

Bike It

Going from strength to strength



Bling Your Bike event St Mary's, winners of a South West interschool Bike It competition. Thousands more children now benefit from Bike It thanks to the newly-funded posts across the UK

Bike It now brings its positive effects to thousands more children, with 16 new Bike It officers (BIOs) now active across the UK. This fantastic growth is due to Bike It's visible results and recognition, which are helping to attract vital funding from sources as diverse as local authorities, Cycling Demonstration Towns and Cities, Healthy Towns and Primary Care Trusts. Without such funding these new posts would not exist, so thank you for your top-level support for Sustrans' ground-level, practical project.

Aylesbury (new postholder): New BIO Lucie Taylor has now started work, getting children more active and independent in Aylesbury.

Yorkshire (two new posts): New BIO Henry joins Ruth in Sheffield, doubling the area's Bike It capacity. Experienced BIO Jim is now BIO for York, a new Cycling Demonstration City, with Tom now building on Jim's foundations back in Doncaster.

West Midlands (three new posts): Stephen and Carl join the ranks in Stoke-on-Trent, with Kim getting children active in Shrewsbury.

North West (three new posts plus new staff): Experienced BIO Ian now heads up Bike It in Blackpool, with new recruit Lucy already working with her schools in Merseyside. Mary has now arrived as the new BIO for Southport. Ecology graduate Lydia can't wait to get started in her Chester schools.

East of England (five new posts): The Eastern region's Bike It capacity has now multiplied, with Bart (Harlow and Cheshunt), Katie (Thurrock) and Anna (Basildon) joining Graham (Southend) and Kevin (Great Yarmouth). Aba and Maya are now in post in Colchester and Cambridge, with Georgina raring to go in Thetford. This burgeoning team now has a new regional supervisor too, Rowan.

Welcome and best of luck to you all for 2009-10 and beyond.

About Bike It

Bike It is a Sustrans project that is enabling many thousands of children to cycle to school everyday. It does this by helping schools to make the case for cycling in their school travel plans; supporting cycling champions in schools and demonstrating that cycling is a popular choice amongst children and their parents; and, most importantly, giving children the skills and information they need to cycle so their parents can have the peace of mind to let them.

Each Bike It officer works with up to twelve schools for at least a year to create a positive cycling culture that continues long after the Bike It officer has finished with them.

If you would like to find out more about Bike It, please visit the Bike It project pages of the Sustrans website at www.sustrans.org.uk/bikeit

Bike It is made possible with the ongoing support of the Bike Hub and additional funding from organisations such as the Big Lottery Fund, Transport for London, Cycling England, the Welsh Assembly Government, NHS Primary Care Trusts and many local authorities.

South East

Brighton and Hove 590

Hundreds of pupils took to two wheels to support Ben's 'Battle of the BIOs' race, an effect that lingered long after the event, especially as Ben won! Another highlight was seeing 140 children out of 225 cycle to school, despite being in a hilly, town-central position surrounded by busy roads. It really can be done safely. Key work Ben accomplished included getting further council-funded storage installed at Somerhill Juniors, The Alternative Centre for Education's five sites and at St Margaret's. Ben also delivered Bikeability training in schools across Brighton and Hove, and trained staff to run Go Ride clubs.

Ben is looking forward to progressing discussions with the Council, in order to help them develop their infrastructure as one of the UK's flagship Cycle Demonstration Towns.

Ashford

After its phenomenal success in Ashford, Bike It now spreads to Canterbury, with three primary schools keen to go for newly-offered Bikeability training and the Bike It Bronze School Mark. Bike It officer David's schools were trialling this initiative last term, which really made clear to David that Bike It officers don't just have their 12 engaged schools – they still actively support many others. The structured School Mark and its accompanying staff training will be vital in helping schools sustain Bike It's benefits beyond the initial years.

