



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 16 Summer 2011

www.wheelrights.org.uk

Bike Week is upon us!



This picture was taken at the start of a mass ride in September 2007 from Blackpill to Castle Square. Its purpose then was to advertise European Mobility Week. A similar ride is taking place on Saturday, 18th June, ie during Bike Week which is from 18 – 26 June. Its purpose is to encourage people to get on their bikes and leave the car at home.

This is just one of a number of Swansea Bike Week events which *Wheelrights* and others are organising. Details are given on page 3.

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Editorial

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to *Wheelrights* Secretary (e-mail address below) by mid August.

Some of us have been pretty busy of late. A key activity has been the preparation of a flyer for the Gower Cycling Festival. (See article on p.4) These should be printed by Bike Week, when we hope you will help us distribute them.

In this issue we feature some recent rides which show just how active some of our members are. But the glamour of these events should not distract from *Wheelrights* key theme – the main focus Bike Week– which is to get people out of their cars and on to bikes.

We also update you on the Cycling Festival and draw your attention to an open meeting on 25th July when Alan Kreppell will give a talk. (See p.8.)

David Naylor

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Local news

Loughor link now open

Work on the new NCR 4 section immediately east of Loughor Bridge, the start of which was reported in the last issue, is now complete – well, actually, not quite as the chunk of concrete blocking the east end has yet to be moved and the signing altered. (It currently directs you away from the new section!) But you can now enjoy a nice smooth off-road path which bypasses Culfor Road. The picture shows riders on the *Pioneers Ride* using it as they approached Swansea on 2nd May.

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Sustrans Rangers have been busy.



People usually only take note when things are not what they should be, so next time you are cycling or walking on the Clyne Valley path (NCR 4) north of Dunvant note the swept surface and lack of obstructions on this section. The photo shows Sustrans Ranger Simon Eastwood briefing the writer on the cutting back of the dogwood to the right. The path to the south of this had recently been swept by the Council. This stretch had remained unswept for most of the winter and it is thanks to the efforts of another ranger that it eventually got swept.

David Naylor

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Another Award

It seems to be becoming fashionable for *Wheelrights* members to pick up awards. In 2010 our President, David Judd, was given a special award by Jane Davidson and David Naylor was short listed for a Swansea Sustainability award. (Both reported in the Winter 10/11 issue.) This year David N. was given CTC's Volunteer of the Year for Wales award. He received it at the dinner following CTC's AGM in Weymouth on 14th May. The photo shows the splendid medallion inscribed with his name which he was presented with by Olympic cyclist Magnus Bäckstedt. It features CTC's famous winged wheel. He was also given a framed certificate signed by CTC's President, Jon Snow.



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Bike Week Events

Summary below; for details visit:

: www.wheelrights.org.uk
www.tyhafan.org/our-events



Saturday 18th June

ADULT BEGINNERS CLASS (Wheelrights)

9.30 Civic Centre East Car Park SA1 3SN

Learn how to cycle in two hours! For complete beginners. £5 Fee Ring 01792 206617 (Veronica) or 01792 510470 (Rhian)

MASS BIKE RIDE

12.15 Blackpill Carpark SA3 5AS. Join us in a ride into the City Centre with photo-shoot in Castle Square Stop off at the Environment Centre at about 2.00pm on the return

BIKEABILITY OPEN DAY (11a.m. – 3p.m)

See BikeAbility Wales' range of exceptional adapted bikes, which you may be able to try out. Dunvant Rugby Club SA2 7RU bikeabilitywales@gmail.com

Monday 20th June

NORTH GOWER RIDE (Wheelrights)

6.30p.m. Railway Inn, Killay SA2 7DS. A circular route on cycle paths and quiet North Gower roads, stunning views and a pub stop in Llanrhidian.

Wednesday 22nd June

COMMUTER CHALLENGE (Wheelrights)

From Gowerton to Castle Square by bicycle, bus, train and car (and a kick-bike rider and maybe a runner). The challengers will leave the large car park on the north side of the Gowerton Relief Road near the Commercial Pub at 8.15am.

Sunday 26th June

43-2-C Ride down Swansea Valley

11.00am Pontardawe Inn, Pontardawe. Riding to Swansea Marina and back. (Charity ride for Ty Hafan)

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The Gower Cycling Festival gets into Gear (10-17 September 2011)

This year's Festival is shaping up to be even bigger and better than our first one in 2010.

