

Opening a 'missing link' on the WoW

Cyclists on the Wonders of Wakefield (WoW) cycle trail now take it for granted they can enjoy a traffic-free ride through Walton Colliery Nature Park (WCNP). But it was not always thus!



Originally cycling from Crofton to WCNP required a cyclist to negotiate the busy Shay Lane. It took a five-year campaign by Wakefield District Cycle Forum (WDCF) to open the new traffic-free route. The new access resulted from the removal of palisade fencing under the railway line which borders WCNP and joined up two existing paths for cyclists and walkers. The 'before' photo on the left shows the situation before the summer of 2014.

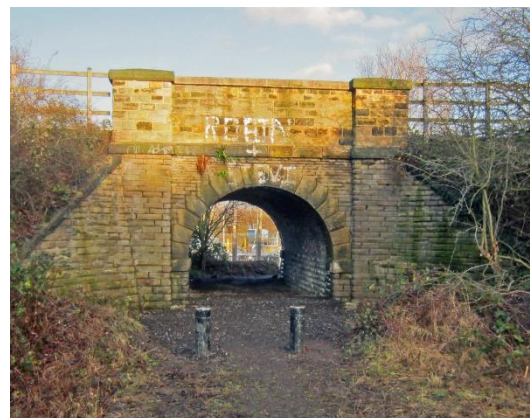
The first hurdle to be overcome was an objection from Yorkshire Water, who use the road from Shay Lane to WCNP for access to their water treatment plant. A campaign of letter writing by WDCF members was the final straw in persuading YW to change their mind.

The next hurdle was to persuade Network Rail to remove the palisade fencing under the railway. Again, this took many letters, emails and phone calls before they agreed to meet with representatives of WDCF and Wakefield Council, a meeting at which they agreed to the removal of the fencing.

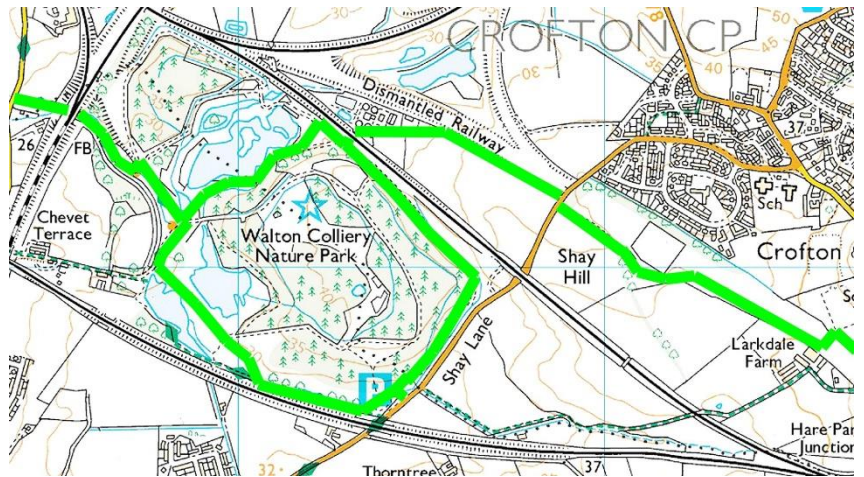
Although the WDCF was the driving force behind the project thanks need to be given to several partners. Network Rail agreed to the removal of the fencing and agreed to lease the land under the railway to the Wakefield Council.

The Wakefield Council must be thanked for agreeing to lease the land, for removing the fencing and for providing materials that enabled the WDCF workgroup to construct an accessible path through the railway arch. The photo on the right shows the access path after our work party did its bit.

We are also indebted to local MP, Jon Trickett, who used his influence with Network Rail to get the parties together. He has been supportive of WDCF in a number of our campaigns.



The campaign took a long time to achieve its aim and required a great deal of persistence on behalf of WDCF volunteers, but it opened another 'missing link' in the network of traffic-free paths in the district. The map opposite illustrates how the new path has joined together the network of traffic-free routes in the area.



The route is not only an improvement to the WoW but completes a very useful traffic-free commuter route from Crofton to Sandal and Agbrigg Railway Station and then by a signed route on the road into Wakefield Waterfront.



Everyone involved was overjoyed at our success, including the workgroup who completed the path under the railway, as you can see from the photo.