



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 1 Summer 2007

www.wheelrights.org.uk



Fabian Way is bridged

The photo (taken on 22 July) shows the new bus and cycle path bridge being lifted into position. It replaces the old "Sidings" Bridge which used to take NCN 4 across Fabian Way. The new cycle path will be alongside and separate from the bus lane. This will be a cable-stayed structure not unlike the Sail Bridge across the River Tawe. When opened it will link the new section of path to Swansea with the existing NCN 4 to the east.

Swansea Bay Strategy

Wheelrights have contributed to the consultation on this proposal for a major new development in Swansea Bay. We are *not happy* with what is proposed. While we support planned improved amenities and the proposal to widen the foreshore path for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians we are against a plan to increase parking in Mumbles — we believe it is contrary to the Council's sustainability policies — and we do not want a bridge at Blackpill. We do however think that there is a case for a cycle/pedestrian bridge across the Mumbles Road 150m west of Brynmill Lane.

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Copy deadline

Correspondence or articles for the next issue should be e-mailed to David Naylor (address below) by 2 Nov. 2007.

For our reasons visit our website where you will find our written response on the "Various" page. Also there you will find Sustrans response and it is encouraging that they also are concerned about the increased parking and do not want a bridge at Blackpill.

Why a newsletter?

A priority when *Wheelrights* was revived at the start of this year was to set up a website. This has been done and the writer enjoyed the challenge of learning enough HTML to get it going and the even greater challenge of responding to feedback to make it acceptable.

But the problem with a website like this is to know how frequently to update it and how long to keep news items on it. Ideally it should be updated whenever something new of local interest happens, but it being a one man effort this is not practical and it gets updated on a fairly irregular basis.

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An advantage of a newsletter is that it covers a definite period. In this case we are planning quarterly issues. The news in it can therefore relate to that period and will not disappear into the ether as it would with every update were it on the website. Also there is flexibility; it can be viewed or downloaded from the website (as a pdf file), it can be e-mailed to *Wheelrights* members or if they are not on e-mail posted to them. Earlier editions can be kept for reference and it is proposed that these also will be made available on the website, as indeed is the last issue of *Swansea Sustrans Rangers Newsletter* (No. 12, Nov. 2006) which this newsletter both replaces and extends.

So that the scope of this newsletter is not too restricted (and because some readers would otherwise get bored!) we plan to keep the articles short and where appropriate — as has been done in this issue — refer the reader to the website for the ‘full Monty’. But we do not want to exclude the occasional longer article of general interest, and the last in this issue comes in that category.

I have undertaken the editing of this first issue but think that others with the interest and the time might take this over on an *ad hoc* basis.

David Naylor (Issue editor)

Your comments

Well actually there aren't any! There couldn't very well be in a first issue. The purpose of this is to provoke you into providing some for future issues! So if there is correspondence we will provide a correspondence column.

For a start you might wish to comment on what this newsletter should attempt to cover. Those of us involved so far have had differing opinions and this issue editor has responded to some (but not all!) of the suggestions made.

Alternatively you might wish to comment on matters raised in the articles. David Judd's article on p. 3 is thought provoking and you might like to put forward your thoughts on, for example: how the sometimes conflicting requirements of commuting cyclists, beginners and families with young kids and pedestrians can best be met.

City Centre

No, the picture was not taken in Swansea! But we could do with some more of those cycle stands.

In May we sent letters to the appropriate bodies enquiring what provision is being made for cyclists in both the SA1 development and the City Centre.

An encouraging reply was received to the former from Halcrows, the City and County of Swansea's consultants. It reported that employers in the area were to be encouraged to provide cycle parking and other facilities for their employees and that there should be a 20mph speed limit in the area. We have welcomed these proposals and trust that they will be adopted. (Currently they are recommendations.)

Our second enquiry about the provision for cyclists in the City Centre resulted in an invitation to us to attend the *Transport Forum* meeting on 12 July, which your Secretary duly did. This is perceived as a recognition that cycling is a form of transport and not just a leisure activity. (Hopefully underlining this your Secretary cycled the eight miles from his home to the meeting in heavy rain. While damp round the edges he proved – at least to himself – that a bike can be used even under such adverse conditions.) An outcome of this is that we should be consulted on future plans affecting cycling in the City Centre, such as to how this can be fitted in with the Swansea metro development. The mechanism for this consultation is the *Cycle Forum* and it's associated Technical sub-group on both of which we have representation.



View from the saddle

More consideration needed?