We are repeating some of the more popular rides from last year and adding several new ones. These include a *City Heights* ride on 13th September in which Claudine will lead us up and down Swansea's notorious hills to explore our urban landscape.

This could be a warm up for her challenging ride to Carreg Cennen Castle three days later. She will take you there the long way round via Ferryside and the unspoilt Towy Valley.— 70 miles with some testing climbs. For those wanting a more direct route to the Castle there will be a shorter and less brisk ride of (only) 48 miles, also with breathtaking views.

Another new ride, this one for less experienced cyclists, is the *Sustrans* Ride on 15th September to the *Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre* at Penclacwydd. This ride is totally on NCR 4, is flat and mostly on cycle paths. It includes a stop at Colin Fielder's (our Treasurer) small holding, Ddol Farm, for a look at his vineyard. Not sure about wine but he is offering tea and cake.

The detailed programme can be found on the Wheelrights website 'Cycling Festival' page (which can alternatively be accessed via www.gowercyclingfestival.org). From this you will note that there is a £3 charge for individual rides payable at the start. However if you plan to take part in more than one ride you can purchase a £5 Festival Pass which entitles you to unlimited rides. These can be ordered in advance using either the booking form on the web page or that on the flyer. The purpose of the Pass is to encourage more to join more than one ride (last year most only joined one) and to get more people from outside the area to make a holiday out of it. But we hope that you locals will support the Festival by also purchasing Passes.

Our thanks go the local CTC Member Group for their support by leading a number of the rides and allowing their regular Sunday and Wednesday rides to be part of the Festival. We are also grateful to The Gower Heritage Centre and Swansea Council for their support.

Help needed

- You can help make the Festival a success in the following ways:
- By displaying a poster in your locality or workplace. (When a poster has been prepared it will be made available either from the organisers or as a pdf download from the website.)
- By distributing flyers (now available from me) at Bike Week events, on the 3rd July BHF Gower Ride and elsewhere.
- By helping at *Wheelrights* stalls; in particular the *Festival of the Tides* at Penclawdd on 13th August. Here the plan is to dress up French style (as 'Johnny Onions') and cycle with the procession to publicise the Gower Cycling Festival.
- By being a Cycling Marshall. We anticipate that we will need several marshals, particularly at the weekends.

If you can help please contact either David Naylor (01792 233755) or myself (01792 476178).

Nick Guy

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Pioneers' Ride

It is some years now since John Grimshaw stood down as Sustrans CEO, but he is far from retired and continues to be very active in promoting cycling across the UK. At least once a year he in collaboration with local people and David Gray, an erstwhile senior Sustrans colleague, organises a ride. This Spring it was the *Pioneers' Ride* from Fishguard to Swansea. It started on Friday, 29th April and ended with a party in the Dunvant RFC on Monday, 2nd May.

These rides are rather special. Some will remember the infamous 2007 Sustrans 30th birthday ride when John G. led a band of nearly 100 from Bristol to Swansea into fierce headwinds and driving rain, followed by a trip across the Bristol Channel in which most were sea-sick. The elements were much kinder for the Pioneers' ride, even so it was no sinecure..

Phil Jones and I decided to join it on the Saturday. We took the train to Haverfordwest and caught up with the Pioneers' riders at Neyland where they had stopped for coffee. They had followed NCR 4 from Newgale where they had camped the previous night.

They were a merry bunch of around 30. There were a lot from the north of England and beyond plus a few from South Wales. There was a good cross-section of ages and, as I have noticed on Sustrans rides, lots of ladies. Of particular note was Ruth from Edinburgh who, demonstrating that you do not need special kit for cycling, cycles in a frock. The picture shows her. The tall fellow on the right is John Grimshaw.



NCR 4 in this part of the world is mostly on quiet country roads or, in the case of the section between Johnston and Neyland along an old railway line. We found the bit between Haverfordwest and Neyland particularly delightful: virtually traffic free lanes, undulating but lacking the energy sapping hills which are such a feature of South Wales.

Phil and I left the group near Saundersfoot and cycled north to Narbeth where we caught a train back to Swansea.

But the Pioneers' riders had not seen the back of me for on the Monday I joined them on their ride round the Gower and also at the party that evening. They had camped the previous night in Pembrey Park and I met up with them on the new section of path just east of Loughor Bridge (Photo on Page 1.) CTC members John Blundell and John Cardy (the local Member Group chairman) joined us there.



