



Newsletter November 2014

Parks by the Loop: Debdale Park

This is the second in our series profiling parks along the Loop or within easy reach of it, which enhance the value of our greenway linking them. Debdale Park on the borders of Gorton and Tameside covers a large area (45 acres) and offers many amenities for visitors, including a children's play area, skate park, multi-use games area, tennis courts, pitch and putt, a bowling green and a visitors' centre. Adjacent to the park is the Debdale Outdoor Centre, which offers learning courses on its two reservoirs in sailing, windsurfing, canoeing and kayaking, for all levels of ability. Together the park and outdoor centre offer what must be the best range of activities of any park in the city. You can also explore the park on bikes and can cycle round the two reservoirs on a recently refurbished cycle path.

Debdale Park originated as land purchased in the nineteenth century by the City Council to safeguard the water supply for the two Gorton reservoirs, and was allocated for recreational use after the First World War. The reservoirs themselves were designated for water sports use when they were no longer needed for the city's water supply, from 1963 onwards. The Friends of Debdale Park are a very active community association dedicated to maintain and improve the park's facilities, and we have good relations with them. Their current priority is restoring the historic Gorton House in the park, which was built in the 1790s by wealthy textile merchant Robert Grimshaw, and has fallen into disrepair.

The park is adjacent to the Loop, and can be reached from the first entrance on the left after you have crossed the Hyde Road. Turn down the tarmac path and then immediately left again through the bridge under the Loop. You will see the outdoor centre straight ahead, and can reach the park entrance by continuing in the same direction. It is open from dawn to dusk throughout the year. Why not pay it a visit?

Gift of crab apple trees

Just beyond the turn-off to Debdale Park you will see on the right our latest community orchard set among broom bushes, which provide a striking contrast to the fruit blossom in the spring. It is there that we have welcomed delivery of two large crab apple trees which spent the summer adorning the Manchester Art Gallery. They are the gift of *Rivers of Flowers*, as part of their project to increase pollinating species for bees in urban areas. We planted them on site in late October (a picture or two of the planting group accompanies the internet version of this newsletter). Just as we were leaving a van arrived from the Friends of Vine Street Park in Gorton with a bench to install at the

junction of the Loop and Abbey Hey Lane. Dick Venes quickly volunteered to assist with the installation, and to advise on how to cope with the old railway rubble that lies hidden under most of the land along the Loop. The task was only just completed as darkness fell.

Stall at Levenshulme Festival

This year we decided to hold our Festival stall and Dr Bike advisory service at the Levenshulme Saturday market on the Stockport Road. We had a good position at the entrance to the market, and handed out lots of maps of the Loop and other information about cycling in Manchester. Our thanks to Frances McCann and Luca Conte for organising the stall, and to all those who took part on November 1st.

Cyclists please use your bell!!!

We continue to get complaints from walkers about cyclists coming up fast behind them on the Loop without warning. This is potentially quite dangerous. So we appeal to all our members to use your bell when approaching from behind. Of course we expect that most of our members will already do that, and we are exploring ways of getting the message across to a wider public. Where possible walkers might also consider keeping to one side of the path for their own security.

Hedge at Sherwood Street entrance

John and Wendy Eaden have offered to supply hedging plants to go round the fence at the Sherwood Street/Wellington Road junction. This has in principle been agreed with Sustrans, and will be planted in the New Year. The entrance is in sore need of brightening up, and our previous efforts have proved disappointing. We hope this one will fare better, and provide the spur to a wider improvement of this key entrance point.

Forthcoming events: please note for your diaries

Saturday/Sunday 22-23 November: our autumn rolling clean-up of the Loop. Saturday start at Sainsbury's Fallowfield at 10 am, working east to Levenshulme. Sunday start at the Debdale orchard at 10 am, working west to Levenshulme. **We need helpers!** Please let Dick or David know if you can help (0161 224 3843 or 445 1524). You can come at any time, and can work out from the above whereabouts to find us. Equipment provided.

Saturday 6 December: David will be leading a pruning and fruit tree recognition workshop at two of our community orchards. Levenshulme start at 11 am; Fallowfield (just beyond Wellington Road bridge on the right) at 2 pm. Waterproof shoes desirable. Do come if you want to learn more about fruit trees and their maintenance.

Sunday 4 January 2015: our annual wassail celebration at the Levenshulme orchard, beginning at dusk (3.30 to 4 pm). Great fun for all the family, with drinks and eats.

Stop Press: next Monday 17 November, members' meeting. Our bi-monthly members' meeting will be held next Monday at 7.30 pm, Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. All are welcome to our regular discussion about current concerns, plans for future improvements and other activities.