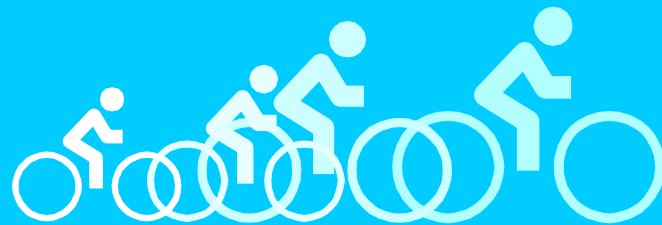


CYCLING Wakefield

Newsletter of Wakefield District Cycle Forum

Promoting and campaigning for cyclists



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Irreplaceable

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Christmas Dinner

This year our Christmas Dinner will be taking place at the King's Croft in Pontefract. For the last eight years we have been in Wakefield so it is perhaps time we moved to a venue in another part of the district. There is, however, no truth in the rumour which suggests that the venue choice has been unduly influenced by its proximity to the home of our Chair.

Christmas Dinner

Kings Croft

Wakefield Rd, Pontefract

WF8 4ED

Thursday 7th December

Four Course Dinner

£18.95

You should already have received a menu and booking details but if not contact Janet Taylor, 17 Park Street, Horbury, Wakefield, WF4 6AA
Tel: 01924 261452

John Harvey

The November 2016 edition of this newsletter carried an article billed as 'John Harvey – volunteer extraordinary'. After giving a flavour of the importance of John to the work of the Cycle Forum the article ended by saying:



"All of this is only a fraction of what John contributes to the Cycle Forum so it is no surprise that he was our Volunteer of the Year in 2014, and two years running received the special Faceless Trophy."

What would we do without John Harvey?"

In this newsletter we are sad to report the tragic and untimely death of John who was involved in an industrial accident while working on a local farm.

John's enthusiasm, willingness, persistence and hard work were unprecedented and his dedication to Wakefield District Cycle Forum was without equal. Ride leader, workday manager, logistics manager for our village events and odd-job-man he never refused to help with any task the forum asked of him. And all done with a smile and often a wee bit of mischief.

As one of our leading volunteers said when hearing of his death, 'we will remember John on every ride the forum leads as there are so many paths in the district where John has left his mark through his workgroup activities'.

The greatest tribute we can make to John is to carry on his work. We may try to do what we can but he is:



Irreplaceable.



News Roundup

Bike Doctor drop in sessions

Bike Doctor drop-in sessions continue on the third Sunday of the month.

The coming sessions are:

Sunday 19th November, Anglers Country Park, 11 am till 1 pm

Sunday 17th December, Anglers Country Park, 11 am till 1 pm

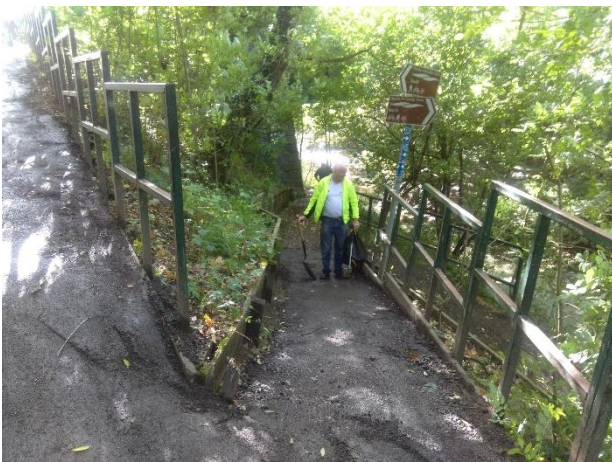
Booking is not required for these sessions.



Smoothing the Pathways

Our workgroup continues to work away at improving the cycle tracks in the district. The group consists of a lot of old men, with a few not so old men and women, but they still manage to shovel a lot of surfacing material, bang in a lot of posts and cut away a lot of vegetation. Many of them may be retired but they have not lost the work ethic.

We continue to repair the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) between Old Royston and Walton and one of our latest projects was to re-surface the path from the road at Old Royston down to the old towpath on the Barnsley canal. The Council provided the materials and an enthusiastic group of only 4 volunteers managed to move the 4 tons of planings, lay it and roll it.



This part of the TPT is steep and twisty and not at all easy to negotiate. It is even worse when the surface has been partially washed away and rutted. It is the ambition of the Cycle Forum to have this section of the TPT diverted to avoid this slope but in the meantime, and for the benefit of those who wish to

use the 'amazing' Chevet Branch Line path, we hope we have made the journey a little more pleasant.

The workgroup is out on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, meets at 10 am and generally works for 2 to 2 ½ hours before retiring to the café (for an all-day breakfast). Why not join us? (The breakfast is not compulsory). e-mail info@cycling-wakefield.org.uk and ask to be put on the mailing list for future workdays.

You won't regret it.