The lovely weather which the group had enjoyed from the start continued and the Gower was at its best. We did an anti-clockwise circuit, dividing into two groups: the more energetic cycling to Llangennith and from there off road to Rhossili, while the others headed for the King Arthur in Reynoldston. John G. was keen to explore the off-road section between Hill End and Rhossili. Calls for a coffee stop in the Hill End café were ignored – JG is not easily diverted when he has the bit between his teeth – and we confirmed the cycleability of the bridle path and track which leads to Rhossili. There we enjoyed a pint before the final stage via Mumbles to the Dunvant RFC.

David Judd had organised a splendid party in the Dunvant RFC that evening with a Penclawdd string band and excellent eats. Tenby's Rosie Swale-Pope, famed for running round the world, was guest of honour. Her Dawes Galaxy was for sale. We auctioned it and raised £390 for the Tinker's Hill Bird Sanctuary (Her opening of it last August is described in the Autumn 2010 Newsletter.)

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David Naylor

CTC in London (again) (20-21 April 2011)

There were times during this two day cycle around London when I thought this has to be good material for a Harry Potter style children's story. Somehow we seemed to be under a sort of spell which propelled us smoothly from one interesting vista to another. Within 15 minutes of arriving at Paddington we were speeding towards Camden along picturesque canal paths: alternative communities with their quaint water borne homes one minute, palatial mansions and the monkey enclosure at London Zoo, the next. Amazingly, no one fell in and despite the wondrous distractions, we made it safely to our first stop, Camden Town, for a very reasonably priced tasty lunch.

Cycling through London really does offer a wide variety of sights: Regents Canal and Victoria Park. Hertford Union Canal whizzed by and as we got to the beginning of the Greenway it felt as if we had emerged out into the open country side. A short ride and the Olympic Construction Site popped into view and our afternoon tea stop at the Viewtube café was the perfect place to stop to take in the huge scale of the operation.

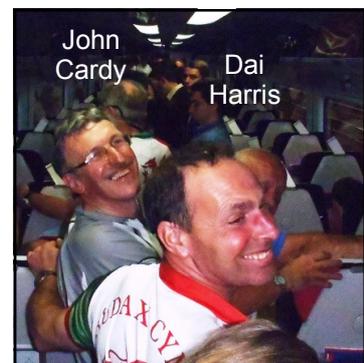
Vast glass walls containing a multitude of gleaming offices greeted us at Canary Wharf. We could just make out little humans working away at their computers. The sun shone and as we cycled away along the Thames path we were very glad we were allowed out to play. Our journey continued via Greenwich, Southwark Park, Bermondsey, Tower bridge, Waterloo Bridge and to our Central London Hotel at Covent Garden.



The group cycling south on superhighway CS7

A surreal sight we must have been, as we wheeled our eight bikes in through the sliding glass doors of the Covent Garden Travelodge, through the reception and into the lifts to the eighth floor, where our rooms for the night were spacious enough to park our bikes. Showered and changed (One of our group transformed from cyclist to city gent, in an immaculate miraculously uncreased summer suit) we emerged to sample the delights of an evening in Central London. A nearby nightclub was a bit pricy so we settled on the dubiously named *Dirty Martini* for a welcome nightcap. The unruly Colin had to be restrained after hijacking a cycle rickshaw on the way back to the hotel.

The next day, after a relaxed breakfast and stroll we were glad to be back on our bikes. We literally flew along the cycle superhighway (a thoroughly recommended adrenalin rush!) out of London to Wimbledon Common and Richmond Park for a lunch with magnificent views. Lovely tea, cakes and a restful chat at Alison Cardy's house was a great battery charger before the journey back to Paddington through London's rush hour traffic. Demand for train seats was unusually high due to it being Good Friday the next day, so the photo you see of John Cardy's smile as we'd just squeezed ourselves onto the train should have the caption "Magic!" and it certainly was! [Ed: his wasn't the only smile!]



Our next two adventures see us with a five day trip around Southern Ireland organised by Phil Jones and a two day tour of Bath organised by Valerio Marino. [Ed: the five day trip in early June will have taken place by the time you read this. Hopefully there'll be a report in the next issue.]

Jan Garvey

The Friday Night Ride hits Swansea

'The Fridays' is an unusual club dedicated to finding quiet roads to cycle along with friends. It all started 6 years ago when Simon Legg and other cyclists in South West London realised that the best way to avoid the traffic between London and Brighton was to leave Hyde Park at midnight and arrive in Brighton in time for a large cooked breakfast. Since then they have visited Southend, Blackpool, Bognor, Whitstable, Dieppe and Brighton many times.

