



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 35 Spring 2016

www.wheelrights.org.uk

When will the rain stop?

Well, it may have by the time you read this but can you remember a wetter winter? Chances for getting out on the bike were limited if, like me, you mostly went out on fine days. This picture, taken on a recent CTC ride, was on such a day. But then that shower behind the rainbow caught us.

Despite the rain *Wheelrights* has been busy lobbying for better cycle provision. A highlight was the visit of Ben Hamilton-Bailley in January who both gave a public talk and held meetings with Council officers. Promotional events are planned for Bike Week (11-19 June).



In an attempt to get various outstanding works implemented we have set up a "Loose ends" section on the Infrastructure page of our website. Our concern is that a number of mainly minor works needed to bring our cycle infrastructure up to standard have not been carried out. These apply to both new and existing routes.

This issue

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Copy deadline

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

A shortcoming of this issue is that too many of the articles are written by me! In each issue I ask for material but unless I pester individuals (Thanks Alun and Nick!) nothing comes. So once again please let me have articles, letters, poems or anything of interest to our readers.

In this issue you can read on p.3 about Ben Hamilton-Bailley's visit, and on other pages about events ranging from our new short rides, a very full Bike Week, Llandrindod Wells cycle museum, proposals for a new Tirpenry cycle route, our consultation on plans for the Fabian Way Corridor to future events.

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Short Rides

Do you have a partner or friend who wants to cycle more, but finds the usual club rides too long or strenuous?

Well *Wheelrights* now may have an answer. In response to requests we are planning a series of "Short Rides" which will mostly be on traffic free cycle paths and be very gentle rides of between 5 and 10 miles.

We have spoken with several contacts (mostly part-time workers, and mothers of school age children), and it seems a Monday morning would be the preferred time. We have also talked to the manager of the Coast Café in the Marina (On Trawler Road next to the Trafalgar Bridge) who are willing to host these rides, and may consider a discount on drinks and snacks.

So we are kicking them off on Monday 4th April, meeting at 10am in the Coast Café (free parking nearby), when we can decide the route to suit whoever turns up. The advantage of the Coast café is that there is a good choice of traffic free routes to the east, west and north.

Although *Wheelrights* is launching these rides our aim is for them to be self organised (eg the initial group could think of a name) and *Wheelrights* would just help with publicity.

So if you know any nervous or novice cyclists please spread the word.

Rhian Evans, Allyson Evans, Alice Saville, Nick Guy

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Correspondence

With reference to the Tirpenry cycle route described on p.6 I believe that once the link under Clase Rd is completed it would be viable to extend this path alongside the green area adjacent to Clydach Rd, across the road and over the Council run Tircanol playing fields where a path already exists. The route would then turn right along Heol Gwernen, go over the railway line by an existing bridge and cross another park area. From here it would cross Llanllienwen Road, go along Llanllienwen Close to the M4 bridge where it would link to Morryston Comprehensive school, Leisure centre and Morryston Hospital. This route would meet the *Active Travel Act* guidelines as it provides access to the amenities of the school and hospital. It would avoid the narrow and congested Chemical Rd. Of course it will also link up with NCR43, although the link over the A4067 does need improving. The route can be followed on the Swansea Cycle Map.

Alun Evans

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Swansea: a city for people?

In the evening of 19 January close to one hundred people gathered in the reading room of the erstwhile Swansea Central Library (now part of the University of Trinity St David's) to hear a presentation by Ben Hamilton-Bailley titled: *Reconciling people, places and traffic*. Ben is renowned for his expertise in designing towns to make them people friendly but at the same time able to cope with traffic.



He was introduced by Jane Davidson. She is now involved in the development of Trinity St David's University but previously was Environment and Sustainability Minister in the Welsh Assembly. She set the scene by noting that the focus in the plans for their new University Campus would be on people, not cars. She also highlighted the key role of *Manual for Streets* (MfS). It subsequently featured in Ben's talk.

He started by illustrating the sort of problem we now have in city centres: eg traffic snarled up at lights, people fenced off by guard rails. While in the early days of the motor car people and traffic could mix reasonably well this all changed following the 1963 Buchanan report. This advocated segregation of people and cars. A reduction in child fatalities followed, but this was because children were kept off the roads. No more could children safely walk or cycle to school.