Bournemouth and Poole

Bike It press coverage got a huge boost last summer, with local press and radio loving the 'Battle of the BIOs' – a race of over 100 miles between Bournemouth and Brighton schools by Bike It officers Jason and Ben. Cycling levels at both schools increased markedly during and after this event. Walk to School Week and the Big Green Week were also popular, with the Big Green Bus providing information at several of Jason's schools. Jason's also concentrating on promoting health and active play, joining up with Sustrans' Active Travel and Active Play events.

Reigate and Banstead

Gayle's DVD 'How Bike It works with local bike shops' shows how the project benefits local businesses as well as children's health. She's also working hard to source money for more Bikeability training. Summer's Action Day was a great success with 25 staff now training to be school champions; schools sharing Bike It success stories; and plans afoot for joint events next term. The Bike It 30 competition was a particular success, with prizes offered to encourage children to cycle 30 times over the term.

Coverage appeared in Borough News, Family South East, and the Surrey Mirror. Watch Gayle's video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ni65A06fHW0



Bike-powered smoothie-making at Aylesbury's joint Action Day

Slough and South Bucks

Clare's well-attended joint Action Day with Aylesbury was a resounding success, with a visit from BlendaVenda, the fun, bike-powered smoothie makers. Clare also met Sustrans' local volunteer Rangers, for the opening of a new cycle route that could encourage children and their parents to cycle more. Alastair Humphreys also visited, to talk about his global cycling exploits. Clare says "What's great about Bike It events is seeing how many bikes turn up in schools in the weeks following." See the Bike It Events webpage for further examples.

Yorkshire and Humberside

Sheffield

Sheffield's Lord Mayor attended the opening of Carterknowle's brand new Bike Park, which was featured in the Sheffield Star newspaper. Bike It officer Ruth is also making headway with her secondary schools, having staged events and made good contacts in each. The Sheffield Stars Cycle Speedway Club school sessions are proving very popular with pupils, and the local authority and training cooperative Pedal Ready are please

with Ruth's efforts to set up one-to-one sessions in schools. To top off the term, an impressive 50 children turned up for Ruth's cycle at Halfway – the biggest group she's ever taken out!

Doncaster and York

Jim's final term in Doncaster (he's now started up Bike It in York) was as action-packed as ever. He found that offering impressive prizes paid big dividends in his events, with more children than ever inspired to take

part. These are lasting effects too – 55 bikes were counted at Bawtry Mayflower on a non-event day in May. Jim would also like to mention the Big Lottery Fund's Awards for All as a potential source of funding for cycle storage. Following his cycle security marking efforts, Jim got an article on the Bike Register website, which also name-checked Bike It's Virtual Tour de France.

South West



Staple Hill's BMX fun day, Bristol.

Bristol area

There are now nearly 60 Bike It schools across Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire. A summer highlight was the Round the World Virtual Bike Race (VBR), in which 36,000 school journeys were cycled by pupils at 45 schools in just one month.

Bath and Northeast Somerset

The region's VBR saw up to ten-fold increases in cyclists, both during and after the event. Paulton Juniors clocked 80 trips a day (compared to two prior to Bike It). Its head teacher said "This is the best outside initiative this school has ever been involved with". Bike It officer Jim now aims to involve parents in identifying more safe routes to school.

Bristol's Round the World cycle challenge

St Mary's RC Primary enjoyed an action-packed day for winning the region's VBR. Its students almost topped 2,000 journeys, averaging 97 trips a day in a school of around 200. Pupils, parents and teachers got to enjoy bike-powered smoothie demos as well as Brompton

folding and Bike Bling competitions. At the awards ceremony, students performed poetry and parents crafted 'Around the World' themed cakes. Bike It officer Ryan said "When St Mary's joined Bike It, five children cycled to school. Now, the shelter overflows daily." Many of Ryan's schools see over 50% of children cycling to school for Bike Breakfasts and cycle skills sessions.

