

Sustrans near you

the North West

New connections in Northwich and Crewe

The new Riversdale Swing Bridge in **Northwich** officially opened on Friday 3 December, replacing the former structure that was lost six years ago.

The new bridge is part of Sustrans' Connect2 scheme in the area, and now the quick and direct link is being used by walkers and cyclists linking Greenbank and the Hartford Campus with Leftwich and Sir John Deane's College.

Peter Foster, regional director for Sustrans, said, "We are delighted to be restoring this lost link for the community, which is going to allow many more local people to make their everyday journeys on foot or by bicycle."

"We are also pleased to see progress on planning the final stages of the Connect2 network, a new footbridge over the River Dane, improved sections of riverside path, and the slight widening of Hunts Lock crossing."

The project could not have come about without Sustrans supporters and volunteers who voted for Sustrans to win part-funding for this and many other Connect2 schemes from the Big Lottery Fund in 2007, as well as project partners, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Growth Point and Weaver Valley Partnership.

Helen Bullough, Big Lottery Fund head of region for the North West, said, "This is great news as the new bridge will make it all that bit easier to make everyday journeys by foot or bike."

"People from across the UK voted for Sustrans to be awarded the Lottery grant, so it's fantastic to see some of that funding making its way to communities in Northwich."

The bridge itself spans 45 metres and is supported by 10 steel tie rods from a tower six metres above the deck. Weighing 50 tonnes, it takes seven minutes to open.

In other Connect2 news in the region, at **Crewe** the Mayor, Cllr Jacqui Wetherill, opened the first section of the greenway



The opening was popular despite the freezing weather

between Queens Park and the Rising Sun on Middlewich Road in early December. Cheshire East Council is now planning the further sections in Nantwich at the public park, the Barony, and between the two towns on Beam Heath Trust land.

Describing the changes, Peter Foster remarked, "It's great to see this section open for use, enabling people to walk and cycle through their local area."

"This is just the first step of a wider project, which will make it much easier and safer for people to get between Crewe and Nantwich without having to rely on their car."

Welcome to the North West hub



Despite the tough economic climate, there is good news to report on: further progress on Connect2 schemes, the valuable work and training

carried out thanks to Sustrans' Future Jobs Fund, and further developments on the National Cycle Network. Also most of the current approved Links to Schools schemes are now nearing completion and the signs are positive for a continuation of this programme at least for a further year.

At a more strategic level we continue to engage with partner councils on the Local Sustainable Travel Fund, through Local Transport Plans and Local Development Frameworks, putting forward the whole range of Sustrans projects and in particular the role of Bike It, our school cycling project.

Now it's over to our Area Manager, Alice Rickwood, for a roundup from Liverpool.

Peter Foster
Regional Director, North West



It's all go for Sustrans in **Liverpool**; we had a visit from board members and management from Sustrans and sister charity, Railway Paths, on 15 October.

They cycled en masse to see the Liverpool Loop Line which is looking better than ever thanks to the tireless work of the maintenance teams. They were joined by representatives from Liverpool City Council who welcomed the chance to share ideas for the future of the route and cycling in Liverpool. The peloton of dignitaries and staff also visited the Liverpool Connect2

site, an excellent route which will link Everton Park to the Mersey. They were greeted by the chair of the steering group, Councillor Jane Corbett, and some of the steering group members, who gave the group a flavour of the rich history of the area through which the route passes, and demonstrated just how enthusiastic they are for Connect2 to be a success in the city.

Future Jobs Fund

The Liverpool Future Jobs Fund maintenance team sadly finished working in November. However due to the great success of the team, a small number of them, along with their superb supervisor John Madden, were able to stay on until January to work with the maintenance team on tackling the tree work required on the Liverpool Loop Line.

We have had a flurry of enthusiasm for volunteering on the Liverpool Loop Line in recent months, particularly from people who are either unemployed, students or retired, and are keen to work very regularly on weekdays. As a result we are forming a Loop Line voluntary workforce who will work twice a month at different locations along the path to compliment the work of the maintenance team.

Exciting new projects

Finally we are working on two exciting new projects for the Liverpool Loop Line with Annie MacLean, the Arts Outreach Officer for Alt Valley. Firstly an orientation project which will involve local people working with artists to design new signage for the path to help people find their way to local places of interest. The second project is a Lantern Parade called Chrysalis which will take place on the path in Alt Valley on Sunday 6 March 2011. It will involve beautiful lanterns made by local people and paraded on the path to celebrate the arrival of spring. Supporters are extremely welcome to come and join us for this amazing spectacle.

