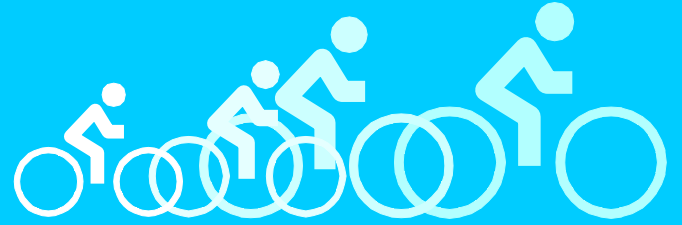


CYCLING Wakefield

Newsletter of Wakefield District Cycle Forum

Promoting and campaigning for cyclists



Edition No.26 | February 2015

First ride from our new cycle hub at Castleford



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What a Year!

Record year for Cycling in Wakefield

Without doubt 2014 was the 'Year of Cycling' in Yorkshire, and in Wakefield. The 'Grand Depart' of the Tour de France was the high profile event of the year and Yorkshire made such a good job of it that we now have the Tour de Yorkshire in 2015, and it is coming to Wakefield.

Wakefield Cycle Forum has done its bit, as you will see from the articles inside this newsletter.

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 24th March
6.45 pm till 8.30 pm
Committee Room A
County Hall
Wakefield

All welcome
Come along and help us celebrate another great year.

DIY Bike Maintenance – Drop In

We are continuing with our regular DIY maintenance Drop-in days. On these days you will still be able to service your bike while being supervised by our Bike Doctors.

Saturday 7th February: Nostell Priory

Sunday 1st March: Castleford Queens Mill, Aire Street

These sessions will take place from 10am till 1pm and 2pm till 3pm.

Sunday 19th April: Nostell Priory between 2.30pm and 3.30pm

No need to book just come along



Bike Maintenance Training Sessions



For members who would like to attend a Basic Bike Maintenance Training session covering puncture repairs, gears indexing, cable exchange, etc we are running two courses in April:

Sunday 5th April Anglers Country Park, 12 noon till 3pm

Wednesday 29th April Wakefield 6pm till 8pm

Booking is essential for these session and you should book by email to info@cyclling-wakefield.org.uk

All our bike maintenance sessions are run by our three 'Bike Doctors', Graham West, Dennis Bell and Steve Valentine, seen above doing their thing at Wakefield's Big Cycle Ride in September.

Path Fund in Need of Donations

We are pleased to report that our Path Fund, which will improve our ability to expand and develop the traffic-free network of cycle paths in the district, continues to grow, slowly but steadily. To date we have raise around £1,600 in donations from members. For the fund to be effective we do need to raise many more thousands of pounds. The Path Fund is an opportunity for all those people who have benefitted from the Cycle Forum's activities to say 'thank you' by making a small donation to a worthy cause.

Please send contributions to the fund to **Sandy Clark, 16 Beechwood Avenue, Pontefract, WF8 4ED** or hand your donation to one of our volunteers. Make cheques payable to Wakefield District Cycle Forum.

If you know of any businesses or potential corporate donors do let us know by emailing: info@cyclling-wakefield.org.uk



Wonders of Wakefield gets new traffic-free section.

In the last newsletter we reported on improvements to the Wakefield Wheel, or 'The Wheel' as we like to call it. This month we can report on a new section of the Wonders of Wakefield cycle trail, the **WoW**.



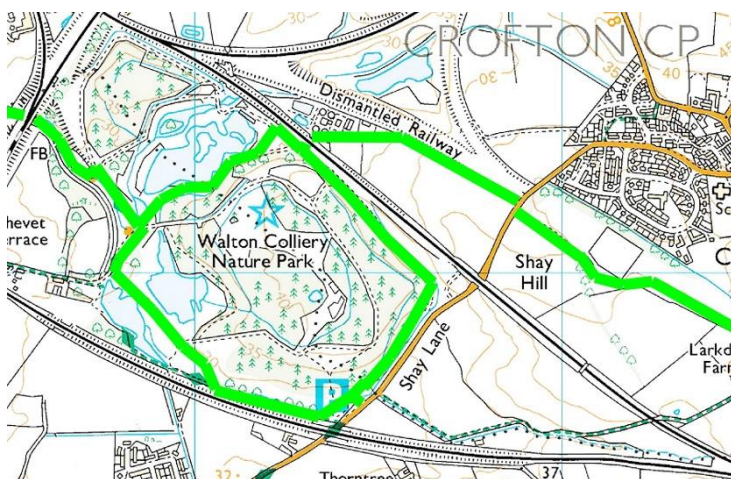
One of the letters on our letters page gives a little bit of background to the campaign the forum waged to provide this new traffic-free path. Essentially it has resulted from the removal of palisade fencing under the railway line which borders Walton Colliery Nature Park and opens up an existing path to cyclists. The 'before' photo on the left shows the situation last summer.

