

Feature

INSPIRING CYCLING



**PRACTICAL
MATTERS**

Everyday cycling
requires an everyday
bike. Recommend
a practical one to
friends or colleagues

**Bike
week**
2016

BIKE WEEK IS AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO PERSUADE FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES TO TRY RIDING TO WORK. CYCLING UK'S **TONY UPFOLD** HAS SOME SUGGESTIONS



Show colleagues that riding to work is a way to beat the rush hour

Main photo: Selim Korycki. Left: © Pat Tuson / Alamy



early 800,000 people cycle to work in the UK every day. With your help, we're aiming to swell that number by half a million during Bike Week 2016 and beyond.

As a Cycling UK member, there's every chance you are one of those 800,000 and already appreciate the enormous benefits commuting by bike can bring, whether it's the healthier lifestyle or the congestion-free journey. So why not spread the word by getting a friend, relative, neighbour or work colleague to join you during Cycling UK's Bike Week – with a little help from our list of tips?

From buddy rides to bike breakfasts, there are a host of simple ideas that can make cycle commuting an accessible and attractive proposition to the many people who might just need a gentle nudge in the right direction. It might also make a difference to your own daily journey.

Many people use Bike Week to kickstart their summer as the country enjoys longer days and warmer sunshine. And this year's event, which runs from 11-19 June, continues the Ride to Work theme that proved so

popular last year. We want to enlist the help of Cycling UK members to persuade people they know to get on their bikes, which will hopefully start – or rekindle – a love affair with cycling that lasts the rest of their lives.

BICYCLING BENEFITS

The first National Bicycle Week was organised by CTC in 1923. Today, the Bike Week mantra is 'everyday cycling for everyone', with the goal of encouraging over 500,000 people to take part in hundreds of events and rides across the country – including their commute to work.

Why cycle to work? Firstly, because it's often closer than you think. Nearly half of all working people in the UK live within five miles of their employment. At a leisurely pace, that is only 30 minutes of pedalling from your front door.

When you factor in the National Travel Survey statistic that over five million people cycle three or more times a week, it means there are plenty of potential cycling

commuters out there. We want to give them the message that cycling to work, or school, doesn't just beat the rush hour, but helps ease it. That means cleaner air and a healthier environment, not to mention the fact it is good for you both physically and mentally.

On average, regular cycle commuters take less time off sick – more than one day per year – than colleagues who do not cycle to work. And people who don't cycle-commute regularly have a 39% higher mortality rate than those who do.

It's also cheaper. A study of 2,000 commuters in 2013 found that fuel, train fares and parking fees totalled around £161 – or 10.5% – out of the average monthly take-home pay of £1,543.

So what can we all do as Cycling UK members to get people to rethink their everyday journeys and switch to cycling? Here are a few easy ideas, and one or two testimonies of those who have successfully tried and tested them.

BIKE WEEK BY NUMBERS

BIKE WEEK IS THE BIGGEST CYCLING EVENT IN THE UK AND MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER BEFORE WILL TAKE PART TO KICKSTART THEIR SUMMER OF CYCLING. THIS YEAR'S THEME IS RIDE TO WORK. WHY NOT CHOOSE TO CYCLE TO WORK INSTEAD OF TAKING THE CAR OR PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND DONATE THE MONEY YOU SAVE TO CHARITY?

5 MILLION
Over 5 million people cycle three times or more a week



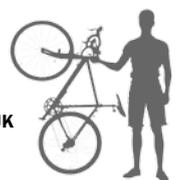
£83 MILLION
Saved by cycle commuters by fewer absences from work



5 CALORIES
Cycling burns 5 calories per minute (on average)



27 MILLION
People in the UK have access to a bike



“Your friend or colleague might own a bike but is it fit to use? Can you help fix it?”

GET THAT BIKE FIXED

First things first. Your friend/neighbour/work colleague might well own a bike, but is it fit to use? Most bikes live in sheds and many probably need a little TLC. It could be something as simple as pumping up the tyres or oiling the drivetrain, but if it's a full-blown puncture or malfunctioning gears, is it fear of the unknown that is preventing the owner from getting it seen to, and therefore going out cycling – and can you help fix it? If not for free, you could offer to carry out any repairs at cost price, or find out if a Dr Bike mechanic is visiting your place of work during Bike Week and get it sorted out there.

LEAD A BUDDY RIDE

Now the bike is in working order, offer to meet a colleague at their house and ride with them to work, showing the best route and good cycling technique. Better still, why not arrange a social ride over the weekend before the commute? It might help an inexperienced cyclist gain confidence on a bike rather than launching straight in to the Monday morning rush-hour.

At Cycling UK, we try to practise what we preach, and buddy rides were the order of the day – or days – during Bike Week last year. Regular cycle commuters Sam Jones and Ian Taylor rode in with work colleague Kay Lakin, who used to walk the two miles from her Guildford home to our National Office. ‘I would have been nervous cycling in on my own,’ said Kay. ‘But the buddy rides with Sam and Ian gave me confidence, and



Get work involved

Why bosses should back cycling: bit.ly/cyclinguk-friendlyemployers

Colleagues might not know the best or quietest route to work

I cycle everywhere as much as possible now. It spurred me to undertake a stage of the Countrywide Tour, from Rye to Brighton, and I'm going on a cycling holiday in France, which I would never have considered before.'

GET THE BUG

These BUGs can bite on behalf of cyclists! An ideal Bicycle User Group is a kind of cycling consultancy/promotions agency/social club that does everything it can to encourage people to cycle commute and persuade their employer to cater well for existing cyclists.

