



Newsletter May 2013

Cycle Promotion, Nationally and Locally

A number of recent initiatives have put cycling onto the public and political agenda. Last month the cross-party Parliamentary Cycling Group published the results of its wide-ranging 'Get Britain Cycling' inquiry. A key recommendation of the Group was for a long-term commitment to redesign roads and other infrastructure to make them more cycle-friendly. The aim is to help raise the percentage of journeys made by bike from the current low of 2% to 10% by 2025. At the same time Transport for Greater Manchester has applied to the central Government for £20m under the Cycle City Ambition Grant, so as to provide segregated cycleways throughout the city region. Among the schemes proposed are a number that have long been on the Friends' campaigning list, such as: the Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road corridor, upgrading the Bridgewater Canal towpath from Stretford to Castlefield, upgrading the Ashton Canal towpath to Guide Bridge and Ashton, and improving routes through Stockport town centre. These all link in with the Loop or Trans-Pennine Trail and are regularly featured in our social rides. We were therefore able to give our strong support to the capital part of the bid, and will give you early news of the outcome. Finally, Sustrans is launching a campaign this month to increase cycling to work tenfold by 2020, starting with a national petition to make all work places fit for cycling. Details can be found at www.sustrans.org.uk.

Work Days on the Loop

Since the last Newsletter went out in March we have held a number of work days on the Loop:

Wellington Road orchard planting, Sunday 17 March.

With the help of the Altrincham and Sale Conservation Volunteers we planted fourteen fruit trees supplied by Bud Garden Centre at the new orchard site next to Wellington Road in Fallowfield – seven apple (various), four pear (various), two cherry and one damson. All except three have been showing healthy fruit buds and/or blossom, and only one of these has none at all. Members are welcome to visit the site, across the little stream bridge from the pathway.

Levenshulme old station clearance, Saturday 20 April.

Organised by Lara Moore from LoveLevy, and with the help of local young people, residents and FotFL members, the work day succeeded in clearing brambles and saplings from most of the Crayfield Road west section of the site, as well as cleaning up the whole area. A skipful of rubbish was removed, including ten barrow loads of back copies of the South Manchester Reporter. Regrettably, not all the submerged copies were located, and the area will need renewed attention. At the same time extra wood chippings were laid on bare sections of the

orchard path on the other side of the route. Our thanks to all who took part, and to Mike and Tom from Sustrans for supporting the day.

Rolling clean-up of the Loop, Saturday to Monday, 4-6 May.

This was by far the most ambitious clean-up we have ever organised, working along the whole length of the Loop from Debdale to Chorlton, and taking advantage of the late spring to reach well into the undergrowth on the side banks. Although the agreed timetable slipped due to the weight of rubbish towards the eastern end, we managed to cover almost all the sections eventually. 27 helpers took part over the three days, as well as the Whalley Range Scouts, and we removed up to ten car-loads of rubbish to the Gorton tip, separating out cans and bottles for recycling as we went. This was a worthwhile but sometimes unpleasant task, and we received many expressions of appreciation from passers-by. A suggestion from one of them was that we should have our own tailor-made 'Who's Working?' signs to give us greater recognition, and we are looking into this. Again our thanks to all who took part, and especially to Dick Venes for devising and organising the weekend. We hope that it will help Rangers to continue to keep their sections of the Loop cleared, at least on the immediate verges.

Other improvements

Sustrans are working with Back on Track Manchester on a rolling programme of improvements to the Sherwood Street entrance to the Loop, including new fencing and hedge-laying, starting on Tuesday 21 May. The work we did at the site in February was not in vain!

Future events

Monday 20 May: Members' Meeting, Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield, 7.30 pm. All are welcome.

Saturday 2 June: Levenshulme Open Gardens, including the Levenshulme orchard.

Sunday 16 June: Bicycle Week Mersey Valley Ride, along the Mersey valley through Stockport to Reddish Vale, and back via the Loop. Details will be circulated by email and on our website.

Friday 21 June: annual evening adult social ride, details again to be circulated.

Monday 15 July: Friends AGM, with election of officers, etc. This is the advance notice required by our constitution.

Stop Press: The four canals ride originally planned for this coming Sunday has had to be postponed, and will now take place on Sunday 14 July.