



Nick Turner/Sustrans

# **B**icycle **F**UN **D**AYS

**An easy guide for schools  
and parent volunteers**

**[www.bicycledays.info](http://www.bicycledays.info)**

## What is a Bicycle Fun Day?

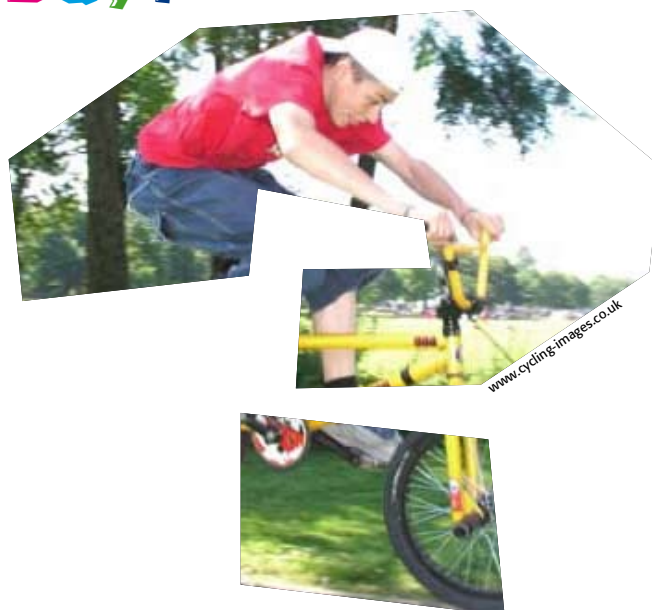
A Bicycle Fun Day is an opportunity to demonstrate the fun to be had with bikes and cycling, by organising a selection of cycling related activities, to suit all ages and abilities. This can be done in school time or out of school hours. (Similar activities can be organised elsewhere such as the work place or a community gala event) The activities can be for simple enjoyment, but also instructive and may indeed be a catalyst for more bicycle events in the future.

A Bicycle Fun Day can be enjoyable for participants with bikes and spectators. It can be a successful social event for the school and the wider community, and a key opportunity to educate, excite and inspire.

If you are reading this leaflet, and considering a bicycle event, it is quite possible you have already experienced the fun of cycling. With some of that enthusiasm you are well on the way to organising a great day

## Why organise a Bicycle Fun Day?

For those who don't ride a bike frequently, recollecting cycling experiences of the past often arouses a smile - memories of good times and good friends. A Bicycle Fun Day is an opportunity to recapture that sense of fun and pass it on to a new generation of cyclists. It will also raise awareness of cycling as it is today, the opportunities available locally and the relevance of and contribution that an active lifestyle can make to our lives generally.



### Broad Appeal

Sometimes "cyclists" are referred to as if they are a one dimensional group of people. In reality bikes and cycling mean different things to different people. For some the pleasure comes from a leisurely cycle in peaceful surroundings. For others the attraction might be speed, and the competitive spirit. For some the bike gets used at weekends and holidays, for others it has become part of the daily commute. It can be about acquiring skills to ride safely in traffic or the skills to successfully ride jumps. It can be a 'my' time, or a 'family' time. It can be about handing your bike to the nearest bike shop for minor repairs or the enjoyment of stripping it down and building it up again. The appeal of bikes is broad. That's their beauty. What's the common denominator? - They are fun! They can be enjoyed at whatever level you choose to engage. So with your enthusiasm and the knowledge that bikes have broad appeal, the outlook for a successful event is good. But the forecast just got better.

## Links With Government Targets And School Curriculum

Health, Energy, Transport, Environment, Climate Change .... these are headline issues that appear regularly in the news. They are areas of priority for national and local government. The message is that we need to be more energy efficient if we are to reduce our impact on the earth's limited natural resources and stem our impact on climate change. We also need to lead more active lives to protect our health, now and in the future. Inactivity is recognised as a key contributor to the three big killers in society - heart disease, stroke and cancer, as well as being a key contributor to obesity, diabetes and mental health problems. There are initiatives and personnel within the school (and work) environment whose role it is to promote awareness of these issues. Cycling can make a positive contribution in all these areas. Bikes may not solve everything but they certainly offer a very cost effective solution. When organising a Bicycle Fun Day why not contact these people. It will add depth and breadth to the event. Some of these initiatives include:

- **School Travel Co-ordinators.** Employed by local authorities to encourage and facilitate active travel to school. See your local authority website
- **Health Promoting Schools Unit.** Strategy unit developing concept of Health Promoting Schools in Scotland. All schools will be required to become Health Promoting Schools by 2007 <http://www.healthpromotingschools.co.uk/>
- **Eco Schools.** A Europe wide project to encourage and acknowledge whole- school action for the environment <http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/>
- **Sport Scotland - Active School Programme.** Active Schools is the term given to all schools in Scotland that provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to get active to the extent that it makes a positive contribution to their health <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk>



## Raising Awareness

In the big scheme of things you may consider your Bicycle Fun Day to be "just a small local event", but in reality it is these sparks of activity that have the potential to educate, excite and inspire and generate the 'confidence' needed to make cycling mainstream.