I hope you enjoy reading about our news in the rest of the region.

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Area Manager, Merseyside

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ISSN 1755-4039

On the ground



Schools get pedalling thanks to Sustrans

Two schools in Cumbria have recently received Sustrans Links to Schools cycle parking facility grants. Robert Ferguson School in **Carlisle** has a much needed cycle shelter and now there is somewhere secure to store their bikes, the children are looking forward to using the new cycleway built on the flood defences to reach the school. Just as importantly, the children are to start their Bikeability training in the spring.

In **Cockermouth**, the secondary school has rather more ambitious plans; it now has three new shelters and a secure locker facility for the staff. Nikki Wingfield from Sustrans will be visiting the school to talk to children and staff at assembly and kick off a cycling challenge, which will involve children clocking up sustainable miles and competing against each other to be the most sustainable class!

Sale away

Thanks to Links to Schools funding we have also been able to deliver a small local network of on-road and traffic-free routes in **Sale**, as an extension to the longer Bridgewater Way canal-side route being developed by the Bridgewater Canal Trust and canal owner, the Peel Group. Springfield Primary School is the main beneficiary, with access directly

Route News



Opening the new cycle shelters at Cockermouth School

from the playground onto the towpath. The headmaster reports that already 40-50 families are using the improved route which is hugely encouraging for all concerned. This project links with an adjacent route that was opened in June 2010 as part of Sustrans' Connect2 project.

Sustrans' school cycling project

Bike It Action Days are annual events held by Sustrans' Bike It officers, bringing representatives from local Bike It schools together to share ideas and experiences and learn more about cycling. Lucy Sutcliffe and Andy Adkin, both new Bike It officers in **Greater Manchester**, with the assistance of Vicky Hill from Sustrans' School Travel team, ran a combined Action Day with a twist.

As well as school representatives and existing local authority contacts, representatives from across **Greater Manchester** were also invited so they too could learn about Bike It and the benefits this can bring to their local schools and wider communities.

"A very helpful and informative day, great to share ideas and take part in child-friendly activities and learn from others who Bike It," was just one of the positive comments.

89 Deeside to Neston route is moving forward

Low temperatures and lying snow did not deter the RSPB, MOD Estates, Cheshire West, Chester Council and Sustrans meeting on Burton Marsh in early December to investigate the practicalities of a new route from **Deeside** toward **Neston**.

The key to the route is very much at the Flintshire end of the marsh, and Sustrans will be working with Flintshire County Council on progressing the details.

451 Signing in progress

We are delighted to report that the first signing is being installed on the new route between **Sandbach, Crewe** and **Nantwich**.

6 62 Bad news for Lancashire

We're sorry to report that sections of National Route 6 proposed for the Stubbins area north of **Ramsbottom**, and National Route 62 over the River Douglas at **Beconsall** look increasingly unlikely to be developed.

The Lancashire County Council land regeneration project, REMADE, was investigating bringing these derelict railway formations back into public use as greenways, but the council's team will be disbanded from April 2011. As always we will be looking for new opportunities to develop these routes where we can.

Connect2 news

Our Big Lottery Fund Connect2 project aims to transform communities by building new bridges and local walking and cycling networks. We are thrilled about the recent openings in Northwich and Crewe, but unfortunately local authority budget cuts and other problems have led to several other Connect2 schemes having to be cancelled or modified. In the North West, schemes in Huyton and Carlisle have had to be scaled down, but more positively, we hope to be able to work on a local network of routes in Kirkby that otherwise may not have been possible; see final paragraph.

In **Huyton**, we are now working on aligning the new route with the Whiston Greenway via Stact Moers Park, as the original plan has been affected by delays to the regeneration of the former Cronton Colliery site.

In **Carlisle** we have proposed to the local councils that the plans be scaled down to concentrate on providing a link from Currock to the city centre. A decision will be made by the end of February as to whether this will go ahead, once the costs and design details have been considered.

The **Workington** scheme to replace a bridge over the River Derwent that was damaged in the 2009 floods, and build connecting paths, has been approved for Connect2 funding and work should be well underway by the time you read this.

