

Keeping you in The Loop

Members may have noticed two items of interest to us in the South Manchester Reporter edition of 28 April. One was a report publicising the work of the Friends under the title 'Keeping you in The Loop', as part of an ongoing series devoted to winners in the Manchester Be Proud awards scheme. Our Treasurer, Dick Venes, explained the range of our work, emphasising particularly our priority to encourage more people to use the Loop, through publicity, environmental improvements, and so on. The SMR report has itself helped to publicise the existence of the Loop to a wide audience.

Among other benefits of the Be Proud award has been the grant of £300 to fund further environmental improvement work. Suggestions for use of the grant at our January meeting included rubbish bins, the involvement of local schools to create artwork, creating a pressed plant record of the route, planting a mini-orchard and encouraging bees. We are interested in further suggestions from our members, and you are invited to email the secretary with any suggestions you may have for use of this money.

Campaign for the Trans-Pennine Trail in Didsbury

A second report in the same edition of the Reporter announced the success of the campaign to block proposals to interrupt the TPT with flights of steps at the Sandhurst Road bridge in Didsbury. The TPT is due to run alongside the new Metro line from School Lane to East Didsbury (previously it used the old track), but the latest proposals showed cyclists and other users having to mount a flight of steps at the bridge, and rejoin the trail at the other side. Our members were among the 200 or more complainants about these proposals, and we have been successful in getting Transport for Greater Manchester to think again, and review alternative solutions, such as widening the bridge. Well done to everyone who contributed to the campaign, though we need to stay vigilant. In some respects it would be simpler if the Mersey towpath were improved to allow the TPT to continue along the river from Simon bridge to the Galleon and beyond, but there would still be a need for an off-road route from Didsbury centre to Stockport. Of course there is an even simpler alternative for the TPT, to leave the Mersey at Jackson's bridge, join the Loop via Chorlton Park, and exit at Longford Road West into Reddish Vale, so cutting out Didsbury and Stockport altogether! But that would be heresy!

Chorlton Big Green Festival

This year's festival, on Saturday 16 April, drew huge crowds of visitors, from all over Greater Manchester and beyond. As in past years we ran a stall, and helped a large

number of enquirers with information not only about the Loop but about cycling routes in and around Manchester. We also led a ride towards the end of the afternoon to familiarise participants with the Loop and its environs. Many thanks to all those who helped with this important event.

Forthcoming events

Dick has already circulated some dates via email. Here are further details:

Saturday 14 May: Plant-spotting walk along the western section of the Loop, led by botanist Dave Bishop. You will be surprised at the hidden secrets to be found alongside the track. Start 10.30 am. at St. Werburgh's Road Metro station, Chorlton. Late-comers are welcome to join us further along.

Monday 16 May: Members' meeting, Union Chapel Fallowfield, 7.30 pm. All welcome. We will be planning details of our tenth anniversary celebration event in July.

Sunday 22 May: Circular ride encompassing four canals, United and City football grounds, the whole of the Loop, with lunch at the Vale Cottage Inn in Gorton. This is a must for those wanting to discover a direct route to Salford Quays, a hidden off-road route through the City centre, and much else. Participants should be comfortable with riding the narrow towpath along some of the canals. Children under sixteen should be accompanied by an adult. Start 10.30 am. at Sainsbury's car park, Fallowfield, 11 am. at the Beechwood Avenue entrance to Chorlton Park. Return by 3 pm.

Saturday 18 June to Sunday 26 June: Bike Week. We will be helping with the usual Mersey Valley and Loop the Loop rides on the two Sundays, and organising an adult social ride with pub visits on the evening of Friday 24 June. Details will be circulated nearer the time by email.

Please also note the following further events for your diaries:

Saturday 14 July: Second plant walk with Dave Bishop, on the eastern section of the Loop.

Monday 18 July: Friends AGM. We shall be reviewing the year's activities and planning our priorities for the next twelve months.

Saturday 23 July: Tenth anniversary celebration event, form and location still to be decided (see above), but involving a special ride along the Loop.