



Pupils get to work on the road carpet at Ashton Gate Primary School in Bristol

Bedminster's magic carpet

Pupils at Ashton Gate Primary School in south Bristol returned after the autumn half term break to find that their journey to school had a whole new look. An innovative road carpet, which involved painting an attractive pattern on the road's surface, had been added to the street leading to the school. This simple solution, along with planters and seating, is intended to help slow vehicles down and improve the appearance and feel of the street for pedestrians and cyclists.

As part of our aim to create better public spaces, we helped the school to work with Bristol City Council and local residents in the area along with parents, staff and pupils to develop ways to slow the traffic down around the school. Parents, staff and governors held workshops to discuss their needs for the street and the issues they wanted to address. Sustrans then provided technical advice and funding for the carpet. Lots of volunteers, including pupils from the school, got involved and helped lay the patterns on the road during the holidays so that they were ready for the start of term.

"There was a real buzz on the school run when we first saw the patterns on the road. We love the designs and car drivers seem to be more aware of the school and children as a result," commented parent, Kathleen Christie.

Road carpets like this one have been used in other locations and have the effect of making drivers slow down because of the uncertainty in priority over people on foot and bike.

Sustrans' Fin McNab says, "It sounds a little unusual, but it's amazing what a difference this kind of intervention can make to a street."

Have a look at the magic carpet online by visiting:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=qw6SVQRE07U

Top Trail through Topsham

It's now possible to walk or cycle almost traffic-free all the way between Exeter and Exmouth on the Exe Estuary Trail, thanks to a new bridge over the River Clyst at Topsham, which was officially opened at the end of November. This is a wonderful route through historic Topsham and the attractive wooden bridge has been designed to be in keeping with the area's heritage and natural beauty.

The new bridge runs parallel to the old stone road bridge, which was unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists and too narrow to incorporate a cycle lane or pavement. We know that the new bridge will make this route even more appealing for visitors as well as residents, with its spectacular vistas and birdwatching opportunities plus excellent connections by rail. If you'd like to ride the route, follow the instructions on page 4.

Zooming to schools all over the south west

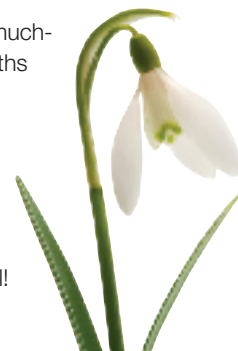
Sustrans works with schools across the region in various ways to encourage and enable children, parents and staff to cycle to school. This includes enthusing children to get about safely on two wheels through on- and off-road cycle training, classroom sessions, new paths and crossings, cycle parking facilities, activities and events.

We've been doing this in Cornwall for over a year now, working with twelve schools from Truro to Penzance, some of which are in socially deprived areas. Pupils have taken part in almost 200 activities with the most popular being bike to school events, classroom sessions and playground skills work. And the results have been fantastic with the number of children cycling to school every day doubling.

We're delighted that thanks to a grant from the People's Health Trust, funded by the Health Lottery, we can continue this work until July. However, the really big thank you goes to our supporters because without your donations we wouldn't have been able to secure this in the first place.

"It's thanks to you that we're zooming to school by bike each day!" said a parent at Bosvigo School in Truro, speaking on behalf of all the happy kids and parents who are now pedalling the school run.

We've also been busy putting in much-needed cycle parking facilities, paths and crossings at other schools around the region. These can make a huge difference to school cycling levels as they help to allay parents' fears about safety and security. Look out for improvements at your local school!



UPDATE

From the Regional Director



Despite the economic gloom, we are staying positive and pressing ahead with our work to get more children walking and cycling to school. We are focusing particularly on helping hard pressed schools to find the time and activities to encourage cycling, as well as providing practical solutions like additional cycle parking and better routes.

We have also been working with local authorities to make your everyday journeys by bike and on foot easier by helping them to make the best use of money they've received through the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). Where authorities haven't received any funds yet, we're helping them to develop bids for future rounds.



At times like these when funding to build new routes is getting harder to come by, it is vital that we continue to campaign for sustainable travel at national and local government levels. The government is investing in infrastructure to help economic growth but we need to make sure that this means walking, cycling and local public transport projects and not just more roads and high speed railways. The National Cycle Network and the local urban networks of cycle routes have made a huge difference to the resurgence of cycling to work and to school and we need your continued support to keep up the momentum in hard times.

One such initiative which you can support right now is our campaign to make 20 miles per hour the default speed limit in urban areas for

safer cycling and walking. In many older parts of towns and cities in the region there is not enough space for traffic-free paths to avoid busy roads, so reducing the danger from traffic by bringing down speed limits to 20 mph could save lives and have the added health benefits of encouraging more people to be active.

