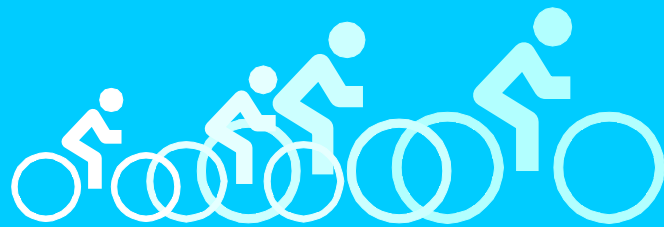


CYCLING Wakefield

Newsletter of the Wakefield District Cycle Forum

Promoting and campaigning for cyclists



Edition number 16

November 2012



Waiting for next summer

IN THIS EDITION

Cycle Forum Meeting

11th December

Cycle Maintenance Course

Free course at Evans Cycles

Summer of Cycling

Report on rides and events

Christmas Dinner

6th December

Campaign Update

Crofton/Walton path.

Signing projects delay.

Get Cycling, Keep Smiling

Chris tells us about joining our rides

Membership

Membership keeps growing

Wakefield Wheel Proves Its Worth

Report on this popular route

Getting Wakefield Active

Sustrans Active Travel

Chevet Branch Line

New Off-Road Route

Cycle Forum Open Meeting

The next meeting of the Wakefield District Cycle Forum will take place on 11 December. The meeting will get a full update on the summer activities of the forum and discuss the activities programme for 2013. All Forum members are welcome to attend and express their views on the work of the Forum

Open Meeting

11th December 7 pm

Town Hall Wakefield

All Welcome

Cycle Maintenance Course

The Cycle Forum has reached agreement with Evans Cycles to run a basic cycle maintenance course in their shop at Xscape, Glasshoughton. The course will take place on:

Sunday 25th Nov

10am to 12 noon

Evans Cycles

Xscape

Glasshoughton

You will not have to bring your own bikes as the course will be a demonstration by Evans staff using their tools and bikes. There is no charge for the course but participants must be booked in advance

To book a place on the course contact Robert on 01924699522 or Email racinyorks@gmail.com.



Summer of Cycling

The weather was not great but somehow the Cycle Forum managed to avoid the worst of the rainy days and we only had to cancel a couple of rides and events as a result of the all too familiar downpours.

More and more people are getting to know about our programme and that is reflected in the numbers we are recording on our health rides' and at our events. Despite having less rides this year we had an increased number of participants with attendances increase at nearly all of our venues. Nostell Priory remains our most popular venue with an average attendance of 15 riders for our Sunday rides there but Pugneys is proving nearly as popular and our new Saturday rides from Anglers Country Park attracted an average attendance of 11.



About to leave on a ride from Nostell Priory

The success of the rides programme depends on a small number of volunteer who lead the rides. We are always looking for new leaders so if you are interested let us know by email info@wakefield-cycling.org.uk or ring Sandy or David; their numbers are on the web site. You can start off as a back marker on the rides to get a bit of experience, if you feel you need to, and we can provide some training.

The rides programme continues through the winter, weather permitting, and you will get information on all rides on the web site at www.cycling-wakefield.org.uk

As reported in the last newsletter our 'Bike Week' events and Nostell Priory were yet again a success. We followed this with our 'Holiday Wednesdays' which were again popular with children of all ages. Our skills course is particularly popular and entertained over 600 people over the summer

More and more people are getting to know about the excellence of the service provided by our 'Bike Doctor', which is headed by Graham West, and we frequently are asked when his next session will be. In response to requests for his services we added an extra event at Nostell in September and the 'Bike Doctor' did not get a break all afternoon. Over the year the 'Bike Doctor' administered a 'health check' to over 100 bicycles.



An unusual job for the Bike Doctor

Our programme also strengthens our membership base as we recruited 135 new members over the summer at rides and events. Look forward to another exciting summer of events in 2013.

