

One thing we have learnt this week- Happy birthday bicycle

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[caption id="attachment_2137" align="alignright" width="300"]

bikes parked in Amsterdam[/caption] Happy birthday bicycle. Cycling is 200 years old this week and some [celebration](#) is taking place. One Karl Drais invented the forerunner of the bicycle due to a rise in horse feed. You sat on it and pushed it along with your feet. It was known as the "dandy horse" and was made of wood. The bicycle was later helped by the Scotsman John Dunlop's invention of the pneumatic tyre, which despite attempts has never been bettered. Also the idea of pedals made it more practical as did brakes! No more pushing with feet which must have been tiring. When the programme "History of the World in 100 objects" came out on BBC Radio 4 the programme makers ran a survey of what the listeners thought was the top invention of all time. The engineering profession were said to be almighty displeased with the choice – the bike. (Number 2 could not have pleased them much more – the solar photovoltaic panel, they were said to have wanted nuclear power as number 1). However the bicycle was a worthy choice. Its quiet, eco friendly, requires little space and keeps one fit. In addition most people can in theory manage to cycle. Its highly likely to be a significant part of the answer to the current problems of obesity, particulates, pollution and congestion. I have seen this for myself in the cycling capital of the world - Holland. Young, old and even disabled cycle there. Millions cycle worldwide and it has to be one of the most successful inventions ever. Cycling has been growing in popularity for many years in part due to the rise of modern day horse feed (car costs). Happy birthday bicycle and here's to another 200 years of your success and may many more cycle. Neil

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