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Crowds of cyclists set for celebration in Southampton

Cyclists of all abilities from expert mountain bikers to wobbly novices will gather by Southampton Water this month for a celebration of pedal power.

The Big Bike Celebration 2009 will take place at Weston Shore on June 14, as part of a city-wide project to boost people's health through walking and cycling.

The event has been organised by *StreetTread* – a BIG Lottery funded project led by transport charity Sustrans. It follows last November's inaugural event, which attracted more than 300 people despite heavy downpours.

StreetTread Project Coordinator Natalie Gledhill said: "Everyone really enjoyed last year's celebration and this time we will have even more entertainment on offer – as well as hopefully better weather.

"This event is all about encouraging people to have fun on a bike regardless of their age or ability. Everyone will be able to choose from various activities, as there will also be some bigger challenges for more experienced cyclists."

Guided bike rides along sections of National Cycle Network Route 2 will be led by volunteers, with bikes available for free hire.

People can get their old bikes serviced to make them roadworthy - with the help of Hargroves Cycles and the Neighbourhood Wardens' bike maintenance group Recycled Cycles - and post-coded for security at the police stand.

NEWS
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The Big Bike Celebration 2009 takes place on June 14 from 10am to 5pm. For more information, call Natalie Gledhill on 02380 515206, email natalie.gledhill@sustrans.org.uk or visit www.sustrans.org.uk

Further information about Sustrans, including other news releases and detailed online route mapping, is available through our website: www.sustrans.org.uk

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For further information please contact:
Matt Davies in the Press Office on 0117 915 0127 (Direct Line)
Press Office telephone: 0117 927 7555; Fax: 0117 930 4149
E-mail: press@sustrans.org.uk.
Out of office hours (mobile: 07802 986 728)
Photo Librarian – Jonathan Bewley (0117 915 0120)
ISDN line available for radio interviews



Notes to Editors

- Active Travel – Southampton is part of a portfolio of projects being delivered by a Consortium of the leading walking cycling and health organisations and funded through the Big Lottery Fund's Wellbeing Programme. The Programme provides funding to support the development of healthier lifestyles and to improve Wellbeing.
- The Consortium is led by Sustrans and includes British Cycling, CTC, Cycling England, Living Streets, London Cycling Campaign, the National Heart Forum, the National Obesity Forum, the Ramblers' Association, Campaign for Better Transport and Walk 21. It is delivering a portfolio of projects that will enable 2 million people nationwide to become more physically active by walking or cycling as part of their daily lives by 2012.
- The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004.
- In March, *StreetTread* published the second in a series of walking and cycling maps for Southampton, covering the Weston and Woolston areas. The first covers Thornhill.
- Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Its vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. It is achieving this through innovative but practical solutions to the UK's transport challenges.
- Sustrans' flagship project, the National Cycle Network, is now around 12,000 miles and runs within one mile of 55 per cent of the UK population. During 2007 over 354 million trips were made on the Network. There are around 2,500 rangers helping to look after the National Cycle Network.

- Throughout 2009 Sustrans is encouraging more women to cycle. Our website www.bikebelles.org.uk has advice for women on what to wear, where to go, how to get started and a specially recruited women's panel are sharing ideas and experiences. Sustrans will also be organising female-friendly cycle rides in the summer. The thoughts and concerns of women, gathered throughout the year, will be used to inform our approach to UK governments with proposals on how to help more women get out and about on bikes, to the benefit of their health, the environment and our economy.