It seems summer is at last with us and we can enjoy the fantastic cycle routes in and around Swansea to the full, whether for a trip to work or more leisurely recreational trips. The popularity of routes such as the Foreshore and Clyne Valley grows each year and at times they are very busy indeed. It is for me a delight to see the many families out with their bikes, particularly young children enjoying the freedom and achievement cycling brings.

What we must not forget is that these routes are shared with other users. Cyclists, like walkers and skate-boarders, young and old must behave accordingly. If we do not then our wish for the development of more routes, especially non segregated shared ones, is likely to receive opposition especially from those with disability.

The bicycle is a vehicle and has the potential, if ridden inconsiderately, of doing serious damage to other users, particularly pedestrians and children but also to other cyclists.

I have noticed, more so in recent years, increased riding at speed on these hugely popular off road routes at busy times, often by experienced cyclists, who see their journey time more important than the consideration for other users. Apart from the inherent danger, this can lose us the support of the majority of users — the pedestrians.

It would be retrograde to start erecting notices or introducing speed limits, because when all is quiet on the work trip you might crack on a bit, but for heaven's sake take it easy, especially at busy times, enjoy the ride and above all smile...

Happy cycling

David Judd

Cycle Training

We held classes for adult beginners on 28 April (when the photo on the right was taken) and on 23 June. On both occasions the weather was good and nearly all the participants were cycling by the end of the two hour session.

First the pedals are removed so that the bike is ridden like a hobby horse. When they can balance and steer we put the pedals on. The next challenge is to get going and turn those pedals. For most this is soon achieved and before they know it they are cycling away!

Note that the next beginners class, originally scheduled for 8 Sept., has had to be postponed. We are now targeting Sat. 22 Sept., the last day of European Mobility Week (see below), but this has to be confirmed. It will be publicised nearer the time..



European Mobility Week

This is from 16 — 22 September. The idea is to promote alternatives to the car. Swansea plans to be one of the *participating cities*. To qualify for this they needed to close a street on one day. The plan is to close Wind Street on Friday 21st and provide a range of events there and in Castle Square on that day. Visit www.mobilityweek.eu for general information.

A “peloton” of cyclists will ride from Blackpill to the town centre on Saturday 15th September to advertise the week. Come and join us! For details see *Future events* on p. 5.



Connect2

Connect 2 is Sustrans' project competing for a single £50 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The People's Millions competition.

As the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, Sustrans works on practical projects so people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Other Sustrans projects include the National Cycle Network, Safe Routes to Schools, Bike It and TravelSmart. Connect 2 is all about connecting people to people and people to places, as well as creating a sense of community pride. The project aims to change the way people think about their local area so walking and cycling become their first and natural choice for everyday journeys. The result will be a more active and positive future for ourselves and our children.

To deliver this, Sustrans is working with partners around the UK to overcome long-standing barriers such as busy roads, railways or rivers that are dividing communities and making it difficult for people to travel by foot or bike as part of their everyday lives.

There are 79 constituent schemes in the UK overall, 9 of which are in Wales. There are two main schemes in the Swansea area. These are:

Clydach – providing a new alignment of National Cycle Route 43 using a former railway bridge and a new route through the INCO Mond Nickel works onto the canal towpath. This avoids the current pipe bridge which is narrow and difficult for cyclists.

Afan Valley and Port Talbot – this scheme links Afan Forest Park to Aberafan seafront using former railway trackbeds and tramways, with links to communities along the valley and through the centre of Port Talbot. It will also link in to the existing National Cycle Route 4.

Completion of the North Gower Trail – This is a reserve scheme at present but may be funded if other schemes cannot be implemented.

Connect 2 is one of six projects competing for the Big Lottery Grant, but the only one to cover Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as England. The others are: The Edge, The Eden Trust, Cornwall; Sherwood, the Living Legend Project, Nottingham County Council, Sherwood Forest; Inspired, the Science Museum, Swindon; Waterlinks, Somerset County Council, Somerset; A Million People - The Black Country as an Urban Park, Black Country Consortium, Black Country.

Each project will have a short film shown during the week of 3rd to 6th December, with public voting over the weekend of 8th and 9th December. The winner will be announced in a further programme on 10th December.

There are a variety of ways to get involved in supporting the project and find out more about your local schemes. Log on to www.sustransconnect2.org.uk or call 0845 058 1373 for details.

Encourage friends, colleagues and organisations to support the project and help Sustrans win the vote. Various events and activities are being organized to publicise the project and local schemes over the coming months with the aim of encouraging people to vote and support Connect 2. If you can help with these or require more information contact our Swansea office on 01792 467954..

