

## **Annual Report**

The secretary's report for the year, which is attached and will be presented at the AGM on 21<sup>st</sup>, shows the wide range of activities members have been engaged in over the past twelve months. Our thanks to all who took part and made them so successful. More follows on some of the recent events.

## **Rides in Bike Week**

We hosted three rides in bike week: on the first Sunday with the Mersey Valley Rangers (see below); on the Friday evening, calling at pubs near the Loop between Chorlton and Heaton Mersey; on the final Sunday in a gale force wind doing a 'Loop the Loop' into the city centre and back via the Ashton canal. Cos Harnasz sends us his account of the first Sunday's ride on 15<sup>th</sup> June:

'Chorlton Water Park and I got there early wondering the usual two things for bike rides – how many people are going to come, and what's the weather going to do. The Mersey Valley Rangers were already there, Andy Martin and Rachael Costigan, veterans of previous rides, and soon Sustrans Ranger Dave Barker arrived, who had kindly taken over the organising, making sure this opening event of Bike Week was going to be in the MVR programme, checking the route was OK, and marshalling a band of stewards. That much mortals can be in charge of, and as for the rest, it turned out to be a beautiful day of fresh air, sunshine and silver tinted clouds – ideal cycling weather for the band of 30 plus who set off soon after 10.15 am.

Familiar faces, new faces. One man said he'd come on his own last year, and this time brought his wife, two kids and granddad. We sailed down the slope from the car park and onto the river bank, and off eastwards. Various leisurely loops on through Northenden, crossing the Mersey over Simon's Bridge, up Ford Lane and through Didsbury – "all these years I've been living here I never knew this place existed" people said along the way. For a ride organiser, this is a sweet sound.

The ride is full of contrasts. On the approach to Stockport we veer off and go up along a steep crushed rock path bounded by high paling fence on either side, to emerge at the crossing of Didsbury Road where you need both patience and wits about you. The signing is good (well done Stockport), and by putting your attention to them it helps take your mind off what the cobbled roads are doing to bike and body parts. But the sacrifice is worth it, as Reddish Vale was in full glory, extensive sweeps of bowery lanes with occasional views across the valley below.

Choice of lunch break at the visitors' centre and the farm up the road. Some chose both! Then back in the saddle and onto the Fallowfield Loop and a smooth freewheelin' time all the way back to Chorlton, over Jackson's Bridge and to the Mersey Valley visitors' centre, for a cuppa and thank you to the wardens there. Already looking forward to next year's ride.'

### **Benches and Lecterns**

Tom from Sustrans has now installed the two benches at the Chorlton end of the Loop, and re-sited the lecterns at Debdale and Levenshulme so that the maps point in the right direction. We shall have a short celebration and photo-op at the Sainsbury's lectern immediately before the AGM (see below). A big thanks to Tom.

### **Increased Use of the Loop**

Mark Stevenson has provided us with the following figures for weekly cycle traffic on the Loop, comparing five successive weeks between late March and early May, 2005 and 2008:

2005	572	579	611	556	524
2008	734	860	913	864	1093

The large rise at the end may be due to our leafleting efforts (or better weather?), but in any case the trend is firmly upwards.

### **BMAG Art Work**

Congratulations to the Burnage Multi-Agency Group for the successful completion of the art work of the two Manchester football teams, and installation at the Slade Lane bridge. The Friends acted as partners in the grant application for the project.

### **New Bike Shop**

Tony from Withington Cycles has just opened a new bike repair shop in Burnage, just round the corner from the Tesco store: 5 Lane End Road, Burnage M19 1AW

### **Future Events**

**Monday July 21<sup>st</sup>:** Annual General Meeting, 7.30 pm, Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. For those who can make it, at 7 pm we shall have a celebration and photo-op for the completion of the lectern installations, at the lectern above the car park at Sainsbury's Fallowfield, with drinks. (Bring umbrellas in case of rain).

**Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup>:** Summer ride along the Ashton and Peak Forest canals to Reddish Vale and back via the Loop, twenty-five miles max (please note the canal towpaths can be narrow). Bring a picnic. Times: 10.30 Chorlton Park (Beechwood Av entrance); 11 am Sainsbury's; 11.15, Highfield; 11.30, Debdale.

**List of existing officers and committee for the AGM**

**Chair:** Sandy Broadhurst

**Secretary and newsletter:** David Beetham

**Treasurer and membership secretary:** Dick Venes

**Minutes secretary:** Steve Keeney

**Archives:** Cos Harnasz

**Website:** Julian Fox

**Other committee members:** Alec Cowan, Pam Flynn, Philippa Lloyd

All the above are eligible for reappointment at the AGM. Any suggestions or offers for any of the above positions should be addressed to the secretary before the AGM: tel. 0161 445 1524, 9 Heaton Road, M20 4PX.