South Gloucestershire

Bike It officer Ian's events are significantly increasing cyclist numbers at schools such as the enthusiastic Wansdyke school, where 60% of the school often cycles in. Ian is working with the Council on a programme of cycle storage installation, the lack of which is often a barrier to cycling. Other schools across the South West are facing similar cycle storage frustrations, with planning permission delaying the construction of much-needed shelters.

Swindon

Bike It officer Ruth is working with GPS mapping projects to enable students to make their own local walking and cycling maps. Her Bling your Bike and Bike Breakfasts are still firm favourites, often with over 200 pupils turning up; at Nova Hreod College, 178 bikes were counted on an overcast non-event day, too. Increasingly, schools are inviting parents to such events, too, with many primary schools seeing more dads getting involved thanks to Bike It. Swindon Borough Council's School Travel Advisor has now prioritised funding for cycle storage, and several schools are applying through Sustrans for grants to improve their storage.

Exeter

Liz's Beauty and the Bike initiative, which aims to get more girls cycling, is an overwhelming success, with 16 girls – who didn't even own bikes – passing their Level 2 Bikeability training. Liz also discussed Bike It on local radio, generating further coverage in the local press. After talks with author Barbara Mitchelhill, creator of *Damian Drooth*, *Supersleuth*, Liz's Bike It children have been 'sleuthing' out the quality of the cycle provision in their schools, and Barbara may even feature a Bike It officer in one of her books!

Wales

Conwy

Gwen has been following up her Action Day in May, investigating how Bike It can work with local police officers, Halfords in Llandudno and the cycle club in Rhos-on-Sea. She's also been in touch with NE Wales' Eco Schools coordinator. Gwen's Dr Bike maintenance sessions and Bike Breakfasts all have a strong following, and Gwen is actively trying to involve parents and school champions more, to help remove barriers to cycling and to ensure that Bike It's great results continue once schools are no longer intensively engaged. Gwen really enjoyed the organised ride with Ffordd Dyffryn school, which helped to cement Bike It's relationship with both staff and pupils.

Cardiff

Tim Anfield is the brand new BIO for Cardiff.

South Wales

Louise was ecstatic when Traethmelyn Primary's Bike Breakfast attracted 80 pupils and 20 parents, with queues spilling out into the corridor. She also got great press coverage of her bike-themed sports week - which attracted 140 bikes - in the South Wales Evening Post (26 June). Head teacher Mr Doyle commented "a huge number of parents have also been inspired and have cycled in to help out, too." The after-school cycling club run by their school champion is also gaining pace, building children's stamina from rides of two miles up to a potential 10. From time trials and Love Your Bike sessions to a Virtual Race around Wales won by Pontrhydyfen Primary, Louise is having great success with the support of Neath Port Talbot Council, embedding a cycling culture in all of her Bike It schools.

East Midlands

Derby

At Mickleover, a tremendous 54 children and 58 parents attended a Bike It family cycle ride. Parents said it was the push they needed to cycle more with their children. At Brackensdale, the head and deputy head now cycle, which is having a very positive effect, too. Located in a relatively low-income area, Brackensdale hopes to get hold of 10-20 bikes for its pupils to share. Sinfyn Primary had similar issues, and Bike It officer Anna gained funding from the neighbourhood committee to buy five bikes to widen participation in Bike It. If you can help, please get in touch.

Leicester

Getting cycle storage in Coleman and Linden Primary schools was a highlight for Rowan, who has now taken up her new role as Bike It regional manager in

the South East. Linden Primary's opening event was shown by ITV Central News, which also filmed the Inertia BMX show, always a great inspiration for the adrenalin-mad children. Rowan's Cycle to School initiative was a resounding success at Caldecote school, with over 100 children cycling daily. Increased teacher support at secondary school events is something to focus on this year.