Whilst on the subject of cycling and walking, Sustrans is leading an exciting new project with the Ramblers to create signposted routes around the edge of Dartmoor National Park, for cycling on cycle tracks and quiet roads, with a parallel walking route on public footpaths. If successfully completed these 100-mile routes will become a major leisure attraction in the region.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you, our supporters and volunteers in the South West, for your generosity in providing donations of your money and time, without which Sustrans would not exist or thrive. In our type of work, it is seed corn funding from supporters that helps us to attract grants and awards of larger funds to make projects happen. We are continually revived and enthused by your ideas and suggestions, even though sometimes it may feel that bringing them to fruition is a slow process! So do please keep them coming in.

Adrian Roper
Regional Director, South West

Contact details

If you would like to get involved or have any comments, do get in touch with Adrian and the South West team:
t: 0117 915 0118 e: adrian.roper@sustrans.org.uk

ISSN 1755-4020

Obituary

We are sorry to announce Ruth James, our schools' officer in Swindon, passed away peacefully in September after a long battle with cancer. True to form, Ruth remained dedicated and committed to her role until her very last days. Ruth had been battling with her illness for some time, but indicative of her strength of character, remained adamant that she wanted to be known as "Ruth the Bike It lady" rather than "Ruth the cancer sufferer". For this reason, she chose to keep knowledge of her illness discreet, and set about her work with her usual gusto until the very end. She will be greatly missed by all her friends and colleagues at Sustrans.



Network News

The National Cycle Network continues to grow and improve all the time due to your generous support. Thank you on behalf of happy walkers and cyclists everywhere. Read on for a snapshot of some of the work going on in the region.

Cornwall

3 Cyclists in **Marazion** are looking forward to new traffic-free sections of the Cornish Way plus new cycle parking and seating overlooking Mounts Bay. Whilst schoolchildren at Berrycombe School will have an easier school journey thanks to a new link to the Camel Trail at Bodmin (National Route 32).

Devon

2 Local residents in **Plymouth** are excited about having a great new link across the city, now that the first section in Stonehouse Creek has been completed. As part of the route, cyclists and walkers will be able to use the Laira Bridge. "We'll be able to go to Granny's without getting muddy feet!", one delighted mother explained to her son.

2 Students at Dawlish College and pupils at Gatehouse Primary School in **Dawlish** will have an easier journey to school thanks to improvements to cycle routes near them and five Devon schools are getting more cycle parking.

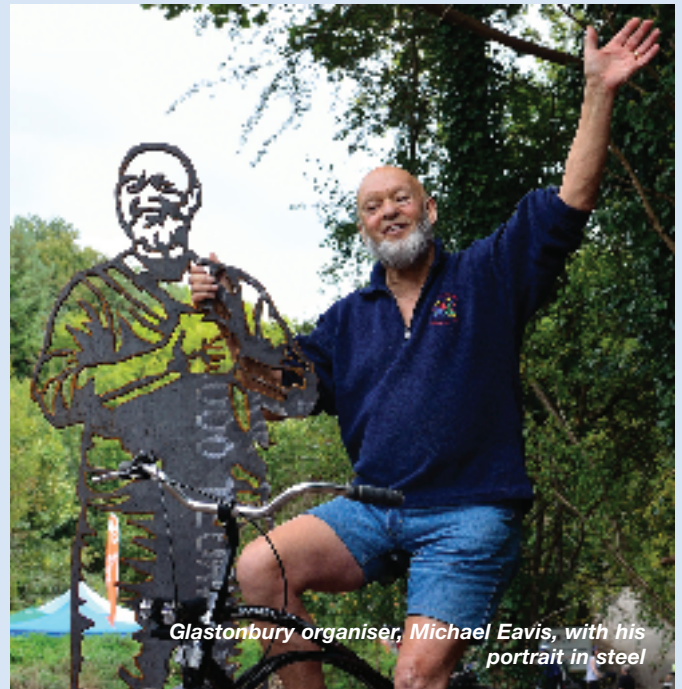
Dorset

26 Cyclists in Dorset are enjoying a new cycle path which is part of National Route 26 between **Dorchester** and **Weymouth** and a new bridge due to open in April will fill a gap in Rodwell Trail.



Somerset

- The exciting Two Tunnels route is progressing with the construction of a new bridge over Monksdale Road in **Bath**, though work on the tunnels themselves will have to wait until late spring to avoid disturbance to the resident bat population.
- Glastonbury Festival's Michael Eavis officially opened the Five Arches route in **Midsomer Norton** at an event attended by over 200 people. Eavis, who worked as a coal miner beneath the site of the new path, also unveiled a portrait bench which features himself. We'd like to thank all the local volunteers who helped organise the event.



