



# Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 40 Summer 2017

[www.wheelrights.org.uk](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk)

## A Clyne Common path?



Following my article in the March issue of the Bishopston Newsletter outlining alternative proposals for a cycle path across Clyne Common I received a number of emails in support. Of the alternatives of a West Cross to Reigit Lane path and one alongside and on the south side of the B4436 the latter was preferred. The picture, which is looking towards Swansea from the Campion Gardens old people's home, shows where it would go: it would pass through the white car and the layby in the foreground.

With support from various councillors and candidates for the May local election it was decided to launch an on-line petition to find out people's views. At the time of writing over 600 have signed it. A selection from the around one hundred accompanying comments is provided on page 4. If you have not yet signed the petition and would like to, a link to it is on the 'Campaigns' page of *Wheelrights* website.

*Wheelrights* have been prioritising cycle routes to the north and east of Swansea to promote 'active travel' there. The 'Upper Bank' cycle path, featured in last summer's Newsletter, is one such route. The case for also giving a Clyne Common path priority is that it is already an established desire line, the use of which can act as a catalyst to encourage cycling in the less affluent areas.

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### Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be emailed to me: [davidjohnnaylor@sky.com](mailto:davidjohnnaylor@sky.com) by mid August.

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### This issue

With the local election over and the National one imminent now is a good time to take heed of our Chairman's comments (p.2) and press for more and better cycle infrastructure. The need for this is reinforced by the overwhelming response to the petition above (and on p.4).

The poem on p.6 is courtesy of *Cycling UK*.

Once again I call for contributions from the membership. Another poem perhaps?

**David Naylor**

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## Our Chairman writes ...

The recent good weather has been a real bonus for cyclists! From Gowerton to Blackpill and Mumbles to Morryston the National cycle network is definitely getting busier with thousands dusting down their bike from its winter hibernation and taking to the tarmac. Most families possess at least one bike and indeed I've heard it said that there are more bikes than people in the UK. But these bikes are a bit like swimming bathers, millions of people own one and want to use it, but the inclination somehow wavers and they rarely get used! In the case of swimming it might be lack of facilities, but can we say that about cycling?

Surely we have a comprehensive road system, but perhaps that is the issue. Only 2% of commuting journeys are by cyclists, as most people feel unsafe cycling on Swansea's roads. Very few motorists cycle at all, so many see cyclists as an obstacle to their progress. Interestingly London's cycle network only got going when a blond haired cyclist became mayor and then put his money where his mouth was! So how much money is that?

London now spends £17 per head on cycling every year. And Swansea? – Just 25p. which shows you all you need to know about the political commitment of our council. Go to the Council's website and see that over £40million is spent every year on transport. We cyclists don't want to stop spending on roads for cars, but just see that we can have our fair share.

Maybe the regular 2% who cycle should demand 2% of Swansea's highway budget – that's £800,000 per annum. Now that would build a city wide cycle network we could all feel proud of – even the motorists!

**John Sayce**

—o0o—

## Local News

### Blackpill crossing

The separate cycle and pedestrians NCR 4 crossings at Blackpill have now been replaced by a Toucan. It is more sophisticated in that the delay for pedestrians or cyclists, if it has not just been green in their favour, is acceptable; also, apparently, it can sense when the crossing is in use and adjust the phase accordingly.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the path is still closed on the sea side, requiring a diversion past the paddling pool.

### Roots on path

The Council have been asked to sort a problem of roots bursting up the tarmac on the Kingsbridge – Grovesend cycle path (pictured). They have confirmed that they will do this, if not by the time this appears then shortly after.



### Cenotaph

The triangular signs which, as can be seen in the photo on p.2 of the last issue, were facing the wrong way have now been turned round.

## Working with your local Councillors

The good news is that we now have a Swansea Council administration committed to boosting cycling locally, and we are forging stronger links with some key councillors.

So now it's going to be up to us *Wheelrights* members to help them implement their laudable aims.

A small example of success are the three new Advanced Stop Lines (ASLs) in the Uplands. These were achieved by a close working partnership between local *Wheelrights* officers (John Sayce and myself) and cycling councillor Nick Davies.

We learnt that every Swansea councillor has access to a small pot of money which they can spend on "environmental projects" in their ward.