Lincoln

Vincent's Medals4Pedals initiative was incredibly successful; Ling Moor alone had 140 sign ups. From Bike Week in June to term's end, over 500 pupils – 39% of his Bike It children – cycled at least 10 out of 25 days. At Birchwood Juniors, rider numbers went from zero to 136 bikes in one fell swoop, that's 46% of the school. Thank you also to

Lincolnshire County Council for backing Bike It; their School Travel Plan Team's 75% match funding for projects under £10,000 means that many Bike It schools can now install new cycle storage. What a fantastic start to the new school year!



West Midlands

Coventry

Andy has been busy raising awareness for Bike It, with press coverage for the Inertia Bike Shows, the Festival of Cycling and the Virtual Bike Race (Cycling England's favourite bike scheme of the month in August). Andy's also working to sustain the region's cycling culture. Encouraged by the City Council, he is linking his schools with local cycling clubs to give children further cycling opportunities. The Transport Museum has strong links with Bike It schools, which opens up further potential for the future. Andy's city-sized Biketastic event was a real highlight, as was the bike show at Sir Frank Whittle school.

Birmingham

Birmingham is fully embracing Bike It – Perry Beeches' first cycle to school day saw 108 'bums on saddles'. Half of Rachel's schools began with no cycle storage, which was sorted out before things could take off. Following Kings Heath Primary's cycling incentive scheme, the school has 50 regular cyclists, compared to eight last year. A BMX stunt show at this school also attracted 724 pupils and 51 staff.

Mrs Quinn, of St Gerard's, said that her school's incentive scheme "not only helped to bring about long-term travel behaviour changes, but also greatly improved attendance". When Mosely closed the road for a cycle to school event, 137 parents and children arrived – in the pouring rain. No road rage in sight! All this proves that the desire is there; it just needs the right encouragement to flourish.



North East

Gateshead and South Tyneside

Alan has been flat out this year, raising £35,000 in much-needed funding for bike shelters, incentive prizes and inspirational demos from mountain bike world champion Ben Slinger. A summer highlight was taking 170 impeccably behaved pupils from Roman Road school, to receive their prize for scooping second place in the National Virtual Bike Race. Alan said "Telling the audience that these children cycle in daily, in all weather, was fantastic. Some days, 50% of the school cycles in. In just two years they've gone from almost no bikes to filling three bikes sheds every day."

The caretaker at Toner School, which used to have serious traffic issues

outside its gates at peak times, added "Bike It is the best that has ever happened to the school".

Darlington

Holy Family RC Primary enjoyed National Bike Week's 'Battle of the Bikes', with each pupil and teacher allocated to a mountain bike, racer, BMX or Chopper team. Bike It officer Debbie recorded 95 bikes in the overflowing shelter, with a total of 755 cycle journeys made – averaging 151 journeys per day in a school of just 208. During the awards ceremony, one rejuvenated grandfather told Debbie "That Bike Week. It gave me a sore backside but is the first time I've been on a bike in 50 years. I really enjoyed it and so did the kids!" At

Longfield Comprehensive, 600 pupils attended a Ben Slinger and Danny Butler trials display.

Teesside

Pamela took over Bike It in Teesside when Debbie Scott transferred to Darlington. She assisted Middlesbrough Council with cycle training, ran 'Getting Off Stabilisers' events and helmet decoration competitions, and raised vital funds for Sustrans with a non-uniform and ride-to-school day. She also ran a Bike It stall at Preston Park's Teescycle event, letting local parents know how children can benefit from the positive health and travel-behavioural changes that Bike It can bring.

North West

Huyton, Knowsley and St Helens

This summer, Ian saw what a really positive effect the Virtual Bike Race had on getting more children cycling: "They're fun, easy to set up and visibly increase cycling levels". 15 children from Stanley High visited the Velodrome, even watching Chris Hoy and the Olympic team train! Thanks to good relations with local authorities and their partners, Bike It has really taken off in this area, and new Bike It officer Lucy aims to continue Ian's great work.