Christmas Dinner

The Cycle Forum Christmas Dinner will again be at:

The Holmfield Arms
Denby Dale Road, Wakefield
Thursday 6th December at 7.30pm.

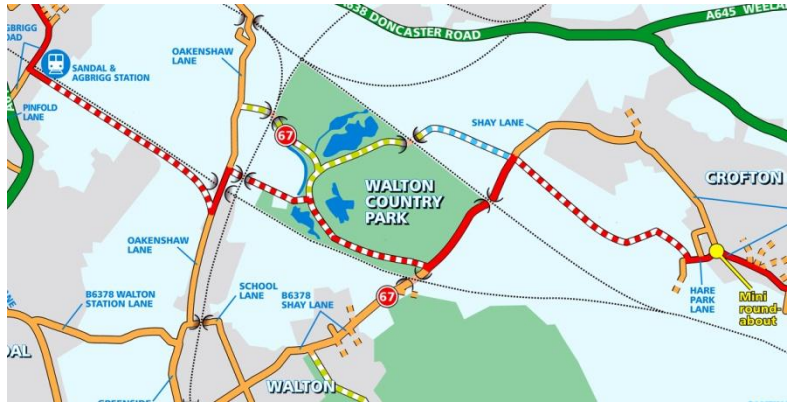
If you would like to attend please contact Geoff before 21st November at: gmwestmorland@hotmail.co.uk. A deposit of £10 per head will be required.



Campaign Update

Crofton/Walton Path – Letter Writing Campaign Bears fruit

In the last newsletter we reported some progress on our ambition and campaign to open the path linking Crofton to Walton Colliery Nature Park (represented by the broken blue line on the map). This avoids the need to use a narrow and busy road, which is the only alternative at present. Although we had agreement from Network Rail to unblock the access under the railway, which borders the Park and which will give access from the path, unfortunately Yorkshire Water, who uses the path to service their water treatment works, continued to object to wider access and have consistently avoided requests to meet with the Cycle Forum and Wakefield Council to discuss the use of the path.



Last month the Cycle Forum asked members and other supportive individuals to write to Yorkshire Water urging them to agree to our request to open the path to the public. We are delighted that so many people responded to our request and as a result Yorkshire Water has now agreed to meet with representatives of Wakefield Council and the Cycle Forum.

The meeting will take place next month and we are hopeful that progress will be made. Thanks to all who have helped in this campaign. We may still need your help in the future.

Council Drags Feet on Signing

In the August Newsletter we announced an important breakthrough in reaching agreement with the landowner to open to cyclists a footpath which provides an important link into Anglers Country Park. The agreement was to replace the existing 'Cyclist Dismount' signs and replace them with the sign illustrated in the photograph below.



After discussions with the council on the issue we had expected the signs to be replaced in a reasonable time scale but, despite a number of reminders, at the time of going to press we have had no information about progress on this issue.

This is a project on which the Cycle Forum has worked hard. It is a pity that the final piece in the jigsaw seems to be taking so long to put in place.

Continuing on the theme of cycle signs, the Cycle Forum agreed with council officers in April, in response to an initiative from a Pontefract councillor, that the council would pay for stick-on signs that could be used to indicate the location of cycle parking. The councillor concerned had been worried that much of the cycle parking in 'heritage' locations, such as Pontefract town centre, was not obvious. The Cycle Forum agreed that if

the council paid to have the signs made Forum volunteers would install the signs in Pontefract and other parts of the district where they were required.

Unfortunately, once more, despite a number of unanswered enquiries we have been unable to find out the current state of the project.

Get Cycling Keep Smiling

'Get Cycling Keep Smiling' is the motto on the back of the Cycle Forum's blue volunteers t-shirts. One of our new members Chris tells us 'my goal now is to earn a blue t-shirt which says "keep cycling keep smiling" which I do every time I go out on a ride'.

Chris was introduced to the Cycle Forum rides by her husband Clive. Here is how she describes her experience.