So how about contacting your local councillor, or attending one of their surgeries, to discuss your local cycling concerns? If you need any advice about this contact one of our officers, who will gladly guide you. We can advise how your concerns/ideas might link in with our priority routes which we are currently pursuing at a high level with Swansea Council.



**John Sayce Nick Davies**

David Naylor drew up designs for the Uplands and some other ASLs which can be seen on the Infrastructure page of [www.wheelrights.org.uk](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk). Suggestions for further ASL locations should be sent to David for consideration by the Routes Group and, if appropriate, added.



The Gwydr Cresc. ASL is behind the left traffic light.  
The third is in front of the cars in the background.

**Nick Guy**

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## Clyne Common Path Petition comments

The initials following the comment will allow the author (at least) to recognise it as theirs.

- This road for the most part is not subject to a speed limit. Mixing pedestrians and cyclists with fast moving motor vehicles is potentially a recipe for disaster. The existing verges could quite easily be converted to shared use paths, allowing cyclists and pedestrians to be segregated from fast moving motor vehicles. **[GE]**
- All the benefits of such a path have been repeatedly outlined, now is a time for action. What logical reason is there for not constructing a cycle path across this location? **[JJ]**
- I regularly ride this road and the amount of illegal close passes that happen because of drivers not wanting to wait an extra 20 seconds to make a legal safe pass. The road would benefit from a multi-use path for the safer cycling and also any children that use the route to walk to and from Bishopston school as currently I often see them walking on the roadside. **[JE]**
- I would like to cycle my baby to nursery on this route instead of driving but at the moment I don't feel it is safe to do so. **[HC]**
- My son regularly cycles across the common to work in Mumbles. Motorists are often not aware of their impact on cyclists and don't give much room when passing. It's incredibly dangerous and alternative routes from Bishopston to Mumbles are even worse – I find walking across the common scary enough. There is no public transport linking Bishopston to Mumbles and public transport to Swansea is no good if you need to arrive before 8.30 am or work into the evening or if you work on a Sunday. So basically if you live in Bishopston it's use a car or risk your neck cycling on the roads. A cycle/footpath over the common would be very welcome. **[KD]**
- As Labour candidate for Oystermouth in the council elections I'm fully supportive of this. I'd love to see a cycle path around the whole of the Gower – however this would be a good start! **[SW]**
- I regularly cycle this route and this would make the journey across Clyne Common much safer for cyclists and much less nerve wracking for drivers. **[HB]**
- I live on the edge of Clyne common and the other side is completely inaccessible to me and my children without a car or risking our lives. **[VM]**
- My daughter is on Treetops nursery and I like taking her on the back of my bike but tend to take her by car as the road is often too busy and I don't feel she's safe. A cycle/walking path would be fantastic! **[RB]**
- I am a local resident who feels that there should be a safe link from Mayals to Bishopston. My children have friends living in Bishopston and there is no safe route to get from one place to the other. We are supposed to encourage exercise and having a path would promote healthy living. **[SE]**
- I'm signing because I use this road to cycle to work on and its the most dangerous part and the only section that's not a cycle path. (I work in Tata Steel.) **[SB]**
- As a long term user of cycle networks, for both commuting and pleasure, I have seen the growth of bike usage over the common between Mayals and Murton grow year on year. This petition is very timely, as it will benefit all road users to and from Swansea, and will encourage many people to switch to bike or pedestrian options. **[SC]**

## Finding the Great Outdoors

Like a lot of people, when working full time, I had little time for keeping fit.

So classing myself as a late beginner, I have only really “found” the Great Outdoors in the last 15 years or so, since giving up full time work due to ill health. I always worked in an office so am making up for lost time now!

The cycle track just around the corner from my home was most tempting, when deciding I needed to get fit after a long bout of ill health. I bought a cheap mountain bike, just in case cycling wasn't for me.

I had really enjoyed cycling as a teenager. Back then there wasn't such a thing as a bike rack. All those massive hills, ALL seemingly on the way home, and usually on a crude boneshaker of a bike, just had to be climbed. Those were the days before mobile phones, and any late arrivals back home would see worried parents conjuring up all sorts of accidents you'd been involved in.

Remembering my reintroduction to cycling and my first ride or two down towards Blackpill, my limited fitness ensured I didn't go too far, and then bit by bit, at last, I'd made it to Mumbles – hurrah!!