Although the Forum was the driving force behind the project thanks need to be given to a number of partners. Network Rail agreed to the removal of the fencing and agreed to lease the land to the Wakefield Council.

The council have to be thanked for agreeing to lease the land, for removing the fencing and for providing materials that enabled the Forum workgroup to construct an accessible path through the railway arch. The photo on the right shows the access path after our work party did its bit.



The campaign has taken a long time to achieve its aim but at last yet another 'missing link' in the network of traffic-free paths in the district has been filled in. Cyclists on the WoW will no longer need to negotiate the busy and hazardous Shay Lane between Walton and Crofton but instead they can enjoy the new traffic-free, signed route through Walton Park. The map below illustrates how the new path has joined together the network of traffic-free routes in the area.



The route is not only an improvement to the WoW but completes a very useful traffic-free commuter route from Crofton to Sandal and Agbrigg Railway Station and then by a signed route on the road into Wakefield Waterfront.

Everyone involved is overjoyed at our success, including the workgroup who completed the path, as you can see from the photo.



LETTERS PAGE

To the editor:

An extra 12 Meters of Cycle Track at Crofton

The news for the people of the Wakefield District who enjoy cycling off road, is that an extra 12 meters (around 40 feet) of cycling track is now available to them. Such news will hardly cause many pulses to race, but this short length of track has taken the Wakefield District Cycle Forum (WDCF) about 5 years to achieve. This new section is hardly very long by track standards, but it links up two bits of existing cycle network and removes one of the more hazardous stretches of road that cyclist have had to take between Crofton and Walton.

When the WDCF was first formed we looked at some of the existing cycle network and wondered if, with a little effort on the "missing links" then perhaps a couple of tracks might be joined. One of these links would join a section of cycle track behind the Academy School in Crofton, with a section of road running down to Yorkshire Water Treatment plant, under the short rail tunnel and out into Walton Colliery Nature Park. This would avoid cyclists having to ride on the road underneath a railway bridge which was always tricky for bikes and road vehicles to share. It would also provide a mainly off road ride down to Sandal and Agbrigg station.

Yorkshire Water were definitely against the move to open up the tunnel near their treatment plant on the basis that tankers were used along the access road and they said they feared that cyclists might be knocked off their bikes on that access road. It appeared to the Forum that they were being risk averse to suit their ends and much letter writing to them along with site meetings, all failed to change their mind.

Network Rail were little interested in removing the barriers which had been placed at the entrance to the tunnel and the stalemate dragged on for months at a time. WDCF set about garnering support from our MP Jon Trickett, Walton and Crofton Parish Council, as well as local walking groups and Northern Rail.

It is true to say that Jon Trickett played an influential part in helping to get the attention of Network Rail. The Chairman of the WDCF Sandy Clark took a central role in bringing these parties together and as it turned out, he was the heartbeat which kept the project going.

At the start of December 2014 a working party of volunteers turned out, they hacked and attacked the growth in front of the tunnel and turned it into a cycle path. More maintenance work needs to be done here yet,....but very well done everyone, it just shows what tenacity can do. John Matthews

From the editor:

John is right to point out to us all that persistence can pay off in the end. It did take almost five years and a lot of lobbying to realise success for this campaign.

John is also correct in pointing out that there are individuals who need thanking for their particular contribution to the project but this campaign also shows the importance of support from our members. It was a letter writing campaign by members which was crucial in showing Yorkshire Water that there was a groundswell of support for the project. We can only hope that we can depend on the same support should we require it in future.

Congratulations need to go to the Wakefield Council officers for their support, agreeing to lease the land under the railway from Network Rail, and removing the obstructing fence.

Yet another success for Wakefield District Cycle Forum.

Dear Wakefield District Cycle Forum

Please accept this donation towards your commitment and promotion of cycling throughout Wakefield.

Your hard work is very much appreciated. I personally have benefitted from your vision and commitment towards better, more enjoyable cycling for everyone in Wakefield.

Best wishes

Anita

From the editor

We have to thank Anita and everyone else who has contributed to our Path Fund. As you will see from this newsletter we are making great progress in improving the cycle path provision in the district and our Path Fund is an important part of that project.