Before explaining how people and traffic could be reconciled he made the point that a distinction needs to be made between through traffic between towns and traffic within them. *Segregation* is needed for the former and he accepted the need for modern highway design. Within towns *integration* is needed: the *hierarchy of provision* spelt out in MfS which puts pedestrians first must be followed. A tricky but key aspect is the design of the interface where the highway enters the town.

Central to city centre design is the replacement of traffic lights, barriers and signs by something different. To a large extent this consists of distinctive surface markings. Thus a large scale check pattern might be applied to a junction. This and other visual clues – more than just eye to eye contact – are what is needed.

He gave various examples of where these techniques have been successfully applied: Kensington High St., Ashford in Kent, Brighton-Hove, Preston and finally Poynton in Cheshire. Poynton is perhaps the best example. Here application of these measures, which included narrowing traffic lanes to allow wider pavements, allowed traffic flow to be maintained as well as catering for pedestrians and cyclists, and even the disabled. He showed part of the Poynton video. (A link to this is provided on the 'Infrastructure' page of our website.)

A lively discussion followed. This inevitably touched on the Kingsway; no magic bullet here, but clearly the principles he outlined need to be applied.

David Naylor

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Summer cycling in Swansea

We are hearing exciting news of a variety of cycling events being planned this summer. They cater for a wide range of cycling interest so there should be something for everyone!

On 5th June *Activity Wales Events* is organising the first ever Swansea Triathlon based around the Prince of Wales docks. As well as a swim and run the 1,000 anticipated participants will cycle on roads closed to traffic, which promises to be a great spectacle. This will hopefully set a precedent to help us to get the Council to close some city centre roads for a family cycling event in the future (as we hear Cardiff are planning).

Bike Week runs from 11th – 19th June, with the theme “bike to work”. *Wheelrights* is involved in planning the events as follows:

- Wed 15th June: A circular ride from Swansea to Gower to visit the smallest cinema in Wales, which is in an old railway wagon in the Gower Heritage Centre at Parkmill.
The film “Belleville Rendez-vous” will be shown. This is a quirky French animation. With references to the famous Tour the film is a unique blend of classic animation and razor sharp wit. As it’s a silent film, you don’t need to understand French to enjoy it!
There will be lunch at the Heritage Centre. This ride doubles as a CTC ride which David Naylor will lead. It starts from Blackpill. Details on Facebook and our website.
- Thurs 16th June: Regional Cycling Conference: This conference is aimed at senior Councillors and Officers of the four County Councils of Swansea, NPT, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The theme is implementation of the **Active Travel (Wales) Act**. The aim is to help the Councils take a more pro-active approach in these times of limited resources. *Wheelrights* is taking a lead in organising this conference alongside the Carmarthenshire Cycle Forum, Sustrans, CTC and Swansea and NPT Councils. We will be grateful for any offers to help stewarding and with the *Wheelrights* stall, etc.
- Sat 18th June: A city centre mass ride around the “box”. This ride was first proposed as a protest against the Councils removal of west-east cycling on the Kingsway. Its objective has now changed to it being a rally to get across the message Ben Hamilton-Bailley so ably communicated (See article on p.3.), namely: to **reclaim our Streets for People** and provide **Space for Cycling**. Current plans for this ride are for it to start at the north end of Princess Way and then do an anti-clockwise circuit round the “box” comprising Kingsway, West Way, Oystermouth Road and Princess Way. We plan to support the ride with events to reinforce the theme that our streets are for people, not just cars, and that space is needed for cycling.. We expect prominent people to join it together with all sorts of cyclists.

I hope all these events will provide opportunities to raise *Wheelrights* profile, recruit new members and promote our Gower Cycling Festival.

Nick Guy

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The Llandrindod Collection

A couple of years ago I was in "Recycle" looking for spare parts, the kind of parts that cycle shops no longer sell. Ian and I were talking about gear systems and Ian mentioned an exhibit in the Museum which used cable and rod to operate the system. "Which Museum?" I asked and was told about the National Cycle Collection at Llandrindod Wells.

