



Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



Newsletter No. 46 Winter 2018/19

www.wheelrights.org.uk

Who's travelling actively?

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Active Travel Act. So how effective is it?. The answer it seems is that it's not. Welsh Government statistics indicate that between 2013 and 2017 walking for active travel purposes has increased from 46 to 47% of journeys, but that cycling has reduced from 6 to 5% and children cycling to school from 3 to 1%.

So what is being done about it? A WG scrutiny inquiry has come up with a number of recommendations.

These include working with planners and professions such as Civil Engineers, and involving stakeholders more, which I take to include *Wheelrights*. To implement them the Active Travel board would be given more teeth.



This issue

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Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to David Naylor (davidnaylor27@gmail.com) by mid Feb.

Most of the articles herein focus on how to get people travelling actively.

First, our Chair tells us about plans for Walter Road. This is followed by an update from Jayne Cornelius on the Bike hire scheme; then on p. 4, 6 & 7 I describe meetings I have attended which address the issue. On p. 5 our President tells us where to find out about cycle routes. Also on this page learn about a recent technological innovation.

Again, too many articles by me. Something from you please: cycling experiences, opinions, whatever.

David Naylor

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A Cycle Friendly Walter Road?

In a recent survey conducted by *Wheelrights*, people in Uplands Market were approached as were shops and offices lining Walter Rd. Nearly 300 people responded to the three questions put to them.



Firstly, an overwhelming majority (91%) said any future plans for Walter Rd. should be centred on people, shops and offices rather than on the needs of cars and lorries.

Secondly, although Walter Rd has a 30 mph speed limit, 6 out of 10 people said it should be reduced to 20 mph. This would greatly limit the severity of any injuries should there be a traffic accident involving pedestrians or cyclists.

Lastly 242 people expressed a preference for separate cycle lanes rather than a shared use path with walkers such as on the foreshore. Several respondents told us of narrow escapes they had had with those who cycle illegally on pavements. Of course, it can feel quite unsafe cycling in the traffic flow with vehicles impatient to pass you!

Separate cycle lanes therefore seems to be the way forward as it would avoid potential conflict with both pedestrians and motor vehicles and allow a safe and healthy activity.

John Sayce

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NCR 4 widening



Work has started on widening the foreshore path (NCR 4) between Blackpill and Sketty Lane. The photo, looking SW, shows it in progress in early November.

This is one of the ten projects funded by the £2.1m Swansea has been awarded. See the article on p.2 of the Autumn Newsletter. (#45)

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Cycling takes off in Swansea University

Over the summer, Swansea University became the first university in Wales to launch its very own in-house Ride Leadership Programme in partnership with Welsh Cycling.

The new programme is for the whole community and aims to encourage people to cycle more often and more safely around Swansea.

There are now twenty Ride Leaders who are fully qualified to deliver guided bike rides to the university and local community. The course blends online learning with an assessed one day course. This qualifies learners to deliver guided bike rides for groups of beginner and intermediate level adults and accompanied children on roads and cycle paths, up to a maximum distance of 50 miles.

The exciting new initiative has got off to a fantastic start, with well over twenty guided rides already under the Ride Leaders' belts, and many more planned to take place over the coming weeks and months.

Jayne Cornelius, Sustainable Travel Officer and scheme coordinator said:

I'm absolutely delighted to have been able to work with Welsh Cycling to bring this fantastic scheme to Swansea.

For me getting our students and staff on their bikes is a top priority. It's not only important to us from a sustainability perspective, but it's also great for wellbeing, because it's good for your physical health, your mental health, your social life and your bank balance!

The Ride Leadership Programme is another great cycling initiative for the University, offering our staff, students and the local community the opportunity to participate in group rides led by keen cyclists.

Jayne added: *Anyone can take part in the group rides and if they don't have their own bike they can hop on a Santander cycle.*

Swansea University brought Santander Cycles to the city in July this year, and so far the scheme has proved to be very popular with students, staff, Swansea locals and visitors to the city.



Anyone can use one of the fifty bikes which are stationed at five convenient locations across Swansea. The bicycles are kept at hubs at both Swansea University campuses, Fabian Way Park and Ride, Swansea Civic Centre and the National Waterfront Museum.

To register for Santander Cycles visit [https://](https://www.santandercycles.co.uk/swansea)

www.santandercycles.co.uk/swansea. To find out more and to book your place on one of our guided rides visit www.letsride.co.uk and search 'Swansea'.

