to do it. (Unfortunately the Active Travel description does not include recreation and tourism trip purposes, very important for health and tourism economic benefits.) It is, in my view, setting in train a bureaucratic nightmare ... time will tell.

But still I Dream of a growing cycling culture, where provision of a safe, convenient network of routes is developed area wide. Where families, young and old, can regard their bicycle as a really useful mode of transport for most, if not all, trips. It's not all about new routes, it is about accommodating the desire lines of users (and that of course includes walking) so that they can safely make the trip and, importantly, leave their cycle in a convenient and safe location. It does mean consideration of cycling access in all areas of activity.

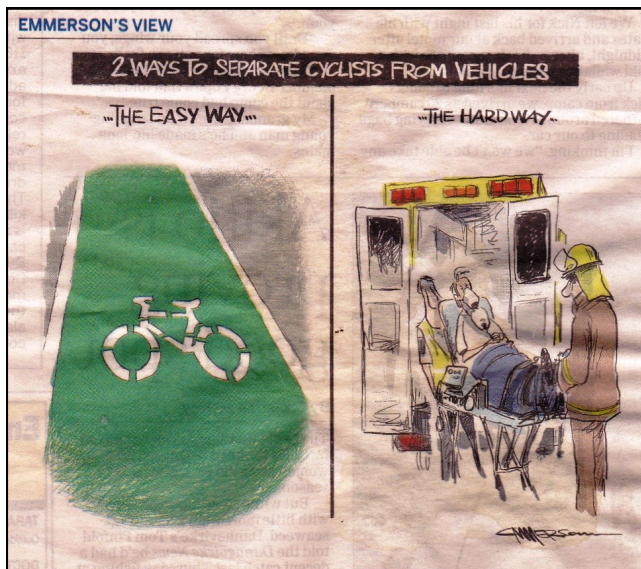
The momentum must come from a strong desire by our younger generation to improve things, not from those such as me, who are well past their sell by date. Certainly inspiration is needed, with champions, and I do not mean sporting ones on racing bikes, but passive ones on practical machines with racks and mudguards capable of carrying shopping or whatever. The enthusiasm of the young is evident, it needs to be nurtured and that is where we should make a huge effort to foster the culture. I came back to cycling with a young family and still delight in seeing families out and about on my travels.

Where would I start in Swansea? There are huge areas around the northern and western fringes with no safe routes for cycling and most schools where it is simply not safe to cycle. These shortcomings must be addressed by a major effort as a priority. In the central area, all the change in recent years, in Westway, the Kingsway, North Dock and the "Boulevard" are road schemes bent on providing more capacity for motorised transport. Not at all about improving the urban environment.

Non motorised users (NMU's) to use the vernacular, are shunted from their desire line and faced with multilane crossings with large delays, often having to cross in stages. They, the walkers and cyclists, need more space and convenient provision in schemes and traffic management. If there ever was an easy option, what about sorting out Sandfields. A large densely populated mostly residential area that is crying out for the removal of through traffic and creating a more pleasant environment. Instead we have buses and cars thundering through it and across it. Even the wonderful open space of the Vetch is walled in and invisible whereas it could be a green lung.

We need some creative thinking in the centre and indeed the marina areas to provide a greener and more pleasant space. There is certainly much to do.

David Judd
(*Wheelrights* President)



Swansea`s City Centre: Sustrans Vision

Sustrans believes that Swansea city centre should be developed with people in mind, creating a pleasant environment that promotes active travel and public transport, and that we should accept that part of this means the need to restrict car use further.

In promoting the city, a clear message is needed that Swansea is a destination for people; an accessible and attractive environment where people live and work and a place to visit and spend time enjoying Swansea`s cultural, historic and leisure offerings. It needs to make a strong and definite move away from being a corridor to drive through in a vehicle.

A connected and continuous network of pedestrian and cycle friendly streets is needed that enables people to make their own choices about what to do and which route to take.

Streets in the city centre need to offer easy and safe attractive routes for everyday journeys on foot or by bike.

Key destination points within the city centre, such as the train station and Oxford Street should underpin the development of a network of active travel routes.

You can view Sustrans` manifesto for Swansea city centre in full on the You Are Here website. [*Ed: also on www.wheelrights.org.uk/campaigns.htm]*



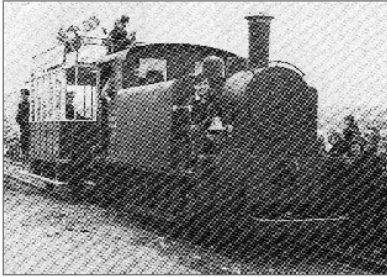
There is an opportunity to re-create this street so that it prioritises pedestrian and cycle movement and minimises space for vehicles, provides a better access and a more attractive environment for people to enjoy and businesses to develop.

