

Edinburgh Festival of Cycling 2017

Kim Harding is the Director of the Edinburgh Festival of Cycling or EDFOC and it is now in its third year.



We asked him about this year's festival and what it will focus on. He explained : "Well this year we have a very special year because it's the 200th anniversary of the invention of the bicycle.

"200 years ago a man from Mannheim Karl von Drais invented the precursor to the bike, which he referred to as the Laufmaschine or the running machine. It was actually invented in response to a fuel crisis at the time.

"The previous year a big volcano in Indonesia had blown up and thrown an ash cloud into the sky. It created a nuclear winter across Europe where the crops had failed. So he didn't have enough oats to feed his horse and so he invented this thing, this wooden frame with two wheels on it which you sit astride and run along rather like a modern balance bike.

"Two hundred years ago on June 12 1917 he took it to the pub! So that was the first cycle ride to the pub and back."

"So that is what we are going to be celebrating this year!"

The full EDFOC programme is available [here](#) but Kim highlighted some of the events for us: "There are things for all ages and we have a lot of events at the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation. We have a big weekend here including the Bike Curious Family Days and top speakers of all sorts.

"For example we have Rebecca Lowe who decided to go and look at the effects of the Arab Spring. So she decided to cycle

from London down through North Africa into the Middle East and ended up in Iran. She has a fascinating story to tell.

“Dr Hutch as he is known on TV who is talking about his new book, Re-Cyclists, 200 years of cycling taking the whole story from Mannheim to the present day.

“We have a talk about how the bicycle liberated women and how it was very important in the 1880s and 1890s in the emancipation of women. That also ties into Rebecca’s talk about the Middle East because that sort of thing is still going on today in Afghanistan, Iran and other parts of the region.

Asked why he keeps organising this event Harding confessed it was to try and bring some thing new about cycling to the city each year. It was originally born out of a need to celebrate the bicycle and Edinburgh together.

There are many rides you can also get involved in from the Ride to the Sun to something a little more sedate. Read the whole programme [online](#) and book now!

The Edinburgh Festival of Cycling gets underway here on Thursday 8 June 2017 so give yourself something else to think about other than the General Election!

[The Edinburgh Festival of Cycling 2017](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).