

INSIDE

Best Foot Forward
page 2

Park it Properly
page 2

Collision Remedial
Scheme
page 2

A1 Improvements
page 3

M1/Westlink
Improvements
page 3

Fortwilliam Pillars
page 4

Hungarian Visit
page 4

Toome Bypass Opens



Journey times between Belfast and Londonderry have been cut by up to 15 minutes following the opening of the long awaited Toome Bypass. The 3.5 km dual carriageway scheme has removed approximately 22,000 vehicles per day from the streets of Toome, creating a safer and more pleasant environment for those who live and work in the village.

At the opening ceremony, Minister of State, John Spellar MP said "The Toome Bypass is, by far, the most significant improvement to the road infrastructure in Northern Ireland since the completion of the Belfast Cross Harbour Bridge in 1995. Today's opening of this major project, costing £18 million, is a further demonstration of my Department's continuing commitment to both the Regional Transportation Strategy and the North West of the province."

A striking feature of the new bypass is 'The Toome Bridge', a 99 metre span

bowstring arch bridge over the Lower River Bann which will undoubtedly become a landmark structure. This type of bridge allows the approach embankments to be kept low to avoid visual intrusion in the floodplain landscape. It also ensures that the bridge deck is sufficiently high for recreational use of the river and to allow free passage for anglers and ramblers along the riverbanks.

The bypass was procured using an innovative Target Cost – Design and Build model where any savings/overspend on the agreed target cost are shared between Roads Service and the contractor in a pre-arranged manner. This form of contract encourages value engineering and allows the contractor to bring his considerable expertise to the project to help solve the many engineering challenges associated with the scheme. The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation contributed 75% of the total cost of the project.

Roads Service has taken other measures to limit environmental impact

and to integrate the bypass into the flat landscape. These include the use of low noise road surfacing, a sustainable drainage system and the creation of grassland areas with wild flowers. Conservation Volunteers NI and the Ulster Wildlife Trust collected seeds from within a 30-mile radius of the site and propagated some 120,000 woody plants which have been used in the soft landscaping of the bypass. Ecoseeds collected grass seed and seeds from other locally occurring plants and have supplied enough material to grass some 15,000 sq metres of the bypass.

Roads Service is now developing a scheme to dual the A6 between Castledawson Roundabout and the M22 motorway and other carriageway widening schemes which will provide more overtaking lanes on the A6. Adding these schemes to the recently announced £29 million scheme to widen the M2 motorway between Sandyknowes and Greencastle, this represents a planned investment of some £66 million on roads on this key transport corridor.

Schools Urged to 'Put Best Foot Forward'

1,400 pupils from 30 schools across Northern Ireland are participating in Roads Service's new 'Best Foot Forward For Schools' pilot programme, aimed at educating children on the benefits of sustainable transport.

Speaking at the launch of the scheme, at Brownlee Primary School in Lisburn, Brian Moreland of Roads Service said: "The Best Foot Forward For Schools pilot will introduce children, their parents and teachers to easily accessible travel alternatives and inform them on the health, social and environmental benefits of using sustainable transport on an occasional or regular basis."

The programme is part of the Travelwise NI initiative, launched by Roads Service in October 2003, which

promotes sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and greater use of public transport to employers, commuters and schools and encourages alternatives to the use of the private car, particularly for shorter journeys.

'Best Foot Forward For Schools' has been developed in keeping with the school curriculum and teachers are provided with an Information and Activity Pack that includes an interactive CD-ROM for computer-based activities. Road Safety is central to the pilot and the programme includes a school visit by a Road Safety Education Officer.

Further information on the programme and interactive games can be found on the Travelwise NI Website at www.travelwiseni.com.



Park It Properly!



Most motorists recognise the need for parking and waiting controls to allow traffic to move freely and park safely. However, there are those who ignore these restrictions, parking on yellow lines and in disabled bays, blocking entrances and obstructing footways, forcing people to step onto the carriageway. This is a particular problem for older people, those with disabilities and those with young children.

Enforcement of parking restrictions is currently carried out by PSNI. However, in 2001, PSNI stated that parking enforcement was not a core policing function and that it intended to withdraw from this activity at the earliest possible opportunity.

Public consultation has shown that there is widespread support for effective enforcement of parking constraints and the Department for Regional Development is now preparing legislation to enable it to assume responsibility for parking enforcement. The public's views will be sought on the draft legislation later this year and the scheme will be fully operational by mid-2006.

In developing its operational procedures, the Department will carefully consider issues such as the appropriate level of penalty for contravening vehicles, arrangements for paying charges, and the provision of an independent appeals process.

The primary objective for the new arrangements is to reduce traffic congestion and to improve highway and pedestrian safety by reducing the number of illegally parked vehicles.

