



## Newsletter March 2015

With spring in the air and the winter hopefully behind us, now is the time to think of more extended cycle and walking routes within easy reach of the Fallowfield Loop. We start with the fourth in our series of parks accessible from the Loop, this time at the Chorlton end of the track.

### **Parks near the Loop 4: Chorlton and Sale Water Parks in the Mersey Valley.**

These are two wonderful lakes, full of bird and plant life, which were both created from gravel pits dug out in the 1970s to provide for the construction of the neighbouring M60 motorway, and subsequently flooded to provide public recreation areas. Perhaps the best way to start is to describe how to reach them from the Loop, for those who are not familiar with the route. For those cycling, cross the Metro track beyond St. Werburgh's station, up the ramp, then bear left into Sidbury Road, straight across into Dawlish Road to the T junction, left and then first right into Beechwood Avenue, which brings you to Chorlton Park. This has all the usual playing facilities, and some special wood sculptures. Cross the park to Barlow Moor Road, turn left to the traffic lights, cross Barlow Moor Road there into Hardy Lane and the Metro track, and it's 200 yards or so to the end of Hardy Lane. There on the right you will see the path across part of Chorlton Ees to the Mersey at Jackson's Boat Inn, a lovely rural pub which welcomes cyclists and walkers. To get to Chorlton Water Park, don't cross the bridge, but turn left along the river to the park in a quarter of a mile or so. To reach Sale Water Park, cross the river and take the road past Jackson's Boat, turn right after 200 yards, and the park is signposted from there. For walkers, the best way is to take the tram on the new stretch of track from St. Werburgh's station in the direction of the airport for a couple of stops to the Sale Water Park station. From here both parks are readily accessible on foot, as well as the Mersey Valley itself.

Chorlton Water Park. This is a nationally important wintering site for water birds, but you will see a variety of duck species all the year round as you walk or cycle round the lake. In June there are lots of orchids along the banks by the path. Across the Mersey bridge lies Kenworthy Wood, with many tracks to explore. The Chorlton Wanderers cycle group begins its monthly cycle rides from the water park office, second Sunday each month, starting at 10 am, with gentle rides of up to 35 miles into the Cheshire countryside. You can Google their site for details of their spring and summer programme.

Sale Water Park. Besides paths round the lake you can also enjoy the birds on the wetland area on the north side of the lake called Broad Ees Dole. On the opposite side is the upmarket bar and restaurant, the Boathouse, with waterside views. There used to be a water sports centre here funded by Trafford Council, but this has fallen victim to the austerity cuts.

## **Developments at Sherwood Street**

1. Hedge planting at the Loop entrance. Some of our members, ably assisted and advised by the Sale and Altrincham Conservation Volunteers, prepared and planted a new hedgerow at the entrance in early February. The young plants for the hedge were kindly donated by member John Eaden. They were a mixture of native plants, mostly hawthorn with some of each of wild cherry, field maple, dog rose, hazel and blackthorn. The planting extends from the Sherwood Street entrance round the corner of Wellington Road to the bridge parapet. We need to finish off the job with a layer of wood chippings when these are made available by Sustrans.

2. Planning application affecting traffic along the street. There is a planning proposal for the development of the Orange Grove site on the corner of Sherwood Street and Wilmslow Road. We have concerns for the impact of increased traffic on Loop cyclists along the street, both in the construction phase of the development and when it is finished, a point which was not mentioned in the traffic analysis which accompanied the planning application. We have put in comments to the planning department, and attended the councillors' site visit on 19th February along with local residents and several cyclists. Initially the City Council Planning Committee were minded to approve the development, but they have yet to make a final decision.

## **Cleaning up the Loop**

Our spring rolling clean-up of the Loop is scheduled for the weekend of 25-26 April, starting at the Debdale end at 10 am on Saturday 25th working westwards, and at the Levenshulme quadrants at 10 am on Sunday 26th. We desperately need helpers if we are to make any impact, so please do consider if you can spare some time to join us at any time on one of those mornings. It would help if you could let one of us know in advance. There is a particular job to do at the Levenshulme quadrants, where the undergrowth and brambles have been stripped, to reveal a load of rubbish to be cleared to improve the site. As usual we will provide bin liners, gloves and litter-pickers for the job. Do please think about helping; it really makes a difference to the environment of the Loop, and to users' enjoyment of it.

Reporting fly-tipping. You will probably have seen places where residents living adjacent to the Loop have tipped their household rubbish onto the bank. Some of these have been photographed and reported to the local councillors and to the Sustrans Manchester office. Again it would help if when members come across any fresh examples of fly-tipping, you can alert your councillor and Sustrans directly.

## **Orchard maintenance**

Again this is a job which falls on a few shoulders, and where it would be great to involve more of our members. It is basically about keeping the undergrowth at bay around the fruit trees, so that they do not become choked. The sites are at Debdale, Levenshulme and Fallowfield. There is always interest in seeing the fruit develop from bud to blossom to fruit formation and then swelling and ripening. Please contact David at the email address given above if you would like to help. The orchard and raised beds at the Levenshulme quadrants will feature again in the Open Gardens event on Sunday June 7th.