'My husband has rheumatoid arthritis and the hospital advised him to exercise. My son told him about a group of riders who gave guided rides around Anglers Country Park, Haw Park Woods, etc so one Saturday he went with the group on their 'Wonders of Wakefield' ride. He enjoyed it so much he told me he had signed us up for a ride from Nostell Priory to Anglers Country Park, a trip of around 8 miles. He had booked a free loan bike from the Cycle Forum for me to ride as I didn't have my own bike. I was very apprehensive about going because I haven't been able to exercise much due to my own illness, which I am now getting over. I came out with lots of excuses why I should not go but Clive wasn't taking no for an answer.

When the Sunday morning came my son and husband rode to Nostell Priory and I went in the car. There Clive, my husband, introduced me to David and Sandy who made me feel very welcome and tried their best to put me at ease but I was still nervous in case I couldn't do the ride. There was no need to worry. The pace was steady and everyone on the ride was friendly and supportive. Within minutes we were all laughing and joking about anything and everything. When we reached Anglers we were asked if anybody wanted to do a bit extra on a ride through the woods, which I was up for as I was enjoying the ride so much. It was brill!! We went for a cuppa in the cafe at Anglers and I promptly made me and my husband members of the Cycle Forum.

I have been on five rides with them now. Thanks too you all.

We are now known as Howard and Marina, of last of the summer wine, by friends and colleagues, which I think is great.'

The picture shows Chris, with husband Clive, as she finished her first ride from Nostell Priory. She did keep cycling and she is smiling!



Cycle Forum Membership

As reported on page 2 of this newsletter our membership continued to grow over the summer mainly because of the people who joined at our events. Membership now stands at around 640.

Having a strong membership base is very important in giving backing to the Forum campaigning, as can be seen from our campaign on the Walton to Crofton path (see report on previous page).



Wakefield Wheel Proves Its Worth

Thanks to our four volunteer rangers the Wakefield Wheel Cycle Route is now complete with signs leading rides in both directions on the circular route. The 'Wheel' map has been around since the early days of the Cycle Forum but a number of cyclist commented on the difficulty of navigating the route with the map alone. So last year Cycle Forum volunteer set about a project to fully sign the route. Having completed that project in March, 2012 was the first summer in which we are able to judge the impact of the signing project.

To date the comments we have received have been very positive.

Colin cycled the 'Wheel' in May and posted this comment on our Facebook page:

'Just completed the new Wakefield Wheel Cycling Route, before breakfast (Well brunch!), absolutely fantastic 40 miles of a brilliantly planned (Well done David Keighley) mainly off-road safe biking, excellently signed (didn't use a map!!!).
Something for Wakefield to be proud of.'

I am told that Colin did take a map but it fell out of his pocket early on in the ride so he was forced to depend on the signs from then on.

Dave and Suzanne did the 'Wheel' one Saturday in July. I met them on one of our 'health rides', which to be honest was a bit easy for them after the near 40 miles of the 'Wheel', and they were full of praise for the route. Later Dave remarked:

'When talking to you about the "Wakefield Wheel" route my remark was based on the many other trails that we have completed which at times have left us looking for clues as to the next part of the trail we were following. Apart for the one missing sign at Anglers (now replaced) and the other near Normanton bypass which was getting covered by natural plant growth (which is not the fault of anyone) the route was well signed and easy to follow.'

Dave and Suzanne's feedback was useful as it did highlight a couple of places where we needed to improve signing. We welcome praise but it is also important to receive constructive criticism so if you notice any improvements that you think are needed please let us know by emailing info@wakefield-cycling.org.uk



The 'Wheel' signs are not only proving useful for those who want to complete the cycling challenge that it presents but also provides useful shorter signed routes to and from places along the route. Our vice-chair, David Keighley, who is responsible for devising the route and planning the signing, met a group of school students from Kettlethorpe School at Nostell Priory in June. They were having a 'treat' at the end of the school year and had decided to cycle over to Nostell Priory. When David asked how they had found their way to Nostell they said it was easy because they just followed the blue ('Wheel') signs.

