



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 55 Spring 2021

www.wheelrights.org.uk



Looking north from Alder Way.

Gowerton – Kingsbridge open.

A decade in gestation this route is at last open, at least between Alder Way in Gowerton and Kingsbridge. The link to NCR 4 via the Railway Station is, at the time of writing, under construction. Its continuation north to Pontarddulais requires the upgrading of the existing link to Gorseinon and a new route north of Grovesend. Ongoing work on the Pentre Bridge, expected to be completed in April, forms part of it.

While this route is great for those who want to access Gowerton Station, particularly from the north, what is needed is a short cut at the south end which bypasses the station. This link could be created by means of a new bridge across the railway using the existing abutments. It would involve only 100m of new path and would connect with NCR 4 via the car park adjacent to the south abutment and to the present path near the north abutment.

This issue

With e-bikes now so prominent, our Chair kicks off on p. 2 with an upbeat account of Welsh Gov. support for them. This is followed by an update from Leonie on the Mount Pleasant e-bike project. Then on p. 5 Hamish tells us about how his cargo e-bike replaces his car.

On p.3 Nick Guy and I invite feedback on how roads can be made safer. Then, also on the safety theme, Allyson highlights the value of lighting.

On p.6 we have something rather different. And then some tips about how cyclists and horse riders can coexist from Jenni of the British Horse Society.

Finally a note on *Wheelrights* contribution to the Commonplace Active Travel Routes project.

David Naylor

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to David Naylor by mid May. (Email: david@davidjnaylor.plus.com)

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The Welsh Gov. support E-bikes

March 12th 2021 just may turn out to have been a momentous day. For on that day, Lee Waters MS, Deputy Transport Minister, announced a new scheme for e-bikes and cargo bikes, noting: "A cargo-bike ... also offers capacity to carry heavy (e.g. >100kg) and bulky loads."

Four e-bike 'hubs' will be established in Rhyl, Swansea, Aberystwyth (including links into Newtown) and Barry. These will offer low cost hire and long term loan of e-bikes for local residents. Two cargo e-bike 'libraries offering trials of cargo e-bikes, advice and training for local businesses and residents, will be established in Aberystwyth and Swansea.

Numerous studies indicate that e-bikes lead to an increase in active travel, and therefore help to combat climate change, air pollution and congestion, all whilst delivering significant health and wellbeing benefits for our communities. Furthermore, e-bikes help to make active travel an accessible, attractive and viable option for a greater proportion of society. E-bikes have broader appeal than conventional bikes, appealing more to older people and women. They are on average used for longer trips than conventional cycles – making them particularly relevant for rural communities.

Cargo e-bikes have the potential to address the rise in van traffic, which has increased by around a quarter in Wales since 2008. Their use can replace vans for short journeys, for example in last mile deliveries, and therefore will also help to reduce emissions, air pollution and congestion in our towns and cities'

Whilst van traffic has risen by 25% in the last decade, Van traffic casualties continue to be much higher than HGVs whose drivers are trained and regulated. So, two more cargo e-bikes will join the one that the Santander bike scheme uses on the cycle ways of Swansea Foreshore.. Of course, the devil is in the detail and we will know much more in a month or two's time, when Sustrans takes on an important role in the delivery of the new scheme.

John Sayce

The Mount Pleasant E-bike Project



Buds are definitely sprouting fast and our e-bike project is moving forward with gusto too. Thanks to the kind support of *Wheelrights* members, Swansea Council, Coastal Housing and many others, our Mount Pleasant Community e-bike scheme exceeded its funding target by mid December, allowing us to buy two Merida Espresso e-bikes and a mountain e-trike.

Early April will see the bike shelter and charging cable installed in Montpelier Terrace, half way up Mount Pleasant. The e-bikes will be available for testing soon after the security system is installed. The official launch date will be set once lockdown-easing permits.

It's wonderful to see that Community bike share schemes are flourishing as evidenced by Collaborative Mobility's ([https:// como.org.uk](https://como.org.uk)) new "Setting up a community bike share scheme" online booklets.

Interested to join the advisory group? Please contact leonie@geni-us.net.

Sunset drinks in the Mumbles anyone?

Leonie Ramondt

How can our Roads be made Safer?