If anyone cycled towards me getting too close, I just stopped, pretending I really needed to, until the coast was clear for me to go on a bit more, until someone else made eye contact – EEK!. Anyway, I did progress and regained my love of cycling.

A 35 mile ride is an average ride for me. “The outdoor bug” will have me walking or cycling the following day, (plus the day after that?!) so this mileage suits me. I enjoy the scenery and “sample” the coffee on route – did I mention the cake??!!

I also discovered walking at this time, and could tell you lots, but our editor has strictly limited me to 500 words so I'll save that for the ramblers, who I'm sure will be more accommodating – joke!

As my interest in cycling progressed I got involved with local groups, including *Wheelrights* hoping I've done my little bit to help.

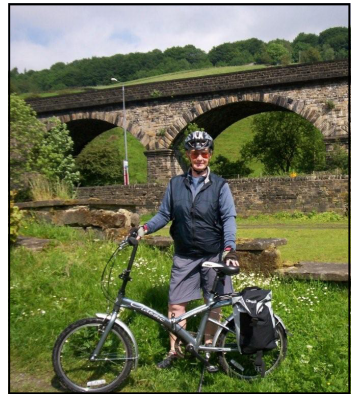
I'm a great believer in everyone doing their little bit to make light work of a BIG job.

Unfortunately “volunteers” can be thin on the ground.

I helped at the Beginners cycle classes, and got immense pleasure at getting newcomers onto their bikes.

We aren't involved with that now, but there wasn't a follow up, to take these newbies for short rides and importantly to show them the lovely cycle tracks we have in and around Swansea. It always surprises me that some people will not walk and/or cycle by themselves – I don't think this is just women??!!

So last year we started the Cappuccino rides, for these kind of people, easy rides for new(er) riders, and we have just had our first ride of 2017. Next time I will update you on how these rides progress this summer.



Al – on a 35 mile ride?



## Your next bike?

There has been some talk recently about the possibility of a bike rental scheme in Swansea, such as that provided by *nextbike*. Their website ([www.nextbike.co.uk](http://www.nextbike.co.uk)) shows that the nearest city to us where they operate is Bristol. However, I learnt that there was one in Cologne so, as I recently spent a few days there, I decided to investigate.

The locations of bike stands where you can pick up and return a bike are shown on an on-line map by blue tear-drops with a cycle emblem. You click one of these and it tells you how many bikes are available. I tried this on the Cologne map but was puzzled to find “0” bikes available on every tear-drop. On getting to Cologne I found the location of one such stand (near the Cathedral) only to find no evidence of *nextbike*! Subsequently I came across the bike pictured, from which I learnt that KVB had got together with *nextbike* to provide a rental service. If you blow up the pic. you can see “*nextbike*” above KVB’s logo.



In Bristol there are bikes at the stands. To rent a bike registration is needed. Then you can pay by credit card or direct debit. The cost is £1/half hour, less if you take out a £60 annual sub. See the website for the details.

David Naylor

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### Ode to a Bicycle

I'm your little bicycle  
Would you like to ride me?  
Think of all the fun that we can have  
Once you're astride me.  
We'll get rained upon in Anglesea  
And sunned upon in Spain  
And when I get a flat  
I'll let you pump me up again.

You never know what's round the bend  
Or over every hill  
You never know how life will end  
Until it does... until.....  
So take me where wild Lycra grows  
The chains of freedom ringing  
And tell me jokes and stroke my spokes  
And set my sprockets singing.

I'm your little bicycle  
Standing in a shed.  
I watch the spiders, bats and owls  
While you're tucked up in bed.  
My tyres are flat, my chain is slack  
My clusters stuck on slow.  
I'm rusty as a pair of shears  
My gears? We'll never know.

I'm your little bicycle  
I used to be maroon.  
You called me Queen Amphetamine  
I flew you round the moon.  
What I was, still is my friend  
And what I am is yours.  
Please bring my twilight to an end  
And open up these doors

This poem is an adaptation by **Andrew Malim** of his longer poem in  
<http://www.cyclinguk.org/blog/samjones/ode-bicycle>.