Liverpool and The Wirral

At Florence Melly Primary, energy levels soared as 70 pupils enjoyed their 'Ditch the Stabiliser' sessions. Simon said "Bike It really raises children's awareness of environmental issues and sustainable transport." Simon's school champions also came into their own last term, running their own bike activities. This shows how support frameworks such as the Bike It School Mark can help schools maintain their pro-cycling culture once their officer moves on. At Archbishop Beck High, Deputy Head and Bike It champion Sheila McAlister says "We're looking at ways to include Bike It in the PE curriculum and next year it will feature in the Year 7 Creative Literacy programme."

Stockport and Rochdale

Last summer, Nes organised trips to the Velodrome, cycle workshops and visits from Rollapaluza - a 'roller racing' company with static bikes to show riders how far they travel in speed trials.



Nes thanks her Bike Crews for all their help with the Virtual Bike Race; Brookside Primary had parents, teachers and 70 out of 140 pupils cycling in every day. Covering the distance in six days, they set a new Bike It record! PowWow Eco Arts helped St Edwards and Shawclough Primary schools paint colourful Bike It murals. At Shawclough, 250 pupils and 10 parents took part. Watch out for Nes's Action Day on 22 September, with guests from Rochdale and Stockport Councils and a presentation from Sustrans on Bike It and the curriculum.

Bury

Andy's been busy running successful Bike It Breakfasts, assemblies and organised rides. In his popular Round the World virtual race, the enthusiastic Old Hall Primary school racked up an impressive 928 journeys! A summer highlight was the Bike Week ride from Hollins Grundy Primary to Openshaw Park, where Nicola Lee from the Local Authority had welcome snacks ready for the children's arrival. Everyone had great fun in the sun, racing around in a series of velodrome-styled events.

Lancaster

Lancaster City Council and Bike It teamed up to put on a great picnic. The Party on the Prom, supported by Lancaster's Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) team, was also a huge success. Bike It officer Damian helped the CDT manager to make Bikeability training available to all schools in the borough. He also worked hard to make Skerton High's bike loan scheme successful – a further 20 bikes are on order and weekly bike club rides – some of up to 20 miles – are now happening. Bike It, Sustrans volunteers and the council's cycling team are also promoting cycling to school as part of their general sustainability efforts.

London

In 2009/10, Bike It will actively engage over 20,000 pupils, parents and teachers in over 70 schools across 11 London boroughs. With news of Bike It's success spreading fast, officer requests have poured in so we'll be active in seven brand new Bike It boroughs - Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Lewisham, Merton and Redbridge.

The Bike It School Mark

Bike It officer Marina organised a bike maintenance training day for Bike It school champions and parents at three schools where the Bike It School Mark is being piloted. The School Mark is a bronze, silver and gold-graded framework that schools can follow, to sustain Bike It's positive results once their officer has moved on. The maintenance day at Rotherfield Primary let Bike It champions and parents learn the skills they need to promote and support bike activities once they become the school's main biking contact. One parent said: "I can't wait to check bikes at school...to decide what is roadworthy, what we can fix and what is for the skip!"

'Wheely' good stories...

What do ET, a castle and a Dalek's exterminating device have in common? They've all been attached to bikes as part of this term's Wheel Stories activity – Bike It officer Owen Powell's variation on the Bling your Bike theme.

Owen said: "Wheel Stories was popular with parents and teachers as it allowed them to link school work with cycling, whilst allowing the children to have fun." In one school, an impressive 25% of pupils cycled in. Wheel Stories events were held this term at Bellenden Primary, Crampton Primary, Weston Park Primary and Seven Sisters Primary.

Bike It officer challenge

Youngsters from Isle of Dogs' schools Arnhem Wharf, Seven Mills, Cubitt Town, Harbinger and St Lukes competed in Tower Hamlets' 'Bike Against James' event. Every time a pupil cycled to school, participating schools were awarded two miles. At the end of the week, all the schools added their miles together and Sustrans' Bike It officer James Scott cycled the combined figure – covering the 180 miles from Skegness to Tower Hamlets in just 18 hours.