Before too long, Jan and I were heading north. For once I didn't get lost and soon we were at the Automobile Palace. Once inside, what an Aladdin's Cave! Every sort of cycle from a replica of the Hobby Horse invented or designed by Karl von Drais in 1817 through to the Lotus where one rides (if one can) with one's behind seemingly two feet higher than one's head. Between these are other interesting bikes and of course there is a very helpful curator on hand to answer any questions. He or she can explain why the tandem has the steering controlled by the rider at the back. Why this bike has what appears to us to be an odd chain or how the Ordinary or as we know it Penny Farthing developed from the Boneshaker to the size it did. You will also find displays of Head Badges and Club Badges as well as many other interesting artefacts.

On our first visit we walked around the Museum then had lunch and returned as there was so much to see. All the staff are volunteers (unpaid) and many travel long distances to help out. Fund raising is helped by a SALE where they sell surplus cycles and spares all at very good prices. Many of these we are unable to obtain in cycle shops now. GOOD NEWS: the next sale is in May, see NCC website (www.cyclemuseum.org.uk).

This collection is well worth a visit for anyone interested in cycles or cycling and deserves our support.



Ed. The gent is not the author!

Alun Evans

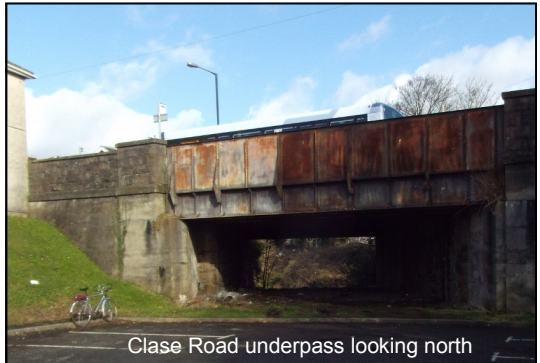
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A Tirpenry cycle route

In case you didn't know Tirpenry is the district between Morryston and the A4067 north of Clase Road (A48). A potentially attractive cycle route runs through it. This starts at the roundabout south of the A48, ie the one before the Wychtree roundabout, and ends on Clydach Road opposite the Tircanol playing fields. Some work – not very much – is needed to make this into a through route. Here are directions for a northbound cyclist.

In the V formed by Martin Street and the A4067 there is a residential street parallel to the A4067. Follow it and at the first junction join the path on your right. Follow this north, past a footbridge, under a road (Morfydd Street) and across Crown Street to a parking area. The footbridge incidentally provides a link between this route and NCR 43. Cross this bridge and you can follow Wychtree Street to join NCR 43 at the Beaufort Bridge.

Across the parking area you will see the bridge which takes the A48 across what used to be a railway. This is where the cycle route needs to go. As you can see from the photo the underpass is open on the south side but closed on the north. It would not be a big job to open it – perhaps a day's work for a bulldozer and digger. To continue your journey north you now have to cross Clase Road. Access to it is from the car park by the road on your left.



Having crossed Clase Road – this may take a while – enter the 'no entry' Foundry Road . Note the aforementioned blockage on your left. A cycle path continues from here for the remaining half mile to the path end at the junction of Cwm Arian, Sway and Clydach Roads. Here a path to your right crosses a green to link with the roundabout north of the Wychtree roundabout and the road bridge over the Tawe. Care is needed on joining this roundabout because of the traffic. You can use this link to join NCR 43.

There is one point on the half mile north of Clase Road where improvement to the path is needed. It is where there are shallow steps with a ramp on the left for cyclists. The ramp ends in a muddy puddle. (At least it was a puddle when visited recently.) Minor realignment is needed to sort this.

My understanding is that there is now political support to get this route upgraded. The work involved is relatively small so let's hope it is carried out in the not too distant future.