Knowsley Council has responded very positively to the possibility of working with us on a local network of routes in **Kirkby** town centre so we are moving forward on the planning work for this.



Along the Lune



The Route

Family-friendly ride

Distance: : 11 (family-friendly loop) or 35 miles/17.7 or 56.3 km

Terrain: flat and traffic-free with country lanes and short climbs on the longer option

Getting there: railway stations at Morecambe, Lancaster, Wennington, Bentham, Clapham, Giggleswick, Settle, Long Preston, Hellifield, Gargrave, and Skipton

Bike hire: Sunshine Cycles, Morecambe – 01524 414 709

Maps: NN69 Way of the Roses – £6.99 from Sustrans

OS maps: Explorer 296/OL41, Landranger 97

Tourist information: Morecambe – 01524 582 808

Morecambe Bay and the Lune Valley hinterland have many wonderful cycling and walking options. Lancaster is a Cycling Demonstration Town, and so it has been able to invest in some excellent facilities in recent years. Our featured ride follows Sustrans' new Way of the Roses route that opened in September 2010 and offers a family-friendly loop and a longer ride for the more adventurous. To take the shorter option, follow National Route 6 signs north from the bridge in Lancaster to the canal, along that to a new link (National Route 69) back across to the promenade that is almost completely traffic-free and very well signed.

Look out for Eric in Morecambe



A bright new sign marks the western point of the Way of the Roses route at the Bastion, a wide section of the wonderful promenade, just south of the renovated Midland Hotel. Depart from here, following

the signs inland, taking care at the two roundabouts. After Morecambe Station, a tarmac-surfaced former railway path leads all the way to the centre of Lancaster. Be aware of road intersections and the crossing point of the current railway.

Lancaster



The Ashton Memorial, Lancaster

The path brings you close to the north bank of the tidal River Lune. A fine view of Lancaster Castle and the waterside city opens up to the right. At the stylish, modern Millennium Bridge, the route joins National Route 6. Cross the river, keeping to the left branch on the southern bank. This path will follow the Lune all the way to the Crook O'Lune and Caton. Follow the signs carefully past the supermarket and underneath the main A589. The next section of two miles changes from riverside to old railway path once more, becoming more wooded. Don't forget to cast your eyes up to the stately Lune Aqueduct, carrying the Lancaster Canal across the Lune. It's worth peeling off the route here to explore the aqueduct itself.

Crook O'Lune

After a further two miles, leave the railway path, and ascend to your left. From the café car park drop to the main road and turn right, following this road uphill for a quarter-mile. Follow signs right onto an unfenced road into picturesque Halton Park. You are

now on a series of ups and downs that take you well above the River Lune for six miles, offering wonderful glimpses to Bowland Forest. A well-earned descent sweeps you down into the village of Gressingham, and to the Loyn Bridge. A short section of the busier A683 brings you through Hornby and you return to smaller roads at Butt Yeats.

Wray

Another mile and you are in Wray. The route ascends gradually but apart from one steep pull the gradients are favourable. Each crest gained only improves the views, and you begin to see the magnificent profiles of the distinctive Dales fells.

Clapham

8.5 miles after Wray, the signs direct you northwards at the remote feeling Keasden crossroads. You pass Clapham Station before meeting the busy A65 highway a mile later. Here you can either cross (with care) and continue into the village or take the sheep tunnel. In dry conditions this allows you to walk your bike under the road alongside the river, accessible through a gate in the wall on the right-hand side shortly ahead of the road junction.

When you come to Austwick village, you will note that there are now signs for National Route 68 and the Pennine Cycleway towards Settle. You are now ascending small walled lanes, winding towards the dramatic outcrops of Moughton Scar. A low pass delivers you into Ribblesdale, with grand views opening up of Pen-y-ghent.

Helwith Bridge

At the hill crest, the unbounded road feels very open. Don't miss the next turning to the right with a final short hill. Follow wonderful, quiet Stainforth Lane, with the Ribble deep below you on the left (east), and mostly freewheel down to Settle. You will need your brakes on this steepening section. Dominating the far horizon is mysterious Pendle. At the T-junction join the B6480 into Settle with its many facilities.

Getting back

Both Settle and Giggleswick have railway stations, the former serving stations towards Leeds or Carlisle and the latter trains for Leeds and Lancaster.

You can explore the route against an Ordnance Survey base map with Sustrans' online mapping: www.sustrans.org.uk