



### **Developments along the Loop**

*Stockport Road Bridge* For those members who have not recently passed this way, the bridge works have now been completed, so there is a clear ride along this section of the Loop without having to negotiate the maze of diversions.

*Bridge signing* Steve Keeney has started a programme of fixing plastic-coated road names under the bridges, working from the Chorlton end eastwards. This is intended as a stop-gap measure until we can get funding for permanent signs, which is one of our priority aims to make the Loop more user friendly. Many thanks to Steve for his initiative.

*Grant application* We have made an application under the MCC ward cash grant scheme for installation of benches, tree and flower planting along a section of the Loop. Our idea of applying to all the wards along the route fell foul of the rules, so we have had to limit our application to one ward – Chorlton Park – which runs from Chorlton to Princess Road. Many thanks to Philippa Lloyd, a Friends member who works for Manchester Parks, for her efforts to get this application off the ground.

*Waste bins* We have agreed with Paul Thomas of Sustrans to run a pilot scheme of waste bins at one of the entrances to the Loop, with the aim of extending this further if successful. The Athol Road entrance has been selected for the pilot scheme, and the councillors for the ward have been contacted for their support. Thanks again to Steve Keeney for getting the scheme going.

### **Developments further a-field**

The national cycle charity Sustrans, which also manages the Loop, has launched an ambitious programme *Connect2*, working with local partners all over the country to overcome long-standing barriers dividing communities or making travel by bike or on foot difficult. The programme is one of six competing applications for *The People's Millions*, a £50 million Big Lottery grant, which will be decided by the public in a live vote on ITV1 in December. Out of 79 schemes in the final list of projects for *Connect2* are eleven from the North West. Two of these are likely to be of most interest to members, as they are reachable from either end of the Loop. One is the construction of a bridge over the Goyt Valley between Stockport and Marple. The other is improvement of access to, and surface of, the Bridgewater Canal through Sale. Members can access details of these schemes, and of the programme generally,

at [www.sustransconnect2.org.uk](http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk) If we also register our interest at the site, this can help in giving extra momentum and credibility to the grant application.

### **National bike week**

We ran two successful rides in bike week, despite the unseasonal weather (or is this just normal English summer weather?). The first, on Sunday 17 June, was run in association with the Mersey Valley Warden Service, and went from Chorlton Water Park along the Mersey Valley through Stockport to Reddish Vale, and back via the Loop to the Mersey Valley Visitors' Centre. 21 riders took part, including three tandems with child extensions. Appreciation was expressed at the improved signing of the Trans-Pennine Trail through Stockport, and those who were new to Reddish Vale were delighted to find this so accessible. It is hoped to make this an annual event in bike week.

On Friday 22 June 15 riders took part in what is now a traditional evening tour of pubs around the Loop. The organiser, Dick Venes, proved a much more rigorous timekeeper than David Beetham last year, in moving us on to our next scheduled stop before the drink had settled! At least that meant getting home sooner than the one o'clock some of us only managed last year. Ladies, we missed you this year on what turned out to be an all-male event.

A novel event took place along the Loop on the final Sunday of bike week, not on bikes and not organised by the Friends, but worth mentioning none the less. This was a rollerblading event organised by the Landscape Institute along the length of the Loop and back. No account of this was available as we went to press.

### **Future events**

**Monday 16 July:** Annual General Meeting of the Friends, 7.30 pm at Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. Besides the usual business of accounts, electing officials and a committee, we shall be discussing priorities for the next year, as well as reports for the past one, including a report from Burnage Multi Agency Group about their project on the Loop which we have supported. All members are welcome at this meeting.

**Sunday 22 July:** Summer social ride from the Loop to the Ashton Canal eastwards to the Peak Forest Canal, and thence down to the Tame Valley Path in Reddish Vale and back via the Loop. Around twenty five miles mainly off-road. Bring a picnic lunch. Details: start from Sainsbury Fallowfield car park at 10.30 am, Highfield 10.40, Debdale boathouse 11 o'clock; return by 3 pm. Contact: David on 445 1524 It is hoped to include a detailed description and map of this route as the second of our *Rides around the Loop* series in the next Newsletter.