David Naylor

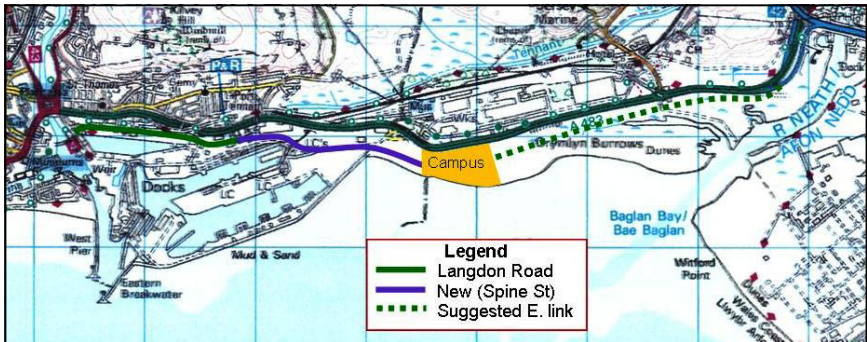
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Fabian Way Corridor

Late last year Swansea and NPT Councils invited consultation on a draft document titled *Fabian Way Innovation Corridor*. I took up the baton on behalf of *Wheelrights* and with the help of a couple of other members submitted a brief consultation. Both it and the document are available as pdfs on the 'Campaigns' page of www.wheelrights.org.uk.

The document presents proposals for the development of the corridor. Two things stood out:

- 1) A direct cycling link between Swansea and the Bay Campus is proposed. This would follow Langdon Road and then continue along a new road to be called "Spine Street".
- 2) There are no plans to provide a link south of Fabian Way to the east. *Wheelrights* has been lobbying for this for some five years now.



In our response we welcome the first and make a case for the second. In commenting on the first we suggest that in addition to a cycle route along Spine Street there should be a footway. We feel that if the cycle route is used as intended there would be sufficient cycle traffic to justify segregation, ie it would not be suitable for shared use. The plan above shows the cycle route.

The easterly link which we are pushing for would at its east end connect with NCR 4 where it emerges from the Fabian Way underpass. It would be a delightful route fitting in a wooded strip between the golf course and Fabian Way. To the west it could use existing disused tracks to access the campus. Separated from the busy road by trees and some distance it would be insulated from the roar of traffic. The easterly alignment of this route is portrayed on the 'Infrastructure' page of our website.

David Naylor

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Forthcoming events

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

Easy rides: first Monday in each month from 4 April.

10.00 in the Coast Café, SA1 1XA. This is the first of these gentle rides for near beginners or returning cyclists. Destination decided at the start to suit whoever turns up.

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: **5 March, 2 April & 7 May.**

April

Tuesday 12th. Swansea Bay Cycle Forum meeting.

6.30pm. Environment Centre, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY.

Monday 4th. Rhondda Tunnel talk.

7.00pm. Environment Centre, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY.

June

BIKE WEEK: 11-19 June.

Sunday 12th. 43-2-C ride.

The popular annual family ride from Coed Gwilym Park, Clydach to Swansea, Castle Square where there will be music, fun events and stalls. Details to come on Events page.

Sunday 12th. A Celebration of Cycling family fun ride.

Along Swansea Foreshore to Castle Square where the ride will converge with the 43-2-C ride in Castle Square to join in the events there. Details to come on Events page.

Wednesday 15th. Belleville Rendez-vous ride.

10.00 am from the Railway Inn in Clyne Valley: a circular ride to the Gower Heritage Centre to see this film in the smallest cinema in Wales. Joint CTC and *Wheelrights* ride.

Thursday 16th. Active Travel Act Cycling Conference.

Regional conference targeting the four South Wales counties. Organised by *Wheelrights*, Carmarthenshire Cycle Forum, Sustrans, CTC, Swansea and NPT Councils.

Saturday 18th. Space for Cycling mass Ride in Swansea City Centre.

Assemble at the north end of Princess Way (Time on Events page when decided.) for an anti-clockwise circuit of the "box" comprising the Kingsway, West Way, and Oystermouth Road. The purpose of the ride and events associated with it is to reinforce the theme that our streets are for people, not just cars, and that space is needed for cycling.

Sunday 19th. BHF ride.

Start 08:00-10:00 from St Helen's Rugby Ground. £15: adult entry; £5: under 18. visit www.bhf.org.uk for details.

August 2014

13-20 August: GOWER CYCLING FESTIVAL.

Full details on our 'Cycling Festival' page: www.wheelrights.org.uk/GCF16. Note that we would like you to register in advance. (It is only £5.)