A debate is needed, which perhaps this note can initiate, on how best to make our roads safer for cyclists and pedestrians. The ideal solution would be to have tracks for each of them separate from roads. Unfortunately there is rarely the space (nor the funding) for this, so the choice has generally been between on-road cycle lanes or off-road shared use paths. There are two more options: 'hybrid' tracks, which provide light segregation between cyclists and the other modes, and cycle priority streets. So what is best?

Nearly all the recently constructed routes in Swansea have been shared use paths (SUPs). The huge increase in walking and cycling associated with the Covid pandemic has contributed to increased complaints, and this has prompted Cabinet Member Cllr Mark Thomas to float the idea of a move away from SUPs. This is supported by Sustrans, and fits well with Cycling UK's "Space for Cycling" campaign and the Welsh Gov.s plan to make 20 mph the default speed limit in residential streets. However, it was found some years ago that in Copenhagen there were more 'incidents' involving cyclists on roads with cycle lanes than on roads without. This raises the question of the safety of road cycle lanes.

Here we are guided by the "Design Guidance" which incorporates the requirements of the 2013 Active Travel (Wales) act. The definitions of the various types of path it gives can help us decide what is appropriate. Key ones, with the relevant Design Elements in the AT Guidance shown in brackets, are as follows:

- Shared Use Paths (DE033) are off-road paths and should be at least 3m wide (2.5m on quieter secondary routes). A white line separating cyclists from pedestrians is appropriate when usage is high. (The threshold is not defined.)
- Cycle Lanes are intended for roads with speeds up to 30 mph. There are two types: mandatory (DE013) marked by a continuous white line and advisory (DE014) by a broken line. The former is preferred and is reserved for cyclists. Cars can use the latter when it is safe to do so. Pont y Cob Road between Gowerton and Loughor is an example. It has advisory cycle lanes on both sides.
- Hybrid Cycle Tracks (aka Stepped Cycle Tracks) provide light segregation from both pedestrians and motor vehicles, from which they are separated by kerbs (at least on the road side). The picture shows one in Bradford. Note the separation from the road.
- Quiet Streets and Cycle Streets (DE011/12) are streets on which cyclists have priority. The difference between them is that a Cycle Street is a primary cycle route. Quiet streets are suitable for residential areas where there is a 20 mph speed limit. They can also be used in rural areas. A candidate would be the Marsh Road between Llanrhidian and Crofty on the Gower Peninsula.



Let us know your views about the various options. This will assist our Routes Group in their contribution to the ongoing consultation on the new Active Travel Network Map.

Nick Guy and David Naylor

Lighting on the Foreshore

In January I was walking part of the Mumbles Way with a friend and joined the seafront cycle path near West Cross Inn where workmen were erecting some bollards, telling us they were "lighting."

I was walking towards Mumbles so didn't see the full extent of the work they were doing at that time.



On my return home, I tried to find out more information but failed to do so.

At a *Wheelrights* Zoom meeting, a few weeks later, Mark Childs, West Cross Councillor, announced he was responsible, together with Councillor Des Thomas, (using their combined West Cross allowance) for this great idea and fantastic addition to our foreshore. I counted 82 lights between West Cross and Norton. This will enhance our beautiful seafront path.

They use LED lighting so have low electricity use, and are on from early in the morning until late at night, thus ensuring this is a safer environment enabling more people to make full use of this great Swansea Bay asset.

An area that would normally have been out of bounds during hours of dusk/darkness for a lot of people is now accessible. This of course could be as early as around 4pm during the winter.

I think the very long line of lighting bollards look so impressive, even in the day when they aren't lit! I have seen many people stop to admire them when I've been passing.

I have since been in touch with the Councillors covering Sketty and Brynmill areas to see if they might consider doing something similar on the paths in their areas, particularly the very dark section at the bottom of Sketty Lane.

They have all agreed to consider my request.

I have also been campaigning for lighting in the two parks near me: Brynmill and Singleton. Both are completely dark at night time.

Plus the Government at last seem to have acknowledged the poor street lighting that has evolved over the years.

I think this subject is very timely given the recent publicity on issues around women's safety.

The big message is: *see and be seen*.

Let's hope we get a positive response, and that the Council and local Councillors are listening.

Watch this space . . . !

