



CUT



Some people who cycle in Bristol

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## Cycling in Bristol

Bristol was chosen because it has had a lot going on policy-wise. In 2008, Greater Bristol was selected as the UK's first 'Cycling City', which meant a total of £22.8 million over three years (including local authority funding) for cycling infrastructure, training, and promotion. Sustrans was born in the area in July 1977 as Cyclebag (Cycle Bristol Action Group). Bristol is home to University of the West of England's Centre for Transport and Society, involved in a variety of interesting cycling-related projects. Unlike the other three sites in the research, Bristol is hilly and on the relatively wet west side of the country, and yet cycling rates are still double the UK average.

From April to July 2011, we participated in a variety of cycling cultures in Bristol. We cycled up big hills with the *Bristol Thursday Old Time Cycling Club* and raced around Castle Combe with *Two's Company*, who provide tandems for visually impaired riders. We attended regular sessions at the *Bristol Bike Project* watching as people 'earn a bike' and joined in the weekly *Women's bike maintenance nights*. We got to know the Better By Bike people by attending their regular Dr Bike events and visited the workshop of Cap'n BikeBeard and learnt about all their creative bike projects. We were inspired by the community co-op bike workshops at Kebele and the volunteers teaching women with children to cycle at Bristol Refugee Rights. In addition to documenting our own experiences we conducted 45 interviews with stakeholders and people who had heard about our research in the media, cycling networks or via postcards left on their bikes. Many thanks to everyone involved in the project.



Bristol

2001 Census Percentage of cycling/all employed*
Bristol 4.58%
South West England 3.34%
England 2.83%
Wales 1.38%

\*Office of National Statistics

## Cycling places in Bristol

The Bristol to Bath path is a popular (mostly) off-road 3 metre wide smooth surfaced cycle route. It starts in the city near Castle Park and is signposted all the way to Bath. There are benches for picnics and play areas for children, cafes in old railway buildings, information boards highlighting local history and wildlife and views out to the countryside and down to flowing rivers. The printed brochure for the route indicates water fountains to fill up bottles and the locality of toilets. The path is used by cyclists, walkers, and runners.



Ashton Court is an historic estate set on 850 acres of woodland in the west of the city that provides high quality mountain bike trails. The city hosts an annual and very popular BikeFest racing event featuring 3,6 and 12 hour team and solo endurance races.



Although steep hills seem to appear out of nowhere for visitors to the city, locals talked about a network of backstreets and off road cycle paths to navigate around these surprising inclines.



There are a range of cycle routes immediately outside the city. The Avon Cycleway is an 85 mile circular route around Bristol that takes in Thornbury, Yate, Saltford, Chew Magna and Clevedon.

Bristol offers a diverse cycling experience – including off-road cycle paths along the river front and docks, disused railways and signed routes along quiet streets and cut-throughs. Cycling routes in the city negotiate motor-oriented postwar redevelopment: like many other English cities Bristol has an inner city motorway reaching into its core.

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## Some Cycling References

### Organisations:

Better By Bike - [www.betterbybike.info](http://www.betterbybike.info)  
 Bristol Bike Project - [www.thebristolbikeproject.org](http://www.thebristolbikeproject.org)  
 Bristol CTC - [www.ctcwest.org.uk/bristol](http://www.ctcwest.org.uk/bristol)  
 Bristol Cycling Campaign - [www.bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk](http://www.bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk)  
 Bristol Thursday Old Time Cyclists - [www.btotc.btck.co.uk](http://www.btotc.btck.co.uk)  
 Bristol Trails Group - [www.bristoltrailsgroup.com](http://www.bristoltrailsgroup.com)  
 Cap'n Bikebeard - [www.bikebeard.blogspot.com](http://www.bikebeard.blogspot.com)  
 Kebele Community Co-op - [www.kebelecoop.org](http://www.kebelecoop.org)  
 Life Cycle - [www.lifecycleuk.org.uk](http://www.lifecycleuk.org.uk)  
 Spoke'n'Chain - [www.spokenchain.blogspot.com](http://www.spokenchain.blogspot.com)  
 Two's Company - [www.lifecycleuk.org.uk/two-s-company](http://www.lifecycleuk.org.uk/two-s-company)

### Local events:

Bike Back - [www.betterbybike.info/bike-back](http://www.betterbybike.info/bike-back)  
 Bristol Cycle Festival - [www.bristolcyclefestival.com](http://www.bristolcyclefestival.com)  
 Cyclescreen Festival - [www.watershed.co.uk/programmes/174/](http://www.watershed.co.uk/programmes/174/)  
 Dr Bike - <http://www.lifecycleuk.org.uk/doctor-bike>  
 St Paul's Carnival - [www.stpaulscarnival.co.uk](http://www.stpaulscarnival.co.uk)

## Bike stories

Everyone has a bike story. Read a story or submit your own:  
[www.cyclingcultures.org.uk/bikestories](http://www.cyclingcultures.org.uk/bikestories)

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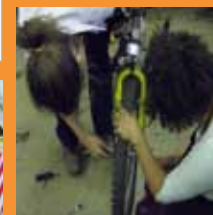
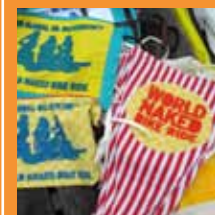


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## Cultures of cycling in Bristol

Grassroots cycling projects such as Two's Company, the Kebele Co-op and Bristol Bike Project target marginalised groups and seek to enable people who might not otherwise have access to bikes. Regular rides and workshops provide people with access to bikes, tools, parts and training as well as a welcoming social environment.

There is a healthy second-hand bike culture in Bristol. People swap and pass around bikes. They buy old ones and do them up, giving them their second, third and fourth lives.



Many bicycles and Sheffield stands in the city centre are decorated with stickers and other personal items.

Better By Bike run regular events in large organisations and public areas featuring Dr. Bike and distributing leaflets, maps and advice about cycle training and cycle buddy schemes.



The Bristol Cycling Campaign host regular meetings and themed rides such as the Blue Plaques ride, the Cycle Chic ride and the Banksy ride.



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## www.CyclingCultures.org.uk

CyclingCultures is a multi-method sociological research project that focuses on four relatively high-cycling cities in the UK to find out why cycling thrives in particular areas.

The four chosen fieldsites are Hull, Hackney, Bristol and Cambridge. All have differing social structures, spatial characteristics, political contexts and political environments.

The project is run by the Sustainable Mobilities Group in the School of Law and Social Sciences at the University of East London. It is funded by the Economic and

Would you like to learn more about the **Cycling Cultures** project? We are looking for people to contribute by telling us more about what it's like to cycle in the UK. If so, please add your bike experiences to [www.cyclingcultures.org.uk/bikestories](http://www.cyclingcultures.org.uk/bikestories)

This zine presents some of our findings from ethnographic research and interviews conducted in Bristol between April and July 2011. During this time we visited and lived in the city and undertook participant observation in many cycling clubs and activities.

For more information or to participate in the project please contact Rachel Aldred on [R.E.Aldred@uel.ac.uk](mailto:R.E.Aldred@uel.ac.uk) or Katrina Jungnickel on [K.E.Jungnickel@uel.ac.uk](mailto:K.E.Jungnickel@uel.ac.uk)



## Bike Portrait - Tabs, Kebele Community Co-op

This is one of a series of 25 portraits taken of people in Bristol with their bikes, that represent the rich diversity of cyclists, bikes and places to ride in the city.

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