Some people think that more of the population will start to cycle when the level of infrastructure for cycle traffic reaches a certain level. In reality the picture is more complicated. There are cities in mainland Europe where the city centre is slashed by urban dual carriageways and encircled by ring roads, yet people still cycle more than people in British cities. What makes a European city a nicer place to cycle is not the engineering alone, but the fact that there is more cycle traffic. And because more people have experience of cycling they tend to be more tolerant motorists, and see a cyclist as a person - a mother, son, grandparent - rather than an obstruction to be swerved around. Motorists more consciously check their near side mirror and anticipate a cyclist's manoeuvres.

Creating a sense of confidence about cycling is as important as delivering infrastructure. This confidence comes from making cycling appear an attractive, realistic option, something people would choose to do. In Britain the average modal share of journeys made by bike is typically 2%. The significant figure to aim for is 4%. There is, as with all things, a critical point - a tipping point - whereby once a certain number of people do something it becomes accepted as the norm. In this case as we edge towards 4% modal share there will be sufficient number of cyclists on the road to make cycling seem common practice, and their visibility will dispel negative preconceptions that cycling is unsafe, and only an activity for certain groups of people.

Bicycle Fun Days help create that sense of confidence.

# How to organise a Bicycle Fun Day

Here are a few practical suggestions to get you started:

- Outline the broad relevance of cycling to Senior Staff, Parent Forums, and the PTA
- Form a small committee (a sub group of the PTA). This allows the work load to be shared and provides sustainability should individuals need to step down from involvement at a later stage
- Insurance needs consideration. Cycling isn't a high risk activity. None the less as a sub group of the PTA your activities should be covered by PTA insurance. Further details available from <http://www.sptc.info/>.
- Use a mind map to consider all the links - healthy living, sport, road safety, transition years, mapping, recycling, environment, outdoor living, personal and community safety, campaigning, citizenship.... and more. A Bicycle Fun Day has potential to be very exciting
- Arrange a let from the local authority via the PTA or a staff member. This is for use of school grounds and a facilities manager
- Something for everyone. Try and arrange a variety of activities to please a family group
- Publicity is an essential part of your planning. School newsletters, posters for the community and even local press are all worthwhile
- Champion the school's initiatives. Invite a local Councillor to ensure they know about the event
- Create some revenue to get the project started. Suggest a 'dress down day' with a theme. The pupils could pay £1, the theme could be "Cyclists are Bright". This will give you some advance income to help finance the event (as well as advance publicity)
- Register your event. Organisers of registered Bike Week events/rides taking place in the run up to Bike Week (excluding races and hazardous activities) will be able to request free £10M public liability insurance and order Bike Week materials. Further details <http://www.bikeweek.org.uk>
- A few refreshments are always welcome
- The weather - well there's no certainty of perfect weather, but a little drizzle shouldn't put anyone off. Consider whether some activities could be held inside if absolutely necessary



Patsy James/TryCycling in Edinburgh (both images)

## Activity ideas to get you Started...

If you are enthused about cycling you'll no doubt have your own ideas. Here are a few tried and tested activity suggestions to help make the day a success:



- **A Free Prize Draw Competition.** This is a good crowd puller. Get a class group to design a few cycling posters for photocopying and distribution throughout the school. Pupils are asked to take them home, to colour them in, and bring them along on the day, marked with their name and class, for entry in the Prize Draw
- **Publicity and prizes.** Ask another class to design some posters to promote the event. It may be that the Bicycle Fun Day is part of a theme week, such as Health Week. Distribute these posters locally in the library and shops. The school is part of the wider community which should be interested in these events. At the same time approach the shopkeeper and ask if they would like to contribute a raffle prize
- **Raffles.** A simple way of offsetting some costs. You don't need a licence if only selling tickets on the day of the event.
- **Fancy dress.** Younger age groups love it. Promote a best dressed bike competition. Ear mark an area in the playground where a circular parade can take place at a specified time. Choose a 'dignitary' to award some prizes
- **Skill testing.** With a few props design an obstacle course that has a start and finish. Keep it simple. Helpers will be needed to keep an orderly queue, reset the props and keep a note of names/age and time using a stop watch. Have a few prizes set a side for age category winners. These can be announced at the end of the event, with the raffle if there is one
- **A "road show"** Invite a local DJ, suggest a road show atmosphere in the playground. Ask the DJ to include some bike songs. The children can have a bike jam - movement to music on bikes.
- **Team competitions.** Invite groups of 2 or 3 on to a podium, for quiz board activities. Resource ideas available to download or borrow from [www.bicyclefundays.info](http://www.bicyclefundays.info) (see link to Try Cycling Resource Boards). Alternatively make up your own. Make use of the DJ to help comper.