Details of how you can donate to the fund can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.



2014 Awards

Since 2013 we have introduced a new feature to our annual dinner. An awards ceremony. Not to be taken too seriously it is however a chance to reflect on the success of the previous year and recognise some of the individuals who have helped with that success.

The photo below may look like a police line-up of the 'Usual Suspects' but it is in fact some of the award winners.



From left to right:

John Harvey, volunteer of the year; Steve Valentine, newcomer of the year; Sandy Clark, chair; Mark Beswick, latecomer of the year; Janet Taylor, silver cyclist of the year; John Matthews, innovator of the year; Sarah Fulber, lady cyclist of the year; Jeff Kitching, male cyclist of the year; Debbie Fox, 1,000th member.

John Harvey and Jeff also received a special 'Faceless' award complete with a trophy, a cycle sculpture from the Faceless Company.

The Forum in the News

I know we should not be blowing our own trumpet, but why not when there is so much to blow about. Over the last couple of months however we have had a little help from the printed media.

In the November 13th issue of the Cycling Weekly magazine a half page article featured Wakefield District Cycle Forum. This was part of a very good series 'Cycling in my City' which features local cycle groups. It gave a brief history of the Forum's development and some of the activities we have been up to in the last couple of years. Under a photo (right) of one of our rides, they concluded 'Wakefield's cycling community has risen from its slumber'. Dead right!!!

It is great to be recognised in the cycling media but even bigger was a two page feature in the Yorkshire Evening Post on 2nd December (also featured in the Yorkshire Post). Once again the work that the Forum has been carrying out in the last few years was documented and particular attention was given to the teamwork and partnerships which are a key to our success. The journalist who wrote the article had attended one of our rides at Pugneys Water Park and was so impressed that she thought we were worth a feature in the paper.

Nice to be recognised.



A Busy Year for our Workgroup

2014 was the first full year of our joint venture with Sustrans to establish a volunteer workgroup with the view to improving and extending the traffic-free network of cycle paths in the district. Wakefield District Cycle Forum has carried out improvement work in the past but this new group is much larger and promises to be a more regular and reliable feature of our work. The workgroup is the inspiration of and is managed by Ian Hookham, the Sustrans coordinator for Wakefield District. He has managed to gather a group of nearly 30 volunteers, a number of whom have been invaluable with their engineering skills.

During the year the group has carried out work across the district including laying a new surface on the riverside path in Wakefield, litter picking on the new Greenway in Castleford and laying a brand new path in the Nostell Estate (see below).



In total there have been 26 workdays, an average of more than 2 per month, with between 2 and 14 volunteer turning up to help. The days are short at around 2/3 hours but a great deal of work is done in that time.

Over the year the workgroup has cleared over 2000 metres of tracks, resurfaced almost 1000 metres of track and has built around 50 metres of new track. In total volunteers have put in more than 800 hours of work. Additional work has also been done by volunteers from TCV with whom Ian has built a good relationship.

The workgroup programme is a very positive example of partnership working.

Not only have we teamed-up with Sustrans and TCV but we have built a valuable partnership with Nostell Estate and Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. Nostell Estate have been cooperative in allowing us to develop the network of paths on their land and allow permissive use for cyclists.

The Council have also seen the benefit of involving our volunteers and have been very helpful in providing most of the material needed to improve path surfaces and develop new paths. The council has also stepped in where the job was too big for our volunteers, like clearing the mudslide on the Chevet Branch Line.

There is still room for more volunteers and whether you are able to join us on every day or just come on one occasion every year you will



be very welcome.

There is nothing more enjoyable than the 'crack' on a workday and nothing more satisfying than being able to see the fruits of your labour immediately.

And you can have the pleasure of saying 'I did that' next time you are out on a ride on our improved cycle track network.

How could you resist being part of the happy bunch in the photo above?

To volunteer get in touch with Ian Hookham at ianhookham39@gmail.com



2014 Rides Programme the biggest yet

As all you avid readers of this newsletter will know 2013 was a bumper year for our rides programme. Our ride attendance that year almost doubled over the previous year with an average of 17 people per ride. One ride even topped the 40 mark and a few had attendances of over 30. Was this a flash in the pan?