Castleford to Wakefield Greenway

Work on the Methley Bridge to Fairies Hill Lock section of the Castleford to Wakefield Greenway has now commenced and the contractors are now on site at both ends of the route (Methley Bridge Farm and the Golf Course). Unfortunately, there was a further delay getting on to the site at the eastern end (Methley Bridge). The scheme is, therefore, now due for completion in February next year.

There is a small section at the end of the route in Wakefield, from Ashfields to Chantry Bridge which is due to be delivered by developers. Unfortunately, this may be some way off, potentially 5 years, due to significant on-site remediation work (contaminated land and power lines!).

Phase 2 and 3 of this project, the bridge over the live railway in Castleford and the Castleford Greenway to Methley link, awaits funding from West Yorkshire Combined Authorities. If that is forthcoming, it is hoped the scheme will be complete in December 2018.



Forum Rides Still Popular

Up till 1st October this year the Cycle Forum had led 102 rides at our various venues throughout the district with 1387 participants in total. The average of 13.6 cyclists per ride is a little down on last year but remains healthy. Of the 262 individuals coming on or rides 137 were newcomers which shows that we are still getting people back on their bikes. Our loan bikes were used over 90 times, which shows how important they are to attracting newcomers. The number of women is around 40% of individual riders which is slightly lower than last year but much improved on our early days when it was about 25%.

This year we have had less individuals and families who come on just one ride, which may account for the drop in numbers. At the other end of the spectrum we have more people who come on 10 or more rides. This may be a result of the popularity of the steady rides from Darrington and Anglers which have bucked the trend with increased participation this year, around 20 on average.

We are at present planning our programme of rides for next year. Remember we can only continue this programme if we have enough ride leaders and helpers. If you wish to volunteer to help please email info@cycling-wakefield.org.uk

New life for old inner tubes

The Wakefield District Cycle Forum is very proud of the way we have built partnerships with a varied group of organisations in the district. One of these is the Countryside section of the Council based at Anglers Country Park. Anglers was one of our first Cycle Hubs and we run a variety of cycle related events including our regular rides, bike doctor and maintenance courses. And, of course, you can now hire bikes at an hourly rate to take in the beauty of the Country Park on two wheels.

So it is good to know that, as cyclist, we can help with the wildlife work that the Countryside team carry out, not just at Anglers but across the 70 sites they manage throughout the district. This help revolves around the re-cycling of old inner tubes.

One of the activities which helps to maintain a healthy presence of wildlife in the Country Park is

the erecting of bird and bat boxes. And that is where the inner tubes come in.

On small bird boxes a strip of inner tube is used as a flexible hinge so that the lid of the bird box can be lifted up and cleaned out each year, and/or allow the birders to open the box and ring any chicks. Our larger owl boxes (see photo) can be attached to trees with a chain, which does less damage to the tree than hammering nails in.



If the chain is enclosed in an inner tube, it will do even less damage to the bark of the tree.

So if you have any old inner tubes, don't bin them, recycle them by taking them along to the Visitor Centre at Anglers Country Park. You may even be able to admire them in their new life securing the home for the birds as you cycle through Haw Park Woods or as you do a bit of birdwatching at Horbury Lagoons.

Your punctures can now have a positive outcome for some creature.

Parking Charges at Anglers Country Park

Wakefield Council are consulting on a proposal to make changes to their parking charges, including imposing new parking charges at Anglers Country Park.

Anglers is of course one of the Cycle Forum's Cycle Hubs where in 2018 we intend to host two lead rides per month as well as our monthly 'Bike Doctor' and two bike maintenance courses. The proposals are to introduce the same parking charges as Pugneys Country Park where our lead rides have seen a decline in numbers since the charges were introduced there.

Consultation on the proposals is open till 7th November and can be accessed at www.wakefield.gov.uk/parkingconsultation



Lycra louts or 'false news'

Last month we were subjected to a media frenzy, not for the first time, about irresponsible cyclists, the Lycra louts. This followed the sentencing of a cyclist for killing a pedestrian. As the Chief Executive of Cycling UK, Paul Tuoht, described him 'an ill-informed young man on a brakeless fixie who had the rare misfortune to collide with a pedestrian with fatal consequences'. One of around 4 such occurrences per year. This compares with just under 450 pedestrian fatalities overall per year on our roads and around 100 cyclist fatalities.

Commenting on the behaviour of the media over this incident Paul Tuoht went on to comment:

"I was angered and dismayed by the media vilification of cyclists in general. After all, a fool is a fool, whether on a bike or in a car, and I can assure you that when a fool kills someone from behind the wheel of a motorised vehicle, you are unlikely even to hear about it. There are so many fatalities caused by irresponsible people in cars that it's 'not newsworthy'"

We should not be surprised in a car-dependent society that this bias exists but it is part of a flawed attitude to transport that is not good for our health. In the last 60 years transport planning has deliberately favoured private car use. And that acceptance of car-dependency is killing us.