Herne Hill Velodrome inspires pupils

Bike It provided funding to Crampton Primary to take 20 or so of the keenest cyclists for an afternoon's session at Herne Hill Velodrome, the only remaining venue from the 1948 London Olympics. Their qualified trainers welcome school groups, and provide appropriately sized track bikes and helmets. This offered the children a completely different experience of cycling that has inspired them to think about cycling as a fun and healthy way to exercise, as well as a way to get to school.

Bitten by the bike bug

Last summer, students at Wandsworth's Ravenstone Primary competed for the chance to ride to a picnic and games on Wandsworth Common, with the assistance of the Bike It school champion and members of the PTA. The children's happy faces were a delight to see, but even better was excitement with which they told their friends how much fun they'd had. Bike It officer Felix overheard one saying 'I'm going to ride *my* bike to the park, too!'



School Champion Richard Huie leads Ravenstone students on their end of term ride.

East of England

Southend

With valued funding from its new status as a Cycling Demonstration Town, Southend now has Graham all to itself. He has partnered with a local cycle retailer to provide Dr Bike sessions and discounts to Bike It schools. He's also presenting the project to the Director of Children and Learning in Southend, and meeting the childhood obesity support team at the SE Essex PCT. It was Graham's excellent and effective work that helped to secure funding from Southend Cycling Town and SW Essex PCT to appoint full-time officers in all three Thames Gateway towns.

Graham says: "Anecdotal evidence shows that Bike It has a real impact beyond the school journey. Parents are cycling with their children, families are cycling at weekends and children are cycling out of school hours. None of this was happening before Bike It." Thorpe Greenways Juniors is a great example of a thriving Bike It school, with over 125 bikes counted on 22 separate non-event days in June.

Harlow and Cheshunt

Bart has set up discount schemes with Cycle King and Staple Tyres, and been

featured on local Ten17 radio and in the press. Having seen how much Alastair Humphreys inspires other Bike It schools, Bart has arranged for him to visit his region, too. Bart's also given assemblies at non-Bike It schools to raise local awareness, and is keen to work with Essex County Council to secure cycle storage for schools in Harlow.

Luton, Bedford and St Albans

Richard has enjoyed great success this year setting up British Cycling Go Ride School Clubs at Daubeney (Bedford), Sundon Park and Warden Hill (Luton) and Fleetville (St Albans). Alongside initiatives like the Bike It School Mark, such schemes help schools to sustain their cycling activities once they're no longer intensely engaged with Bike It. Some of Richard's Heads and Champions are

incredibly supportive, with the Head at Sundon Park saying: "We really want to embed cycling in the culture of our school".

Great Yarmouth

The area's Sports Partnership Development Manager has just been given a budget for Bikeability training – and Bike It officer Kevin is brimming with suggestions to help him spend it! Kev is also developing strong links with the Norfolk Healthy Schools Team, and has met with Great Yarmouth's lead physical activity coordinator, Martin Payne, who is very keen to work with the project.



Children at Wheatfields enjoying a Bike It fun day

About Sustrans

Bike It is delivered by Sustrans, the UK's leading sustainable transport charity.

Sustrans' vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all.

To find out more about Sustrans or to become a Sustrans Supporter please visit www.sustrans.org.uk or call **0845 113 00 65**. Sustrans, 2 Cathedral Square, Bristol BS1 5DD.

Bike It is supported via the Bike Hub. The Bike Hub is a cycle industry initiative developed by The Bicycle Association of Great Britain and the Association of Cycle Traders to generate funds to support the future of cycling in the UK. Independent cycle retailers and companies are contributing to the Bike Hub fund, which is investing in major projects to encourage more cycling, particularly among young people.



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