## The Devil's Staircase

It was a beautiful spring Wednesday and I couldn't resist the temptation to join CTC Swansea on their 'Awayday' to mid Wales. This ride would start and finish in Llandoverly. From there it would head north over the Sugar Loaf to Llanwrtyd Wells, then up a lovely valley through Abergwesfen, over the dreaded Devil's Staircase and back to Llandoverly past Llyn Brienne Dam – a circuit of 42 miles.

Preferring not to drive to the start point and thinking that it would be more enjoyable drinking coffee while the others struggled over the Sugar Loaf, I elected to take the train to Llanwrtyd Wells. I knew that I could expect good coffee and a choice of cakes in the café across the road from the Neuadd Arms. I was not disappointed. The 'Heart of Wales' train times were convenient. Mine arrived in Llanwrtyd at 11.18. To compensate for not cycling over the Sugar Loaf I got on the train at Pontarddulais having cycled the 12 miles from my home in Pennard.

I had just got started on my coffee and cake when the CTC group arrived. There were 17 of them! They seemed happy to join me for coffee. (Would they have had this break had it not been for me?) The management coped very well with this sudden influx.

The Staircase was as devilish as expected. The ascent is a little under 200m, but it's 1 in 5 for much of it. Some cycled all the way but most, like me, walked at least part of it. One, whom, I think, only I can top in years, cycled up it twice! He is trying to get fit for an ascent of Mont Ventoux later this year.

The descent to the south was just about as steep, thereafter undulating along the east side of Llyn Brienne reservoir. We stopped to eat our sandwiches at the picnic spot (pictured) a couple of miles from the dam (which is at the left end of the reservoir in the picture).

We all got back to Llandoverly, tired and happy after a ride through stupendous scenery in perfect conditions, and not a puncture between us! There is something about the fresh greenness of the countryside at this time of year, not to be matched later.

I joined the others for a cuppa before catching the 16.48 back to Pontarddulais. Nicely rested I enjoyed the final 12 miles back home, glad of a tail wind which I had had to push against on the way out. I clocked up 55 miles by the time I got home and was glad to be tired rather knackered after a memorable day's cycling.



David Naylor

## Companion rides

Companion Rides were set up at BikeAbility (Wales) this spring to meet a real need for accompanied rides, especially for those people that have been affected by a stroke, are partially sighted, require a companion to go on a specialist cycle (i.e. side-by-side tandem) or lack confidence to go off on a recumbent, tricycle or conventional bicycle on their own.

The rides are from our venue, down the Clyne Valley to the sea. The participants are accompanied by a staff member or volunteer so that they can be assisted if they get into any difficulty, such as running out of steam on the return journey.

The Companion Rides run on Wednesdays from 10 am till 12 noon and, thanks to the local authorities Park Lives project, are free. However, booking is required if you need a cycle.

Contact Mike or Cez on 07968 109145 or 07584 044284.

**Mike Cherry**



## Forthcoming events

See the 'Events' page of [www.wheelrights.org.uk](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk) for possible changes to these events.

### **BikeAbility (Wales) Companion Rides**

10.00-12.00 Wednesdays from BikeAbility's Dunvant RFC base. These are gentle rides, suitable for beginners. Free but bike hire is available. See the 'Rides/Commutes' page.

### **Cappuccino Rides**

With support for these gentle rides growing towards the end of last year they started again this year on 2 May. If the interest and the weather holds it is hoped to hold them fortnightly, at least during the summer. For details see the 'Rides/Commutes' page of the website and the 'Events' page for when. The venue is now the Environment Centre.

### **Wheelrights Routes Meeting/rides.**

Meet 10.00 in Environment Centre café when ride will be decided. Normally on the first Saturday in month. Check 'Events' page of website for confirmation of dates.

### **U3A Rides.**

10.00am starting at various locations. Normally on last Monday in month, but to meet demand some additional rides have been provided. See the Rides/Commutes' and 'Events' pages for details and confirmation of dates.

### **June**

#### **BIKE WEEK: 10-18 June.**

Check 'Events' page for details. Also visit <http://bikeweek.org.uk>.

### **July**

#### **Sunday, 16 July: British Heart Foundation bike ride.**

Choice of 12, 28 or 46 mile rides round Gower Peninsula.

### **August**

#### **12-19 August: GOWER CYCLING FESTIVAL.**

Full details on our 'Cycling Festival' page: [www.wheelrights.org.uk/GCF17](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk/GCF17). Note that we would like you to register in advance. (It is only £5.)