Most directly that can be attributed to the 1,800 people who are killed on our roads each year, with over 20,000 seriously injured. But in addition, pollution caused by motor vehicles is reckoned to contribute to the deaths of 40,000 each year. And perhaps the most serious consequence of car-dependence is how it has eliminated physical activity from people's daily lives. The effect of this is huge with inactivity the fourth largest cause of disease and disability and contributing to one in six deaths from any cause. This sedentary living costs the NHS well over £1 billion a year.

It all could be so different if we took a different attitude to transport. Two-thirds of all journeys are under 5 miles, a distance that is perfectly feasible on a bike. But people need the right conditions to help them get on their bikes. Seville in southern Spain is a good example of how this can be done. They have built 80 miles of protected cycleway in the city and increased the number cycle journeys over 6 years from 5,000 (0.5% of trips) to 72,000 (7%). And how we would love to be like the Netherlands where three-quarters of children cycle to school.

In contrast we have a recent example of a new road, Wakefield Eastern Relief Road, where segregated cycle lanes force cyclists to cross the road at a hazardous point making the cycle infrastructure more dangerous than the road they were meant to protect cyclist from. The photo shows the point at which cyclists are supposed to cross the road and as you can see oncoming vehicles are not visible till they are very close to the crossing point.



Let's hope it does not take the death of another cyclist crossing this road before our media decides to discuss this kind of issue.

When will our planners and policy maker wake up to the savings that increase cycling number would bring. Cycleways are at least twenty times less expensive than roads and the improvements to our health and our environment would mean less spending on remedial action.



Scenes from Village Thursdays

This year we were invited to participate in a number of family fun days at villages throughout the district. Here are some photos from these events.



The fastest boy and girl on the skills course. Portabello on the left and South Kirkby on right.



Waiting in line at Havercroft and Councillor Maureen Cummings 'doing' the skills course



A busy day for volunteers at Portobello and mastering the Penny Farthing at Havercroft



Holiday Wednesdays

Once more the Cycle Forum were out in force at Nostell over the summer hosting our holiday Wednesday events. They are great fun for all concerned and we now have lots of people coming back every year to join in.

There were nearly 1,000 participants on our skills course which is at the centre of these events. This was the first summer of the new cycle tracks through the woods on the far side of the parkland and our short rides round the tracks proved popular, with nearly 100 people joining them.

The tombola is always a popular feature of our events (see last newsletter) and an important contributor to our funds. This year it raised over £700 and our thanks have to go out to everyone who gave and helped with the tombola.

As always, we are dependent on our small band of volunteers and over the summer at Nostell and elsewhere 25 of them gave some of their time to make sure our events were successful, over 600 hours in total.

Below are some photos from the summer events at Nostell.



Ruth's Story

When our children were teenagers I was an occasional cyclist, in the summer months. Then when the children left home for university I stopped cycling completely for 20 years.

About 18 months ago our granddaughter, Caitlin, learnt to ride a bike and once she gained confidence she was desperate to go out on what she still calls family cycle rides. And so it was time for me to dust off the bike, blow up the tyres and get back in the saddle.

We cycled a few times on the canal towpath in Altofts before starting to venture a little further afield to Stanley Ferry, round the washlands and the Half Moon Lake, and up to Heath Common. I really enjoyed our rides at first but as we went further it became more of a struggle, particularly when it was windy, to such an extent that I seriously thought about packing it in again. But I didn't want to stop cycling and I was also keen to try and get a bit fitter as a get into my 'golden years'. So we started to investigate what might make cycling a little easier for me, i.e. and electric bike.

We searched the internet quite a bit and called into national chain cycle shops to see what was available. But, unfortunately, no one seemed to want to talk to us about electric bikes or even sell us one!!!

Then one day as we were driving across Chantry Bridge in Wakefield, we saw the signs for Cycle Technology. As a last resort we called in to the shop, had a look around and talked to Dan. He showed us a Trek electric bike and let me have a test ride. I was hooked immediately and paid for it there and then. Dan also told us about a local group called Wakefield District Cycle Forum who, amongst other things, organise rides to help people gain confidence and get back into cycling.

My husband, John, and I joined our first Forum ride early this year from Nostell and could not believe the welcome and encouragement we got. Everyone was so friendly. We now try to ride with the Forum once or twice a week and have 'progressed' to steady rides of about 20 miles. But what strikes us again and again is how friendly and helpful the group is probably best demonstrated by the help I received following a minor accident I had on one of the rides.

We now cycle to many different places we didn't know existed and discovered some fantastic local cafes, Castleford Mill and Sandal Castle to name just two.

Thanks to Sandy, David and the other ride leaders and helpers for making us so welcome.

I love my Trek electric bike. To anyone who is struggling with their cycling I recommend giving one a go.

Halloween Ride

Dress up yourself and your bike for a spooky night ride. Bright headlights are essential

Anglers Country Park
Tuesday 31st October
Meet 6:15 pm