There was some reason to suggest that the increase in attendances was due to the 'Wiggo effect' following his win in the Tour de France, which was of course followed by the success of the British Cycling team at the London Olympics in 2012. Yours truly, your humble editor, was a sceptic on this issue being of the firm opinion that the so called 'legacy' was nothing but hot air. Well, it may not be often that I am wrong but I have to hold my hand up and admit that, this time at least, I was way off the mark. We have of course had the benefit of the huge success in Yorkshire that was the 'Grand Depart' in 2014, but it looks as though interest in cycling of all kinds is an increasing and constant feature of life.

The 'legacy' effect cannot be given the total credit for our rides being so popular. We have built a number of partnerships which mean more people get to know about our activities, word has got round over the 7 or more years that we have been running the rides programme, and crucially we have a group of ride leaders who devise interesting rides and provide a welcoming atmosphere for all participants. What is now evident is that the popularity of our rides is not a 'flash in the pan'.

Our rides coordinator, Jeff Kitching, managed a programme which included 123 rides in 2014, up from 79 in 2013. There were over 2,500 participants on these rides, which is an average of over 20 per ride. What is most pleasing is that of around 590 individuals who attended our rides more than 400 had not been on our rides the previous year so we are still attracting new people to cycling.

What we need to remember is that our rides were originally devised to encourage 'new' cyclists, mostly people who wanted to get back into cycling but did not quite know how to go about it. So we offered easy rides, mostly on traffic-free routes, and provided free bikes for those who did not have their own or who could not get their bikes to the start point. Our expectation was that after a couple of rides people would become bored of the same 'easy' ride and decide to go off exploring longer routes on their own. What we have found however is that although lots of people act just as we expected many others enjoy the company and the atmosphere of our rides so much that they return again and again.

So we continue to expand our programme to try and meet the expectation of all participants and it is a tribute to Jeff and all his ride leaders, who give of their time freely, that success continues to smile on us.

If you have not yet joined us on one of our rides make it your resolution to do so in 2015. We look forward to seeing you, and of course all our old (and not so old) regulars.



New Ride Leaders Training

In November 10 new ride leaders attended a training day at Anglers Country Park. As well as some classroom session there was some real life practical experience as you can see from the photo of one of the day's incidents.

If you are interested in becoming one of our band of ride leaders and helpers get in touch through info@cycling-wakefield.org.uk



Bike Fettler – Tales From The Workshop

Fettle those Cables

Now then! Brake and gear cables have a hard life, used and abused, rained on and forgotten. New ones need no lubrication as they run in a nylon liner but grit, water dust and cake crumbs get in there over time. Cheaper cables are made from galvanised steel and will rust in time. More expensive cables are made from stainless steel and don't corrode. I've lost count of the bikes brought in to the shop where they have been left to corrode in a damp shed over winter, seizing up brakes and gears. New cables madam, no problem! That will be ££.

Regularly (every few months if possible) clean the inner wires with a rag and apply a few drops of lube. GT85, WD40 or chain lube will do. No need to take the cables off completely, just release the tension on them and slide the outer cable along whilst cleaning and lubing. At the very least give the cables a squirt of thin lube so it penetrates between the inner and outer cables. Mind you don't get lube on any brake surfaces or rims though! Any frayed cables need replacing immediately, especially brake cables. The short loop of cable nearest the rear derailleur is the worst culprit for seizing up.

Every couple of years, change the inners and outer brake and gear cables completely. It's surprising how well the bike works afterwards. If you want, bring it to a forum Bike Doctor event and we will advise and help you if you want to do the Fettle yourself.

Regards and much tea

Dennis

Cycle Forum on the Wall

The grandson of one of our founder members has recently been painting some pictures on the walls of the Ridings Shopping Centre in Wakefield. One of them, pictured here, is a depiction of a cyclist from the forum. See if you can spot it next time you visit the Ridings.



Top Cycle Racing Comes to Wakefield

Following the huge success of the Grand Depart last year a new top class cycle race will be seen in Yorkshire over the first weekend in May. The Tour de Yorkshire is a three day race from 1st to 3rd May and day 3 will start in Wakefield. The final stage of the race will begin in Wakefield, visit Barnsley then take the same route as day two of the 2014 Grand Depart, only in reverse, before finishing in Leeds. Wakefield Council has worked hard to get the big race to visit Wakefield and this is a great result. Let's make sure we give the race a great welcome.

The following month, on Sunday 7th June, the Pontefract Grand Prix returns. This is a town centre events with a number of races including an elite race to finish off the day. Last year the weather did not favour this event so hopefully the sun will shine in 2015 and the town centre will be throbbing with cyclists and spectators.

Get cycling – Keep smiling