And, of course, don't forget to vote in December!

Ryland Jones

Sustrans 30th birthday ride

To celebrate their 30th birthday Sustrans organised a week's cycle tour which started in Bristol on Friday 29th June, followed NCNs 4 and 47 to Swansea where they spent the night of 1 July, crossed the channel to Ilfracombe and returned to Bristol via Tiverton, Wells and Bath.

There were about 100 taking part; most were camping. They covered around 60 miles on most days, and the weather could not have been much worse. It was a tough ride, appropriately called the *Channel Challenge*.



They were given a good reception in Swansea. David Judd (previously SW Wales Manager but now a Sustrans consultant) and his assistants had arranged for them to camp in Duvant Rugby Clubs grounds and laid on a magnificent party for them there. There was excellent food, musicians from Penclawdd and four from the Duvant male voice choir. The photo shows Ellie, Sustrans new assistant in the Swansea office, being presented with a Duvant Rugby Club shirt by David Judd while the choir sing a Welsh song. John Grimshaw is behind her.

In addition they were given a good send off the next morning. Ten of us — Swansea Rangers and others — guided them to the docks and bade them *bon voyage* as they sailed in the *Oldenburg*, first for a stop off on Lundy and then to Ilfracombe. The photo shows them on their way out from Swansea Docks.



A full account of the Swansea stopover can be found on the "Various" page of the website.

Future events

7.30pm Mon., 3 September. *Wheelrights* 'working group' meeting in Yacht Club, E. Burrows Rd, Swansea. (Any interested *Wheelrights* member is welcome to attend.)

11.00am Sat., 15 September. Cycle ride from Blackpill to City Centre to advertise *European Mobility Week* Meet in car park by cycle crossing before 11.00.

Some time in Autumn: A meeting with a senior person from the Council to discuss with *Wheelrights* members the way forward for cycling in the Swansea Bay area.

A flavour of the CTC

What follows is an extract from one of Bob Evans' accounts of CTC rides the full version of which can be found on his website: www.wennol.co.uk (click *Cycling*). It is a "Wednesday" ride (The local CTC runs rides on Wednesdays and Sundays) and describes a ride in the Gower on 18 July this year.

A Quick Pop to Pennard

Really good turnout today - 15 of us met at The Railway Inn for our ride to Pennard, great to see Chris and Ken with us for the second week in a row. I had the responsibility of leading and after attending a DA meeting last week and being told about Risk Assessment and so on I must say that I felt a bit apprehensive. Its not a case of covering oneself against any blame, I also did not want an accident on the ride. So when I explained the route we were taking I did point out the places where we particularly had to take care.

Boring I know but perhaps wise.

The route was to take us up the hill out of Killay then a long circle through Welsh Moor, Fairy Hill, Cefn Bryn, Park Mill then the lunch stop at Pennard. Usually on this particular run we all seem to disperse after lunch because it is close to so many people's homes.

Once at the top of Cefn Bryn it is traditional to enter the 'Who can go down the fastest' competition. A search through the archives throws up just one consistent winner. He is not hampered by a slight but muscular frame, nor is he hampered by a sense of danger. He is Colin! Not even Dynamo Dai, who makes pure mincemeat out of us all when it comes to riding uphill, can compete with this absolutely incredible athlete. (Hopefully, when he reads this he might not be so insulting towards me in the future!! We can but hope.) The rest of us were compensated by the knowledge that we managed to hold back the Gower Bus, if you've been on a Gower Bus you will be really impressed by that! Colin claimed 44mph - I only managed 38mph. All very exhilarating nevertheless.

We turned off at Llethrid Bridge and went through Park Woods stopping at the neolithic burial ground where Bruce Bowbanks, the scout warden, very kindly gave us some of its history. Along with many of our castles and other ancient monuments a great deal of the stones have, over the years, been taken and used for other purposes. Not many people know that a castle existed in Builth Wells and indeed only a mound still remains, the stone was all removed when the town was rebuilt after a fire. Here at Park Woods the stone from the burial grounds was used to build the lime kiln nearby. In those days history carried very little sentiment.

Reaching Park Mill we had two choices, we could either have ridden through the ford or used the footbridge. Colin chose the ford and only by using incredible agility when reaching the slippery part at the far end did he reach the other side safely. I wasn't quite quick enough with the camera so he obliged by going through again. Not wanting to be outdone now that he has his own claim to fame, Walter, he who outstares bears, had a go as well. Sadly neither fell in! (The photo features Walter.)