Another success for Wakefield District Cycle Forum which makes all our volunteers hard work seem worthwhile.

Getting Wakefield Active!

This year, Sustrans, the national sustainable transport charity, has received funding from the People's Health Trust to run a number of "Active Travel" Projects around the country. One of the areas Sustrans are working in is Wakefield.

Sheridan Woolley is the new Sustrans Active Travel Officer in Leeds and Wakefield and is working with workplaces, initially in the junction 32 (J32) area between Castleford and Pontefract. The project has found some enthusiastic business leaders in the area keen to get staff more active, including managers at Junction32 Outlet Shopping Village, Xscape and Wakefield and District Housing.

Staff working on the site have all completed a travel survey. One striking statistic is that 60 - 80% of staff travel to work by car, yet 60 - 70% live within easy walking and cycling distance, within 5 miles of the site.



A number of walking and cycling initiatives have recently been launched at J32, with the aim of motivating staff to walk and cycle more often. The site now has a 15-strong fleet of loan bikes, which are being hired out regularly to staff. With the help of Wakefield Cycle Forum, there have been weekly Active Travel Stalls outside Xscape on Tuesdays. The stalls provide information and advice on local walking and cycling, offer free Dr Bike safety checks and bike try-outs.

An online J32 Walk and Cycle Challenge is running through October. Workplaces are being encouraged to join in by setting up teams, logging their walking and cycling journeys online and compete against others, for prizes!

The Challenge launch got some great local press coverage, with articles in the Yorkshire Post and Castleford and Pontefract Express You can see the

Express article at <http://www.pontefractandcastlefordexpress.co.uk/news/local/more-local-news/miles-for-prizes-1-5003213>. To date, there have been over 50 journeys logged, covering more than 2,000 miles! The live website is at <http://j32.getmeactive.org.uk>.

Plans for the rest of 2012 include a lunchtime walking club, the creation of a local walking and cycling map, and the training of local workplace champions.

Sheridan says, "I feel particularly fortunate to be working in Wakefield with a number of committed and enthusiastic partners, including Wakefield District Council, Metro, go:cycling and, of course, Wakefield District Cycle Forum.

Help from the Forum on Active Travel Tuesday has been invaluable. So, can I take this opportunity to say a BIG thank you to Sandy, David, Carole, Richard, and Sally for all their help and support so far. I look forward to our work together over the next year".

You can see information about the Wakefield Workplaces project at www.sustrans.org.uk/wakefield. To find out more, call Sheridan on 07909 688177, or email Sheridan.woolley@sustrans.org.uk. You can keep up with project news by following @SustransSheri on twitter.



Developments on the Chevet Branch Line May Produce New Off-Road Route

Earlier this year the Government announced the creation of a funding scheme called Paths for Communities (P4C), which will be administered by Natural England. The purpose of the fund is to 'help local community partnerships to negotiate permanent new rights of way'. The Cycle Forum activists recognised this as an opportunity to raise funding to open up one of the 'missing links' in the districts network of off-road cycle routes.

The missing link in question is shown on the map below and consists of a disused railway line known as the Chevet branch Line. This would link two existing cycle paths allowing cyclists to avoid the busy Chevet Lane and link into the network of traffic-free cycle routes on and around the Trans Pennine Trail. This is an idea which the Cycle Forum has been pursuing for some years. Funding and land ownership issues have however meant that it has remained only an idea.

For the last few months the Chair, Sandy Clark, and Vice-Chair, David Keighley, have been working to try and convert this idea into a reality. To date they have managed to bring all landowners on board with the project and had it confirmed that the project would be eligible to apply for a grant. Wakefield Council rights of way officers are assisting and it is hoped that the partnership that goes forward with the project will also include local walkers and horse riders groups, landowners and the parish council.

There is still a very long way to go in this process but the Cycle Forum will work towards turning this idea into a worthwhile addition to the district's network of cycle routes.