Andrea Baxter/TryCycling in Edinburgh

- **Theme weeks.** Look at the website to see which organisations are on the steering groups of various related theme weeks. Contact them and tell them your plans. They may have some freebies they can send you to use as competition prizes
- **A photo competition.** How well do you know your neighbourhood? If you walk and cycle a lot you may know these places, but you may fall short of success if you love your motor too much
- **Freebies** - everyone loves them. Invite the local Road Safety Officer. They have resources and activity packs that are free as well as being packed with useful information.
- **Invite the Community Safety Officer** from the local Police Station. They will be interested in your initiative and can provide information on bike security as well as security marking pens
- **Bicycle first aid.** Why not offer a basic Dr. Bike session where tyres can be pumped up and minor adjustments made. A prescription list can be handed out for bikes that need more technical repairs. Contact your local bike shop - maybe they'll offer a service discount for a limited period
- **Want to know where to cycle,** and what's on? Invite a local cycling organisation to bring some leaflets and maps that will sustain peoples interest after your event is over



Chris Hill/TryCycling in Edinburgh



www.cycling-images.co.uk

- **Unusual bikes.** Sometimes these are available for demonstration. Again ask the local cycling organisations if they can suggest contact names
- **A "hands on session"** - how to maintain your bike - oil your chain, pump up your tyres
- **A demonstration session.** Some of the school classes may have received cycle training. Invite some pupils to provide a display to demonstrate what they have learned using the games/activities delivered in the training session



Chris Hill/TryCycling in Edinburgh



## Ideas For the Future....

If you feel all has gone well pat yourself on the back. Enthusiasm is infectious. Your event will have generated a sense of confidence about cycling and for some, opened up a new world to enjoy. One thing often leads to another. Capture the enthusiasm. So much more is possible.

Here are some further ideas to consider:

- Establish a **Safer Routes To School Committee**. The committee can support the staff/pupils to develop a school travel plan.
- Arrange a **second hand bike sale**
- Organise a **basic bicycle maintenance course** for some interested parents/ guardians/adults
- Arrange a **social cycle ride** to a place of interest, using quiet off road paths
- Plan a **treasure hunt or nature trail** on bikes
- Use Google Earth to **map rides in the local area**. A useful tool for promoting walking/cycling in the area as well as routes to the local high school for transition stage pupils
- **Make a short film** about the Bicycle Fun Day and other cycling related events. It's worth putting these items on the school website. It shows leadership and inspires others



John Grimshaw/Sustrans

## **Useful Contacts**

**Cycling Scotland** - *A Scottish Executive funded organisation promoting bicycle use in Scotland*

24 Blythswood Square, Glasgow G2 4BG

0141 229 5350

[www.cyclingscotland.org/](http://www.cyclingscotland.org/)

**Scottish Cycling** - *The national governing body for cycle sport in Scotland*

The Velodrome, Meadowbank Stadium, London Road  
Edinburgh EH7 6AD

0131 652 0187

[www.scuonline.org/](http://www.scuonline.org/)

**Sustrans Scotland** - *The UK's leading sustainable transport charity*

Glenorchy House, 20 Union Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LR

0131 539 8122

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**CTC Scotland** - *The UK's national cyclist's organisation*

[www.ctcscotland.org.uk/](http://www.ctcscotland.org.uk/)

**Department for Transport - DfT**

*Free resources to schools in the UK*

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/)

## **Lothian Contacts**

**Spokes (The Lothian Cycle Campaign)**

St Martins Church, 232 Dalry Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG

0131 313 2114 (ans)

[www.spokes.org.uk](http://www.spokes.org.uk)

**The Bike Station**

250 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1UU

0131 668 1996

[www.thebikestation.org.uk](http://www.thebikestation.org.uk)

**TryCycling in Edinburgh**

0131 332 3442

[www.trycyclinginedinburgh.org.uk/](http://www.trycyclinginedinburgh.org.uk/)

**ChangingPace**

[www.changingpace.info](http://www.changingpace.info)

**Edinburgh RC Cycling**

[www.edinburghroadclub.co.uk](http://www.edinburghroadclub.co.uk)

**For topical cycling stories visit:**

[www.cyclinginedinburgh.info](http://www.cyclinginedinburgh.info)

**To order Spokes Lothian Cycle Maps online:**

<http://edinburghpaths.info/spokesmaps.htm>

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Design by Vantage Creative

Spokes background on all pages:

[www.cycling-images.co.uk](http://www.cycling-images.co.uk)