

Feature

GREAT RESTORATIONS

THE BIG BIKE REVIVAL IS BACK. CYCLING UK'S **DAVID MURRAY** EXPLAINS HOW AND WHY IT WORKS

The
BIG BIKE
Revival
SUMMER OF CYCLING





Cycling UK staff at the Big Bike Revival 2016 launch at Cera Cycloan in Stockport

Illustration by Diva Creative. Photos by Joolize Dymond



What was the first bike you had when you were a child? Mine was a blue and white Raleigh Max. I remember it clearly because it was

a passport to fun and freedom. As any cyclist knows, cycling is just as liberating and as enjoyable as an adult. Yet for many people, cycling exists *only* as a memory. They probably have a bike but no longer use it; it's gathering rust in a shed or garage. Step forward Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival.

The Big Bike Revival is a project designed to bring bicycles back into use in their thousands. By joining forces with bike recycling centres across the country, we are offering bike health checks, cycle maintenance knowhow, and riding advice to encourage people to return to cycling. A large proportion of Brits – 42% – have bikes. But we're not making use of them.

According to our research from this same programme last year, 63% of bike owners hadn't ridden their bikes in the past 12 months. This, combined with the propensity

“63% of bike owners hadn't ridden their bikes in the past year”

to use the car for short trips that could be made by bike, is the nub of the problem that the Big Bike Revival is addressing. Last year's efforts proved that the concept works: over 50,000 people took part and 24,000 bikes were brought back into use! So we're running it again.

TWO-WHEELED SOLUTIONS

The Big Bike Revival is funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) in England and Transport Scotland in (you've guessed it) Scotland. It aims to reach into communities challenged by multiple deprivation, where access to a bike gives greater employment opportunities, transport savings and low-cost exercise. Around 46% of project participants last year came from such areas.

DfT's Transport Minister Robert Goodwill MP said: 'I'm confident that local authorities or local enterprise partnerships can see how this sort of project is really working on the ground. They too may want to join in, particularly in some of our more deprived communities, where having access to a bicycle makes a great deal of sense.'

Goodwill continued: 'We are serious about getting people on their bikes – cycling is great for our health and means less congested cities and less pollution. There is no better time to bring out that bike gathering dust in the shed. The Big Bike Revival will help you sort out the punctures and minor mechanical problems that we



GET INVOLVED

To find a Big Bike Revival event, visit bigbikerevival.org.uk. We've also brought together a directory of bike recycling centres, who operate all year round and are armed with bike mechanics ready to check over and fix up any set of wheels you bring through their door. Visit cyclinguk.org/recycling-centres.

This year, we are recruiting ride leaders and Member Groups to put on a series of Big Bike Revival rides during the October school half-term holidays. We would love to hear from you if you are interested in putting on a beginner-friendly led ride in your area. Email our communications team at publicity@cyclinguk.org.



BIG BIKE REVIVAL BENEFITS

CYCLING UK'S Director of Cycling, Ian Richardson (above): 'The Big Bike Revival is the ideal way to bring the fun and freedom you remember from cycling as a child back into your life today. Cycling is the gift that keeps on giving – it can help you to save hundreds of pounds a year on travel costs, is a cheap form of exercise, and it's the ideal way to make trips to work, the shops or to school.'

Brian Pendlebury, Director of CERA Ltd, a bike recycling centre taking part in the Big Bike Revival, said: 'I have seen first-hand how a bit of extra bike knowhow and cycling confidence... can have a hugely uplifting effect on someone's life. Whether that's a homeless person gaining new skills leading to employment, a practical alternative school provision, or simply working with the general public, activities like the Big Bike Revival make a real difference.'

Councillor Chris Paul, Transport for Greater Manchester Committee Cycling Champion: 'Since 2014, we've been working with Cycling UK to increase cycling participation through the Community Cycle Clubs programme. We offer new and existing groups training and practical support to encourage people to cycle more often, and many of these clubs will be holding events as part of the Big Bike Revival. This project helps us to build on the fantastic work already underway to promote sustainable and active travel choices in Greater Manchester.'



Big Bike Revival events will take place at 100 venues in England and Scotland this summer

We're on the telly
bit.ly/BigBikeRevival_ITV
 is the link to ITV's coverage of our launch in Stockport

consisting of hundreds of scheduled led rides across England and Scotland. And this is one way that Cycling UK members can take part. We are recruiting our Member Groups and Affiliated clubs to create accessible and fun rides for our Big Bike Revival participants. Once we've got people set up to cycle with a repaired bike and some cycle maintenance knowhow, what better way to get them started than by joining our fantastic members and supporters in the saddle?

Suzanne Forup, Cycling UK's Head of Development Scotland, said: 'We want to encourage people to cycle to work or school, to the shops, or to visit friends rather than drive or use public transport. Our ambition is to make cycling a normal part of everyday life as it is good for your health, well-being, the economy and the environment.'

BUILDING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE

The Big Bike Revival isn't just about rebuilding bikes. It also rebuilds confidence and provides independence, both for those who bring their bikes to be renovated and



GIVING PEOPLE TOOLS
 Bike recycling centre staff can provide volunteers with City & Guilds qualifications

for those who fix them. Volunteers involved in running the cycle maintenance workshops and bike checks at the bicycle recycling centres gain useful skills. Jim Philpott-Saunders, a workshop supervisor at the Guildford Bike Project, said: 'We take bikes in whether they are donated bikes or service bikes, and we fix them up. With people, we help them gain confidence by learning bike repair skills.'

Trevor Strudwick is a regular volunteer at the same centre. 'The bonus is that you'll be trained to City & Guilds standard at the end of it,' he said, 'so I thought that this is a good scheme. I could help other people and I could learn from the scheme as well.'

As for those directly benefiting from this scheme, Christine Cope is just one of the 50,000 people who has rekindled her love of cycling. The 51-year-old from Crewe experienced bouts of depression, panic attacks and feelings of isolation after suffering a devastating stroke in 2011.

'I went from being a confident, lively woman to someone who was timid and reclusive,' she said. 'My personality changed so much. Situations I had always been comfortable in suddenly became nerve-racking and I found myself getting emotional incredibly easily.' But she happened upon a bike recycling centre last summer and had her 35-year-old bike repaired. Christine has now managed to cycle with her grandchildren for the first time. 'It has given a new lease of life to not only my old bike but me, too, and the feeling of freedom and independence that I am now enjoying when riding it is absolutely wonderful.'