Collision Remedial Scheme Underway at Derryhale

Roads Service has begun work on a £225,000 scheme aimed at improving road safety on the A3 between Portadown and Armagh at Derryhale.

This busy route carries around 16,000 vehicles per day and several businesses at Derryhale attract a significant number of customers, resulting in extensive turning movements, and parking which obstructs sight lines.

An analysis of the collision history at this location showed that there have been a number of serious collisions involving pedestrians in recent years. Following consultation with local traders and PSNI, a scheme was designed that will both enhance road safety and accommodate local business needs.

Existing hard shoulders on both sides of the road will be removed to prevent sight lines being obstructed by parked vehicles. A central lane will be provided to facilitate right turning movements, and several traffic islands will be installed to assist pedestrians in crossing the road. Provision will also be made for two bus lay-bys and associated footpath links. In addition, it is planned to reduce existing traffic lane widths and implement a 50mph speed limit on this stretch of the road.

Work began on-site in January and the scheme should be completed by the end of May this year.

What Do You Think?

On the move is published to provide road users with information on the services provided by Roads Service. If you have any views on the newspaper, or if there are any areas of Roads Service work that you would like to see featured in future issues, please contact the editor at:

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Improvements Continue on A1

The latest stage in a major programme of improvements to the A1, which links Belfast to the border at Newry, has been completed with the official opening of the new £4.9 million flyover at Rathfriland Road, Banbridge.

The main aim of this scheme, which has been completed on budget and several months ahead of schedule, is to improve road safety by removing the difficulties associated with right turning movements on to, and across, the A1 dual carriageway. All the former central reserve crossing points within the junction have been closed, with access to the carriageway now by 'left in/left out' manoeuvres facilitated by the new bridge and associated link roads.

The scheme has involved the construction of two substantial structures, a two span bridge crossing the A1 and a single span bridge over the Bannview Road.

The new flyover forms just part of the strategy to upgrade the entire A1 route

to dual carriageway standard and to improve safety particularly at the major junctions. The dualling will be completed in three stages, with work already underway on the 9.5 km stage 1 from Loughbrickland to Beech Hill which will cost around £21 million. Stage 2, from Cloghogue to the border is currently being progressed through the statutory procedures with work due to start on the ground in January 2005. Design work is continuing on the final stage from Beech Hill to Cloghogue.

In an effort to further improve road safety on this route, another flyover junction will be constructed at Hillsborough Road, Dromore. Work on this scheme, costing £4.6 million, is planned to begin in July.

Consultants have also been commissioned to investigate the feasibility and develop preliminary proposals for providing further flyovers at other selected junctions on the A1 between Lisburn and Loughbrickland.



£100 Million Roads Project Launched



Northern Ireland's first privately financed roads project has been launched by Minister of State, John Spellar MP. The £100 million package will include the widening of the M1 between Stockmans Lane and Divis Street, grade separated junctions at Broadway and Grosvenor Road, and the widening of the M2 from Sandyknowes to Greencastle.

Using a 'Public Private Partnership' approach, the road improvements will be designed, constructed and financed by a private sector consortium, which will then operate and maintain the roads, under the direction of Roads Service, for up to 30 years for an agreed series of payments from Government. Although this concept is new to Northern Ireland, it has been successfully used in GB, Ireland and many other countries.

The M1/Westlink scheme includes an underpass that will carry the main road under the Broadway roundabout.

The Westlink will also be partially depressed to pass under a new bridge that will be constructed to carry the Grosvenor Road. A dedicated busway will be built parallel to the Westlink from Broadway to connect to the existing busway which runs from Roden Street to the Europa Bus Centre.

The works at Broadway are particularly complex and will involve alterations to many existing services, as well as to the Clowney and Blackstaff Rivers which meet under the middle of the roundabout. Current plans are to construct an aqueduct to carry the rivers over the road and to incorporate this into the structure that will carry the roundabout.

This scheme will connect to the separate £5.7 million scheme to widen the M1 between Blacks Road and Stockmans Lane which is due for completion this summer. The M1/Westlink will then have 3 continuous lanes in each direction between Blacks Road and Divis Street.

Need information on current traffic conditions?