Sam Mugford helped set up a BUG at the Norwich BioScience Institutes site last year after reading Cycling UK's Bike Week guidelines about cycle-friendly employers – and received the full blessing of, and funding from, management.

Sam, a research scientist at the John Innes Centre, said: 'There's a strong cycling community here and we already had great facilities, such as showers, drying areas and a bike mechanic on site once a week. But the management were extraordinarily supportive of the idea of a Bicycle User Group and paid for a set of 10 bikes that people can use for nearby meetings or, if they are working here short-term, for their commute to work.'

ARRANGE A BIKE TO WORK DAY

For the ultimate buddy ride, you could arrange a specific Cycle to Work Day during Bike Week. The Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group (HarBUG), based in the South Oxfordshire countryside between Didcot and Wantage, is planning just that on 15 June.

Cycle to Work Days are already popular on the campus.

Over 120 cyclists from 20 organisations took part in the latest on 20 April, with escorted groups riding in from Abingdon, Didcot, Wantage and Grove.

HarBUG chairman and Cycling UK member Kevin Wilkinson said: 'We co-ordinate with the Bicycle User Groups from Milton Park and Culham Science Centre, the other campuses in "Science Vale". We will meet at Didcot railway station on 15 June and ride to the respective campuses from there, which should involve several hundred cyclists.'

HOST A BIKE BREAKFAST

Reward those work colleagues (or school classmates) who have cycled in with a coffee and pastry! After all, they say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day – and those who have been using a little pedal power will be entitled to replace a few burned-off calories.

A bike breakfast is simple to host, cheap to put on and an excellent way to bring people together. The Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group expect another large turnout for their bike breakfast on 15 June, having attracted 125 cyclists for tea and toast after their Cycle to Work Day on 20 April.

GET TAX BREAKS FOR BIKES

By subscribing to the Government's Cycle to Work Scheme, an employer can buy a cycle for an employee and hire it to them for a regular payment, usually over a year. If they want, the employee can buy the bike at the end of the loan period at market value. It's tax-efficient because payments are deducted from wages before tax, typically saving an employee at least 25% of the cycle's cost. ➤



With the right bike, special cycling kit is not required



BIKE WEEK CHALLENGE

LOG YOUR COMMUTING MILES ONLINE TO BE ENTERED INTO A DRAW

WE'VE TEAMED up with Love to Ride for Bike Week 2016 to offer everyone the chance to win some great prizes. Simply log on to the Love to Ride website (through bikeweek.org.uk or lovetoride.net), add your details and log every ride you do during Bike Week (11-19 June) to be in with a chance of winning. You can connect an app (e.g. Strava, MapMyRide) to automatically log your rides and put you into the draw. We also want to help you spread the joy of cycling to others. If you encourage others to ride, you'll go into the draw for even more prizes!



LOADS BETTER

Backpacks are okay for short trips but luggage on the bike means less sweat



Hire bikes are an option for colleagues who don't own one. Or could you lend a bike?

Clockwise from left: © Jeff Gilbert / Alamy; Joolze Dymond; © Paul Weston / Alamy

There's no need to worry about admin – facilitators are easy to find online.

According to the Cycle to Work Alliance (a group of the leading providers of the scheme), 169,913 employees joined the scheme in 2015 and over half-a-million are currently participating. To see how easy it is to join, look at the website of the leading provider, Cyclescheme: cyclescheme.co.uk

PUSH CYCLING UK MEMBERSHIP

The more members we have, the bigger our voice nationally to press for better conditions for cyclists. Becoming a Cycling UK member means a warm welcome at over 600 cycling groups and clubs, thousands of cycle rides and events, product and ticket discounts, £10million third-party insurance cover, Cycle magazine six times a year, and our weekly e-newsletter CycleClips – plus the opportunity to support our many campaigns and projects. With those benefits, why wouldn't someone want to join us?

GET ROAD DEFECTS FIXED

We're all aware of the ever-growing profusion of potholes on our roads and the increased menace they pose for cyclists when traffic is heavy during rush-hour, but there is something you can do to help get them repaired so it's more enjoyable to commute to work. Our Fill That Hole mobile app is an easy way to report potholes and road defects, and local councils are generally quick to respond. See fillthathole.org.uk

THEME YOUR BIKE WEEK

Why not theme your Bike Week schedule? For example, you could have:

- **Warm-up weekend:** Take your friend/ neighbour/work colleague out on a confidence-building weekend social ride ahead of their first commute.
- **Mega-mile Monday:** Let's see how many miles we can total across the UK with people commuting by bike.
- **Tasty Tuesday:** Treat your cycle commuters to a bike breakfast.
- **Work-on-it Wednesday:** Help a new commuting colleague find their way around a bike by teaching a few simple repairs. It could be something you can do, or you could get a Dr Bike at your workplace.
- **Thirsty Thursday:** Rather than commute directly home, you could arrange an after-work social ride, perhaps to the pub.
- **Fancy-dress Friday:** Maybe your employer could supply a prize for the best fancy dress outfit? (Don't forget those fake Wiggins sideburns are so passé now...)

KEEP PEDALLING

Getting people to commute by bike isn't always easy, but you'll be helping to create a less stressed and healthier workforce – and every extra cyclist is a success.

As we have teamed up with NSPC as our Bike Week charity partner this year, perhaps our new cycle commuters would consider donating some of the money they have saved in fuel or public transport costs to help vulnerable children and young people?

For those who commute to work already, we are hosting The Bike Week Challenge (see sidebar), with prizes up for grabs.

Let's make Bike Week the week that more people cycle to work... and continue cycling in the future. 