Allyson Evans

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A Cargo Bike's the answer

I used to think e-bikes were for other people. I happily rode my touring bike all over the place; for work, commuting, errands and fun. The thing is, though, I also own and use a car. Anyone that uses a car will have a point on their personal spectrum of journeys when they opt for the car over the bike. That tipping point will vary from person to person, day to day, depending on distance, journey purpose, time, weather, mood, load and luggage. To use the car less and bike more you must push this threshold towards the further, heavier, wetter, faster end of the continuum. I have a tendency to do this. But we all have our limits, and it used to bother me that I had to reach for the car all too often.

Pondering on how I could stretch that limit, it dawned on me one day that my purist attitude to cycling was actually stopping me from reducing my car mileage. That if I opened my mind to using an e-bike I could probably cycle further and leave the car at home for many journeys that I simply would not have made on the tourer. What's more, if the e-bike was a cargo bike, I could carry bigger loads and replace yet more car journeys.

I really wanted a front loading box bike. Reise and Muller produce a range of super cool box bikes, but they are massive, hard to store and hard to get through kissing gates and into trains and houses. After many hours of internet research I opted for a long-tail rear loader, settling on a Tern GSD, a bike that *Cycling UK's* Dan Joyce waxed lyrical about in a *cycle* review.

By the time I picked the bike up in mid August I had got cold feet. I just couldn't picture myself on an e-bike and felt I was giving in by buying one. With a heavy heart I installed panniers and an extra front rack and set out for a ride. Within minutes I was converted. This thing was fun. It is solid, manoeuvrable, steady and capable. You can ride it hard and get a real sweat up, or you can also sit back and let the electrons take the strain while you enjoy the view. Within days I had completed a click and collect shopping excursion from Oxwich to Fforestfach and back bringing about 100kg of shopping home with ease.

I have had the bike just over six months now and have covered about 2000 miles. So how is it going? Every single journey on the GSD has had a purpose; any recreational rides are done on my other bikes. It has carried shopping, my weekly veg. box, inflatable kayaks, firewood, tools, work equipment. I have even transported one of my daughters on it (Pictured). It has definitely cut into car use. The choice to ride not drive is definitely easier to make when you know the bike can carry more stuff or fight headwinds and hills against the clock.

I am very pleased with the choice of model. It wasn't cheap but it is a very clever design and is a high quality machine. It is amazingly compact for a long-tail cargo bike and can be enhanced by a massive range of accessories. It rides well unladen and the lights and riding position make it really good for night riding. Best of all, I look forward to every ride.

Hamish Osborn

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Introducing the Turf game

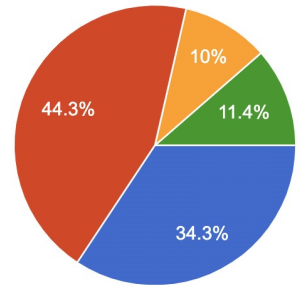
I have been missing my regular group rides with *Cycling UK* (CTC) Swansea group, as it often got me out when I would have put off riding solo. A friend asked me if I had tried an App based game called Turf. I am not much of a gamer and took a bit of persuading but am glad I gave it a try.



The game works on a phone App from Turf.com and uses GPS to locate areas dotted all over Swansea, Port Talbot, Neath and Llanelli, in parks, paths and at landmarks. The idea is to cycle/walk to them with the Turf App running and "take the zone". There are points for each take and league tables for Wales, the UK and Scandinavia where the game originated over 10 years ago. Hotspots in the UK are in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the Midlands, London and Bristol.

In Wales the Swansea area is by far the most active. It seems not yet to have caught on in Cardiff. There are also active areas in North and West Wales.

Turf is very much like orienteering, and gets you out to places you might never otherwise visit. Some of my recent zone taking trips have led me to spectacular views from Kilvey Hill while the goat herder rounds up his herd, south of the tracks in Llanelli where I came across a quirky water feature (illustrated) and walking out to Mumbles lighthouse at low tide.



- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely/Never



To allow my phone to last longer I have made a handlebar bracket and run a lead along the top tube to a battery and charger unit (Ebay) in the pannier mounted top bag. The phone slides in from the side and is retained by the charger plug.



To get started, visit Turf.com to read up about it, download the App, give yourself a Turf name and join in. The more people taking part, the more zones can get added.



Oscar "Chesso" Chess

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Bikes and Horses

Do you know what to do when you meet a horse rider when cycling out and about? The joint British Horse Society and *Cycling UK* message to both horse riders and cyclists is to “be nice, say hi”. Horse riders and cyclists are both vulnerable road users and also share public bridleways where the 1968 Countryside Act dictates that cyclists must give way to horse riders and pedestrians. That shared use and the fact that the public bridleway network in Swansea is interconnected by roads, and in parts forms part of the National Cycle Network and/or Active Travel routes, means that horse riders cannot easily avoid encountering cyclists and vice versa. So we all need to “share with care”.

