

# Semaine du défi vélo - Jacques Monod's Bike Event



From Monday, October 13th to Sunday, October 19th, our school and other high-schools from Pau area took part in a Bike Event organized by the association "Pau à Vélo".

The goal of this Biking Event was to promote bicycling commuting, that is to say to encourage students and the school staff to ride to work, in order to decrease traffic and parking congestion and improve air quality in the area.



a bike sharing station in Pau

So, what happened at Jacques Monod's during the bike event week?



- A bike repair workshop enabled students to have their bicycles maintained and repaired for free
- An Idecycle bike sharing station was set outside our school to provide bikes to those who don't have any. Idecycle is a bicycle sharing system in Pau area which allows riders to borrow a bike from point "A" and return it at point "B" at a low cost.
- An inter-schools relay bicycle competition with relay teams of 3 cyclists riding for their schools was planned. However, our school couldn't join the event as not enough cyclists from Jacques Monod had registered for the race...
- An orienteering course with a quiz was organized in Pau and Lescar to learn more about Idecycle stations.
- A bike agility course was set up outside our school to check if we were able to ride a bike in a pack (a group of cyclists). That was much fun!
- Students, their families and the school staff could eventually meet on Sunday in a family cycling tour and mountain biking rally in Lescar.

- Some prizes were given to the best cyclists after half-term holidays and we have just learnt that our school will have 4 bikes available for those who want to have a ride and that.....

## **JACQUES MONOD RANKED SECOND AT THE BIKE EVENT !!!**



**Jacques Monod →**

However, the bike event has not attracted as many students as expected in Jacques Monod. Why not? That is what we have tried to find out.

To start with, it was the first time a bike event had taken place at Jacques Monod's and some students didn't really know what it consisted in. Then, some of them told us that they are not from Lescar and did not feel like riding 10 or 20 km long to go to school. We must admit that most of us are not used to riding to school, especially when it rains or when it gets cold and dark. Finally, some parents didn't want to let their children ride to school for security reasons.

Nevertheless, here are some reasons why we strongly believe we should start changing our modes of transportation and why we hope next year bike event will be a real success:

- 1) we must definitely reduce traffic jam: according to an article published in Le Parisien on 14 October 2014, traffic congestion costs French people around € 17 billion a year and the bill should rise to € 22 billion in 2030! Indeed, being stuck in traffic jams means more fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> pollution, being late at work and much stress for drivers!
- 2) riding a bike is cheap, eco-friendly and it's good for our health and the environment (but you already know that!)
- 3) Lescar and Pau city councils are working to promote cycling.  
In Pau, some efforts have been made to promote cycling but not as much as in the best European capitals, which is logical. However, you can rent bikes from 20 stations in Pau urban district where a bike rental service is provided by the IDELIS company. Near Pau, the city of Lescar intends to improve bike riding with road renovation work as the mayor of Lescar has explained to us in a letter.





Last but not least, we have decided to conclude this article telling you about three bike-friendly cities which have attracted our attention: Copenhagen in Denmark, Amsterdam in the Netherlands and Portland in the USA.

## - Biking in Copenhagen

In 2014, Copenhagen has won the “European Green Capital award”, which is given to European cities trying to improve their urban environment and one of the main reason is its bike traffic.

Indeed, Copenhagen is one of the most bike-friendly cities in the world and plans to have 50% of people cycling in its city center by 2015.

But why do 37% of the population ride to work?

Because the streets are safe for cyclists : speed is limited to 15 or 30 km/h downtown and since 2012 commuters have even pedaled on cycle highways (highways for bikers only!). Then, there are a lot of bike paths and bicycle-friendly roads. As a result, the Danish postal service delivers nearly all mail in Copenhagen by bicycle.

Every day, 120 000 cyclists ride in the city center, where most people, even politicians, move on a bike!

## - Biking in Amsterdam

In Amsterdam, where more than 60% of city-center trips are made on two wheels, most citizens have been cycling along bike paths since their childhood. That’s why cycling security is a priority as you can read in the following article about safe cycling in Amsterdam:

<http://www.iamsterdam.com/en-GB/experience/what-to-do/activities-and-excursions/cycling/cycling-safely>



**Amsterdam and Copenhagen are the best European cycling cities !**

## - Biking in Portland

Portland is located in the North West of the United States, in Oregon.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation works to make bicycling an integral part of city-dwellers' everyday lives. To do this, Portland uses different approaches.

- Planning, implementing, and maintaining a bikeway network
- Providing secure bicycle parking downtown
- Educating people about the role of bicycle transportation in keeping their communities livable, and encouraging residents to choose bicycling to commute to downtown Portland, that is to say to ride a bike to work.

Portland intends to make it easier for its inhabitants to cycle around the city than to drive a car because Portland city council is aware of the need to protect the environment. For example, in downtown Portland, pizza boys move around by bike.

Bicycle use in Portland has risen very quickly, it has nearly tripled since 2001; for example, bicycle traffic has increased from 2,855 before 1992 to over 16,000 in 2008, partly due to good bike facilities and infrastructures in city.

The city of Portland has issued a map of the different bike places.



There are many bike events in Portland (competitions, races...) and according to a local biker « The paragon of bike-friendliness regains the top spot in our rankings ».

**To put it in a nutshell, Portland is the best American bike city!**

*by Baptiste, Thibault and Clément  
Hugo, Louis, Antoine, Jules and Rémi (2<sup>nd</sup> 4)*