On behalf of **Jayne Cornelius**

Senedd Cycle Rally



On 2 October a rally was organised to lobby for money for cycle infrastructure in Wales, specifically to persuade the Welsh Government to spend £20 per head of population across Wales. A large crowd of perhaps 200, most of them with bikes, gathered outside the Senedd in front of which were assembled the politicians and other notaries pictured above. There were short speeches co-ordinated by Lee Waters, AM for Llanelli who is holding the megaphone, and Gwenda Owen of Cycling UK in the pink top next to him.

Wheelrights were well represented. Five of us met up at Radyr on the Taff Trail near the motorway 5 miles from the centre of Cardiff. I had taken the train to Cardiff and cycled to Radyr, the others had driven there. We cycled back down the Taff Trail to the Senedd. There we met up with Phil Snaith of the Carmarthen cycle campaign group and *Wheelrights* members Don Ashman and Alice Saville.

After the lobby some of us joined Gwenda and Chris Roberts, secretary of the Cross Party Cycle group, for lunch in a nearby Portugese café. (Excellent food! Why can't we have one in Swansea?) Some light on why the Active Travel Act is not achieving its purpose emerged from our lunch time conversation. Apparently there has been little increase, if any, in active travel in Wales since the act became law in 2013. A reason for this appears to be that the WG is not checking that LAs implement their ATA obligations, the reason given being a shortage of staff competent to do this.

I enjoyed the company of Phil Snaith on the train journey back to Swansea (to Llanelli for Phil). It was an Arriva train and, including ours, there were five bikes in the space designed for two. Let's hope that there is more bike space on the Keolis-Amey trains which will shortly be replacing the Arriva ones.



These '£20 notes' were widely distributed during the rally to ram home the message. But, after our lunch time discussion, I ask myself: have the WG the competence to spend it?

David Naylor

Cycle Routes in Wales

Looking for where to go for a ride or even a touring holiday? If so then you may find the following websites of interest,:

Cycling in Pembrokeshire (A PCC development.)

www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/cycle-Pembrokeshire gives detailed information on their local routes and provides historical/ tourism information as well. Worth a look if you are planning a visit or looking for somewhere to go. It does not yet include the NCN except where it overlies these routes, but is subject to further development.

Canal River Trust

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/cymraeg gives information on the canal network for cycling, walking, or whatever, and is a valuable source when planning a trip

Sustrans

www.sustrans.org.uk/cymru provides information about their comprehensive review of the National Cycle Network.

David Judd

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Plastic Cycle Paths

Plastic has a bad image these days, but if it is recycled and used for permanent installations it's OK isn't it? Civil Engineers are currently making an effort to be more environmentally friendly by increasing their use of recycled materials. In the Netherlands a pilot study is underway of a cycle path surfaced with a plastic made of recycled bottles, cups and packaging. It is in the district of Zwolle and opened in September.

The 30m long path (illustrated) is made of recycled plastic made from the equivalent of 218,000 plastic cups.



It is expected to be three times as durable as asphalt. Sensors within the material monitor its performance. This includes counting the number of bikes that pass over it and measuring how it copes with traffic.

The path is made of prefabricated sections which are light and hollow making them easy to transport and quick to install. Issues with asphalt such as erosion, weeds, potholes and surface flooding are expected to be alleviated.

Maybe we could have some in Swansea?

[Information and photo taken from the November 2018 issue of *New Civil Engineer*.]

David Naylor

Cross Party Active Travel Group

This group has been set up by the Welsh Gov. to help implement the Active Travel Act. As noted on page 1 the ATA is not achieving what it's meant to. The group holds a meeting twice a year to which representatives of interested groups across Wales – predominantly representing cycling – are invited. Nick Guy and I attended the meeting on 14 November in Cardiff wearing *Wheelrights* and *Cycling UK* 'hats' respectively.

There was a record attendance of around 40 people. These included CUK representatives from North Wales, Sustrans, local councillors and AMs. The meeting was ably chaired by Lee Waters, AM for Llanelli.