Over 60 cyclists joined the first *Friday Night Ride to the Coast* ride to visit Wales. We gathered in Cardiff Bay on Friday evening 20th May, with cyclists from all over the UK including London, Cardiff and Swansea. Most arrived by train but six intrepid cyclists, led by John Cardy, rode from Swansea to Cardiff for a warm up before the night ride. Even more impressive were the two brave cyclists who left London at 8am and cycled to Cardiff Bay, arriving just in time at 11.30pm!

After Simon Legg's famous safety talk we all switched on our lights at midnight precisely and made the exciting crossing of Cardiff City Centre, as night clubs emptied and happy revellers and taxis attempted to join the peloton.

A short stop at Culverhouse Cross allowed a careful inspection of the late night Tesco facilities (very nice) and then we hit the open road with a climb up to Bonvilston. At this point we left the well-lit A48 and travelled by dark and narrow country lanes through the Vale of Glamorgan. The weather was perfect with light winds and clear skies. We saw stars and a beautiful moon rising over the Bristol Channel, while still managing to avoid potholes and gravel. We passed through the charming village square of St Donats at 2am, almost as silently as mice! The café at the Ewenny Pottery kindly opened and provided sandwiches and mugs of tea between 3 and 4am.

The sky was already beginning to lighten as we followed a scenic route through Porthcawl, before a pre-dawn stop to admire the view of Port Talbot from Kenfig. We didn't quite manage to see sunrise over the steelworks as the clouds gathered and the South-Westerly wind picked up.

We regrouped on Aberavon beach before the final faster push along the A48, over the old bridge and along Fabian Way to the Sail Bridge and Swansea Marina. We made a short stop for photos but cooked breakfast was now calling and, despite the freshening wind, we all made good time to the Pavilion Café on Mumbles Pier.



59 miles cycling along silent Glamorgan roads was an unusual privilege. I would like to say a very big thank you to Simon and Claudine who organised this ride and to all the keen cyclists who manned every junction and rode up and down the group, making sure we were all well.

For more details about this amazing 'club' check the website <http://fnrttc.blogspot.com/>

Colin Fielder

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Forthcoming events

Switching from the car: how Traveline can help

A talk by

Alan Kreppell

(Chair of Traveline Cymru)

Open meeting at **7.00pm on 25th July**

in the

Environment Centre

Pier Street, Swansea

Traveline Cymru is a major organisation which helps people reduce car use and travel more by public transport, bicycle or walking.

Their telephone line (0871 2002233) is answered not from a distant call centre but by locals who actually know where Gowerton Station is. Their website (www.traveline-cymru.info/) can help you plan journeys by bike, bus or train. Alan is a long standing *Wheelrights* member and this promises to be an informative and entertaining evening.

[Ed: Alan was one of the trio who cycled from London to Swansea last Summer, the story of which is given in the Autumn 2010 Newsletter.]

Thursday 16 June: *Wheelrights* meeting

Time: 7.00pm; place: Environment Centre, Pier Street, Swansea. All welcome

18 – 26th June: Bike Week

See page 3 for the programme

Sunday 3 July: BHF South Wales Bike Ride

Registration from 8.00am at the St Helens ground where you start and finish. This year there are 16, 29 and 50 mile courses. Entry £10. [BHF Ride](#) provides more information.

Saturday 16 July: Adult Beginners' Class

Meet at 9.30 at the Civic Centre East car park. If interested in attending please phone Veronica Wood on 01792 206617 or Rhian Evans on 01792 510470.

Sunday 17 July: Parkinson's Charity Rides

20 and 80 mile rides from Swansea. Proceeds in aid of Parkinson's research. For details visit www.parkinsons.org.uk/pedal.

Monday 25 July: *Wheelrights* meeting

Alan Kreppell talk. See box above.

Saturday 10 September: Adult Beginners' Class

Meet at 9.30 at the Civic Centre East car park. If interested in attending please phone Veronica Wood on 01792 206617 or Rhian Evans on 01792 510470.

10 – 17th September: Gower Cycling Festival

See Nick Guy's article on Page 4. Details, including a booking form are now available on the 'Cycling Festival' page of *Wheelrights* website which can also be accessed from www.gowercyclingfestival.org.

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