Horse riders may be nervous, especially about encountering cyclists due to previous bad experiences. Horses are prey animals whose vision is adapted to escape from large predators which chase or ambush them. This means horses may startle, leap and even run at unexpected movement in their peripheral vision. Their ears are equally sensitive to sudden noises, like gear changes or noisy brakes. Cyclists, quite by accident, present themselves to the horses’ instincts as deadly predators!

Cyclists usually approach horses from behind or in front. Horses have a blind spot directly behind them and may not see a cyclist until they begin to overtake – naturally this can startle some. Likewise the rider might not see the cyclist, and be equally startled! Saying a cheery “hello!” and slowing down as soon as possible helps to draw the horse and rider’s attention while still leaving enough time for the rider to respond safely. This might be to move their horse to a wider section of the route or to move onto a side road or lay by so that there is enough room to pass safely.

With eyes on the sides of their head, horses also have poor depth perception and struggle to focus on approaching cyclists and identify them as non-threatening. This can cause some to freeze and then panic and spin away as we continue to approach. This risk isn’t always apparent because the horse simply looks like they are standing still. For this reason cyclists should be prepared to follow the rider’s instruction to slow down or stop. If they’ve already introduced themselves with that cheery “hello!” they’ll have opened a line of communication that can help us all stay safe.

To summarise, follow these simple rules :

- Alert the horse rider you are there by calling out in advance.
- Give the horse and rider time to react to your call of ‘Hi’.
- Never pass on the inside of a horse and be aware of pinch points in the track or on the road ahead.
- Slow down or stop if asked to do so.
- Pass wide and slow - at least a car’s width if possible.

Visit: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/common-incidents/cycles>, the British Horse Society website, for more about how to ride safely around horse riders and carriage drivers. It includes informative videos created in partnership with Cycling UK.



Jenni Nellist
(British Horse Soc.)

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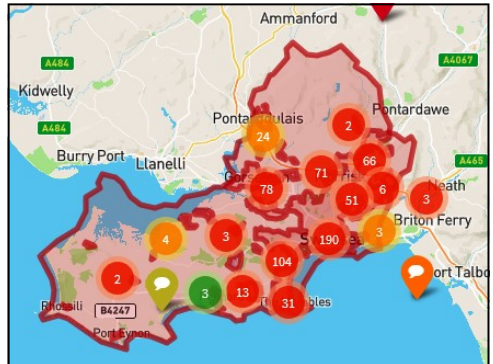
The Commonplace Exercise.

This may not be news to many of you because the exercise has been so well supported that it is likely that many of the contributors are *Wheelrights* members. (If not they ought to be!) For the benefit of those for whom it may be news let me explain what it's about.

Recently the Welsh Government set up the Commonplace website to get feedback from people across Wales to assist Local Authorities produce their Active Travel Network Maps (ATNM). These, it appears, combine the Existing Route (ERM) and Integrated Network (INM) maps required by the 2013 (Wales) Active Travel Act.

The website has separate sections for each county. These became live at various dates early this year, Swansea in late February. Response took the form of adding a pin to a map of the county to locate the position of an existing or proposed active travel route and completing a form to comment on the route.

Inserted is the map as in late March. It can be expanded to show individual pins. There are in the region of 1000 of them, not all indicated on the insert. *Wheelrights* Routes Group have decided to assess them.



When this decision was taken there were only a handful of pins on the map, so it is a much bigger task than we anticipated and we are only part way through it. When complete we hope to have something to help Swansea Council come up with an acceptable ATNM. The website closes on 9 April so there is still time for you to place a pin (or two).

As well as the information on the forms completed for each pin, the map is useful in that it highlights the locations where active travel provision is most needed.

David Naylor

Forthcoming events

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

Wheelrights Routes Group meeting/rides.

These are usually at 10.00am on the second Saturday of each month. During lockdown these have been on Zoom. When permitted we expect to revert to either the Environment Centre or Ripples Café. The next is scheduled for 10 April.

Cappuccino Rides.

Allyson hopes to revive these when we are allowed to. Keep an eye on the Events page.

Other

Bike week is from 30 May to 5 June.