It started with a talk by James Price CEO of the newly formed *Transport for Wales* (TfW) in which he described its role. He explained that it was not a *quango* (That left me guessing as I thought that was just what it was!) but was set up to advise the WG on how best to implement its policies. TfW would not set policies. Key points were as follows:

- The proposed S. Wales Metro would be on TfW's agenda.
- In reply to questions about integrating buses and cycling, and taking bikes on trains James said that they would 'stand on shoulders' and see what works. He thought that trains could take more bikes and encouraged us to lobby them about this.
- One questioner, noting that there was a lack of good practice in the UK, wondered where this would come from. The response from both the chair and James was that we already have a design guide (The ATA guide is currently under revision) and that the issue was how best to deliver it. However James noted that TfW may have to face up to shortcomings in the ATA guidance.
- 20 mph speed limits were also discussed. WG minister, John Griffiths, suggested (but did not say how they would be implemented) that measures were needed to assist LAs.
- TfW might learn how to influence planning from Transport for London .

This took up the first hour of the meeting. There followed reports on Planning, Decarbonisation and funding (£20/head needed), and then the AGM.

After lunch in the nearby Portugese Café I caught a train home.

David Naylor

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Bikes on the new Hitachi trains

We reported in last winter's Newsletter (Issue 42) that there would be only two bike spaces in each of the five carriage units. We were misinformed as it turns out that there are actually four, meaning that there are eight bike spaces in the two unit trains which ply between Swansea and Paddington.

It seems that GWR want to keep this a dark secret as in addition to keeping quiet about the eight spaces there aren't bike signs to show where they go. So if you are travelling with your bike leave lots of time!

Sustrans Festival

Sustrans conferences are an annual event. There are normally two, one in the south of the country the other in the north. I have been to several and this year I attended the southerly one in September in Bristol. I don't know why they called it "Festival".

It was a weekend event with workshops and talks on the Friday, a full day of activities on the Saturday and then a choice of rides on the Sunday. I decided to combine it with a visit to my son, Bill, who lives in Westbury Leigh, some 30 miles SE of Bristol. I would forgo the Friday events, go by train to Bristol from where I would cycle to Bill's, then take part in the Saturday events and on Sunday join part of a Festival ride on my way home. This is what happened except that it didn't work out as planned on the Sunday .

The trip started well: First class travel on a new Hitachi train to Bristol Parkway; cheaper than standard if you include the complimentary coffee and cake. From Parkway a reasonably cycle-friendly route took me the four miles to the Bristol-Bath cycleway. From Bath I followed the Avon-Kennet canal to Bradford, then 10 miles on road. This 35 miles trip made a nice ride apart from a pot-hole canal tow path and unduly heavy traffic on the B3109 for the five miles between Bradford and Rode.

The next morning I left my bike with Bill and took a direct train to Bristol Templemeads. Here a Sustrans lady directed me to a nearby yurt – yes a yurt in the middle of Bristol! – where I was treated to a magnificent breakfast. This was needed because what followed was a pretty strenuous day. The 40-50 attendees (pictured below) were divided into work parties and I with others spent the morning clearing vegetation off the Bristol-Bath cycle path. After a picnic lunch there were optional events in Bristol. I chose an 'infrastructure walk' in which we were shown examples of recent developments in the city. Of note were some dedicated cycle paths of adequate width. The day ended with a buffet and a talk by John Grimshaw. He gave us the history of the Bristol-Bath cycle path. While he made light of his own achievements it was apparent that it wouldn't have happened but for his enterprise and ability not to take "No" for an answer!

I had hoped on the Sunday to meet up with Festival riders at the south end of the twin tunnels and accompany them back to Bristol, but this didn't happen as they were late and I had a train to catch. However while I was waiting who should emerge from the tunnel but John Grimshaw with son and grandson. A chat with him made a fitting end to the event before we went our separate ways and I completed my journey back to Swansea.



With their commitment to a review of the NCN and plans to work with others such as *Cycling UK* my confidence in Sustrans under Xavier Brice's leadership has been renewed

David Naylor

Forthcoming events

(See also the 'Events' page of www.wheelrights.org.uk.)

Green Fayre

10.00am – 4.00pm on Saturday and Sunday, 24/25 November. *Wheelrights* have a stall.

Wheelrights Christmas Dinner

7.00 for 7.30pm, on Tuesday, 4 December, in the **Mumbai** on Mill Lane in Blackpill. If you plan to attend please email Dawn Aplin: dawnaplin@hotmail.com.

Wheelrights AGM

7.00pm on 28 November in the Environment Centre Café, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY. Sustrans' Ryland Jones will give a talk on "Quiet Streets".

Wheelrights Routes group meeting/rides

10.00am Saturday 1 December, Environment CentreCafé, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY. Thereafter first Saturday in the month (but check the 'Events' page).

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Merry Christmas!



This was a CTC "ride" on 22 Dec. 2010, actually a walk up Ilston Valley.