Glastonbury organiser, Michael Eavis, with his portrait in steel

- Our wonderful volunteers were hard at work in the autumn looking after traffic-free paths throughout Somerset and a dozen volunteers from Lloyds TSB enjoyed a break from the office when they spent the day shovelling and brush cutting at Portbury Docks.

33 We're hopeful that cyclists will soon be able to follow the Stop Line Way, a coast to coast route on National Route 33 between **Weston super Mare** and **Seaton**. Where some sections are incomplete, the route will initially use the existing roads.

33 Further north on National Route 33, local residents are looking forward to a new crossing of the River Yeo with a link to **Clevedon** which will be opened later this year.

Wiltshire

24 Cyclists in **Salisbury** have been allowed to cycle on the Town Path which links to National Route 24 as part of a six month trial. If successful, cycling restrictions will be permanently removed.

403 Relief for cyclists on National Route 403 near **Calne** – for the first time they don't need to carry their bikes up the steps at Sands Farm as the quarry conveyor has been moved.

The projects in Plymouth, Bath and Midsomer Norton are some of the many local networks Sustrans is developing with the help of funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The aim of the work is to bring the National Cycle Network into the heart of communities. To find out more visit: www.sustrans.org.uk/connect2



Spring days out in the South West

Whether it's spectacular displays of springtime flowers or a Mother's Day cream tea, the South West offers lots of choice for car-free days out.

Spring blooms

A good choice for flowers throughout the season is Duncliffe Wood near Shaftsbury, reached by heading south along **National Route 25** from Gillingham in Dorset. Alternatively, Lanhydrock on **National Route 3** near Bodmin in Cornwall offers beautiful gardens full of magnolias and camellias.

For a stunning carpet of bluebells, take a slight detour off the **West Country Way** (National Route 3) between East Harptree and Priddy

in Somerset towards Charterhouse to reach Long Wood, rated by the Woodland Trust as one of the best places in the UK to see this late spring flower. Alternatively, the network of routes linked to **National Route 42** in the Forest of Dean offers some wonderful woodland trails.

Mother's Day

A cream tea or lunch can be a special treat on Mother's Day – and even better if you've worked up an appetite by cycling there! In Devon, Buckland Abbey off **National Route 27** near Yelverton and Knighthayes Court on **National Route 3**, near Tiverton, are both offering Mother's Day lunches, whilst Arlington Court on **Regional Route 56** near Barnstaple is running craft activities and teas. On **National Route 2** in Dorset, Studland Beach and Nature Reserve and Brownsea Island (accessed via ferry) are serving teas; whilst the Courts Garden, off **National Route 254** near Bradford on Avon in Wiltshire, is holding craft activities. Check the National Trust website for dates and booking requirements.

For information about attractions on the National Cycle Network plus nearby railway stations, visit the online mapping at www.sustrans.org.uk

All of these routes are featured on a new range of Sustrans maps covering Cornwall, North Devon, South Devon, Dorset and the Somerset Levels; they'll be available from the end of March at www.sustransshop.co.uk

Featured Ride:

Exeter to Topsham

This is a family-friendly ride on traffic-free paths with short on-road sections in 20 mph zones. In the early Spring, the area is great for birdwatching at the head of the Exe Estuary, an international site for birds. It also makes a good walk, with a riverside footpath option at low tide north of Topsham.

Start your ride or walk in Exeter at the historic Quay, where there are cafés, pubs and cycle hire if you need them. Head south east following the signs for National Route 34 on the path between the canal and the river, passing the Double Locks pub.

On meeting National Route 2 at the bypass, turn left to cross the River Exe and follow signs to Topsham through the housing estate and under the M5 (walkers may follow a path along the riverside if the tide is not too high). Follow the National Route 2 signs to the estuary side and Topsham, which again is full of pubs and cafés, most notably one called Route 2!

The route from here goes up Monmouth Hill and left up Monmouth Road then down Bridge Hill to the wonderful new bridge over the River Clyst. The choice here is yet more refreshment at the historic Bridge Inn, carrying on a short distance to Darts Farm (with RSPB shop and cycle hire if you start here instead) or exploring the Exe Estuary Trail down towards Exmouth. Topsham also has an RSPB reserve with great viewing areas just off the route.

This and many more of Devon's best cycle routes can be found on the new South Devon cycle map. Perfect for planning your summer rides, it will be available from the end of March, priced £4.99, at www.sustransshop.co.uk



Enjoy a leisurely family day out on the Network in Devon



The Route

Distance: 5 miles/8 km

Terrain: mainly traffic-free paths and flat

Getting there: railway stations at Exeter and Topsham

OS maps: Landranger 192

Maps: Exe Estuary Explorer leaflet available to download from www.devon.gov.uk

Tourist information: www.visitdevon.co.uk