Lindsey Curtis (Area Manager of Sustrans)

— oOo —

Bad Cycling

A Shared Path Code



*The Mumbles train in days of yore
Plied up and down this scenic shore.
To clear a pathway through the throng
A lad on the engine rang a bell; "ding-dong"
He sat on his seat o'erlooking the track
Shouting: "Look out – Step back! Step back!"
Strolling walkers enjoying the view
Raised their hand to say, "I hear you"*



*It's bells on bikes we use today
To gently say: "I'm on my way!"*

Pedestrians

- On divided paths please keep in the pedestrian lane.
- On undivided paths allow space for cyclists and others to pass.
- If a cyclist approaches ringing his bell, no need to move but just raise your arm to let them know you've heard them.
- Keep dogs under control; if on a lead ensure that the lead does not cross a cyclist's path.
- Prevent small children from running out in front of cyclists.

Cyclists

- On divided paths please keep in the cyclist's lane (except to overtake or pass when the pedestrian lane is empty).
- Keep to the left of the cycle lane or the path.
- On undivided paths give way to pedestrians and slow down to pass them. Warn of your approach, by ringing your bell or calling politely.
- Take particular care when passing small children and dogs.
- Slow down to pass horses, giving them a wide berth.
- Use lights in the dark.



Dai the Bell says:
**"Remember, the path is for everyone,
please enjoy it safely"**

What should *Wheelrights* do about bad cycling?

I have recently heard about two accidents in Swansea where cyclists on pavements have collided with older people, causing distress to both and significant injury to one gentleman (a former cyclist).

Most of us have witnessed inconsiderate cyclists on the Swansea Foreshore path, and my impression is of an increase in illegal cycling, eg on pavements, no lights and jumping red lights. This could be partly due to the welcome increase in people cycling, but as "ambassadors for cycling" we should think about our role in educating and promoting considerate cycling.

I have discussed these concerns with my local community police, who conducted an exercise on the Mumbles cycle path to give warnings to dangerous cyclists. These discussions led me back to a draft leaflet (above) which Rob Wachowski and David Naylor produced a few years ago. It targets in particular the Foreshore path, and uses the erstwhile Mumbles Train as a symbol.

Thinking they had copied the poem from a distinguished poet, when I enquired about copyright I was delighted to discover that the poem was written by Rob and David, so *Wheelrights* really does have "poets in our midst"!

As Swansea Council never published it how about *Wheelrights* printing it in conjunction with BikeAbility Wales. It could have information about their National standards Training on the back, and Wheelrights logo, website, etc.?

Nick Guy

Routes Group

The Routes group first met in July 2014. This followed a suggestion made by Nick Guy that a working group should be formed to consider routes and infrastructure in general.

The following purpose and aims were agreed:-

1. Ensure existing Cycling Infrastructure is 'fit for purpose' identifying issues for discussing/prioritising with the City & Council of Swansea (CCS).
2. Identify and prioritise new cycling Routes, liaising closely with CCS.

The Active Travel Act places a requirement on local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for walkers and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential routes. The Act will also require new road schemes to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at the design stage.

Work initially focused on prioritising the eight aspirational routes proposed by CCS and present our conclusions to CCS at the Cycling Action Plan (CAP) meetings. This forum gives Wheelrights an excellent opportunity to advise and shape Council thinking.

The 3 routes that emerged as priorities were:-

- Gowerton - Pontarddulais
- Uplands - City Centre - Liberty Stadium
- Bonymaen - Liberty Stadium

Monthly "Routes Rides" (See below) have been introduced to gather information about the above routes. These rides are open to all *Wheelrights* members providing a regular social outlet as well as gathering facts .

The group is keen to hear from all, to identify specific areas of concern on the existing route infrastructure. Either contact me directly or via our Secretary or Chairman.

Chris Walsh (Routes Group Chair)

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Forthcoming events

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

Adult Beginners Classes from **April to September** on **Saturdays: 11 April, 9 May, 13 June, 18 July, 22 August and 19 September.**

9.30-11.30 in Civic Centre East car park click. See the 'Beginners' page of www.wheelrights.org.uk for how to register, etc.

Wheelrights Routes Rides: first Saturday in each month.

Meet 10.00 in Civic Centre café when route will be decided. (But check 'Events' page of website for possible changes.) Next three dates: 7 March, 4 April & 2 May.

April

Monday 6 April: Defiance Cycle Ride

See p. 11. Further info. incl. registration on www.defiancecycleride.com.

June

BIKE WEEK is normally in mid June. (Dates awaited.)

August 2014

8-15 August: GOWER CYCLING FESTIVAL.

Full details on www.gowercyclingfestival.org (aka 'Cycling Festival' page on our website). Note that we would like you to register in advance. (It is only £5.)