Log on to the Roads Service Trafficwatch website at:

www.trafficwatchni.com

Office	Address	Phone
Roads Service Headquarters	Clarence Court 10-18 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8GB	9054 0540 Text Phone 9054 0022
Northern Division		
Divisional Headquarters	County Hall Castlerock Road Coleraine BT51 3HS	7034 1300
Londonderry	1 Crescent Road Londonderry BT47 2NQ	7132 1600
Limavady	86 Main Street Limavady BT49 0ET	7776 2198
Coleraine	County Hall Castlerock Road Coleraine BT51 3HS	7034 1210
Ballymoney and Moyle	8 High Street Ballymoney BT53 6AG	2766 2252
Ballymena and Larne	Ballykeel Depot 190 Larne Road Link Ballymena BT42 3HA	2566 2951
Antrim	Crown Buildings 20 Castle Street Antrim BT41 4JE	9442 6508
Southern Division		
Divisional Headquarters	Marlborough House Central Way Craigavon BT64 1AD	3834 1144
Ards	2 Jubilee Road Newtownards BT23 4YH	9181 9328
Down	129 Newcastle Road Seaforde BT30 8PR	4481 2612
Banbridge	45 Newry Street Banbridge BT32 3EA	4066 2466
Newry	1 Cecil Street Newry BT35 6AU	3025 3335
Armagh	17 Ballynahonemore Road Armagh BT60 1JD	3752 9504
Carr	Carr Industrial Estate Portadown BT63 5RH	3833 8521
Eastern Division		
Divisional Headquarters	Hydebank 4 Hospital Road Belfast BT8 8JL	9025 3000
Lisburn	40a Benson Street Lisburn BT28 2BG	9262 6677
North Down	72 Balloo Road Bangor BT19 7PG	9127 9800
Belfast North	148-158 Corporation Street Belfast BT1 3DH	9025 4044
Belfast South	1a Airport Road Belfast BT3 9DY	9025 4609
Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus	148-158 Corporation Street Belfast BT1 3DH	9025 4046
Castlereagh	Hydebank 4 Hospital Road Belfast BT8 8JL	9025 3212
Western Division		
Divisional Headquarters	County Hall Drumragh Avenue Omagh BT79 7AF	8225 4111
Cookstown	33 Molesworth Street Cookstown BT80 8NX	8676 2980
Dungannon	Main Street Moygashel Dungannon BT71 7QR	8775 1251
Fermanagh	Castle Barracks Enniskillen BT74 7HN	6634 3705
Omagh	32 Deverney Road Arvalee Omagh BT79 0JJ	8225 4600
Magherafelt	30 Station Road Magherafelt BT45 5DN	7963 2308
Strabane	20 Derry Road Strabane BT82 8DX	7138 2982

Pillars of Community Get Facelift!

The Fortwilliam Park Pillars, one of Belfast's most ornamental links with the past, have been given a much needed facelift, by Roads Service.

Having provided gateways to Fortwilliam Park since 1864, the B1 listed pillars and archways at both the Antrim Road and Shore Road entrances had suffered from the ravages of time and were in need of extensive refurbishment.

The Shore Road entrance, commissioned by James W. Valentine, is made of sandstone. Each semicircular triumphal arch is below a projected cornice crowned with a sculpted group of maiden, cupid and urn. A matching pillar was moved from the centre of the carriageway to Musgrave Park.

Valentine also commissioned the Antrim Road entrance, with pillars of a French gothic design. A central cast iron pillar along with the gates no longer exist, having been removed for use during the Second World War.

The refurbishment works consisted of a combination of using replacement stone, indenting of original stone that was partly damaged, and general cleaning. Whilst most of the replacement stone was machine cut, the detailed work on the cornice and finials of the Antrim Road pillars was hand-cut by specialist stone masons.

The refurbishment work, which was substantially completed 3 weeks ahead of schedule, has been welcomed and applauded by both local residents and politicians.



Foreign Officials 'Hungary' for Ideas!

Roads Service recently welcomed two Project Managers from the Hungarian Government as part of a fact-finding mission to learn how Roads Service delivers its main functions, and to observe Best Practice within the Agency.

As Hungary is scheduled to assume full membership of the European Union in May 2004, the theme for the visit, arranged as part of a Twinning Project co-ordinated by the Department of Trade and Industry in London, was centred on the application of EU Structural Funds.

A packed itinerary ensured that much relevant ground was covered during the 2-day visit. Topics ranged

from presentations on the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan to the different sources of EU funding that have been utilised by Roads Service over the past 10 years.

The visitors were extremely impressed by the systems of work in place for the management and development of the road network in Northern Ireland, and were also grateful for the hospitality of Roads Service staff during their stay in Belfast.

Having previously accommodated a high-level delegation from Bulgaria, word of our hospitality and goodwill in Northern Ireland has obviously spread!

Where to Meet Us

If you have enjoyed reading this newspaper and would like to find out more about our work, then why not visit the Roads Service stand at one of the following local shows:

- Ballymena 28-29 May
- Lurgan 4-5 June
- Clogher 28 July

Our staff will be only too pleased to meet you and answer any queries that you may have.