

Time for reflection : About me and my ...

One way to take a break from the here and now is to spend a few moments writing about something you enjoy doing or have enjoyed in the past.

We asked Susan Eady Team Leader, Subject Librarian: Architecture, Design about bike riding

About my Cycling:

I ride a couple of times a week, if I can, outside lockdown. The thing I like about cycling is that it doesn't require a huge amount of skill and expertise, it's pretty much equal opportunity for all once you have learned to balance on the bike. I don't have lots of lycra though I do have some cycling shorts I bought after doing the Hauraki Rail Trail a few years ago and I can recommend them for the extra padding.

My first bike was a tiny one my grandma bought from a friend at her work. It had white tyres and was pimped with tiger hand grips, a Minnie Mouse bell and a carrier that had plastic flowers. I loved it so much and spent my pocket money on more accessories.

My bike now is a commuter bike so has big wheels that make it easy to ride but it doesn't do so well cross-country. I also have inherited one of my kids bikes that is chunkier that I can use if I am going on a path that is likely to be muddy or gravelly. I do prefer the comfort of my commuter bike. My bike came from a second-hand shop in Avondale and is kitted with a carrier, bell and lights. Lights and bell are essential. I am pretty safety conscious and normally stick to footpaths when on the main roads because it's scary when cars and buses come really close. I also wear gloves because when I have fallen off, even the slow-mo falling off, I have grazed my hands so the gloves are great protection and keep my fingers warm in cold weather too.

It's important to me that I give way to pedestrians and often I will stop so I can get to the side and not obstruct their way. That said, some pedestrian ducks at Western Springs recently gave me a fright when they didn't move fast enough and I nearly went over them.

The rides I do most often are from home in Pt Chev, down along the boardwalk from Eric Armishaw park, toward Unitec, up the footpath to Alberta St then across to Western Springs, round the lake, back through the soccer fields and down Pt Chev Rd to the beach, around Coyle Park then back home. That is a decent circuit, not too hilly and takes me about 45 minutes.

Other rides I enjoy are from Onehunga Wharf, along the Mangere esplanade to Ambury Farm, through the farm to Creamery Rd. I did this for my birthday in summer, extending a little bit to Villa Maria for a gorgeous lunch. Sometimes we park the car at Orakei and bike along the waterfront to St Heliers though this is a busy route with lots of people on the footpath so has lots of stopping and starting.

I am still a nervous rider, avoiding roads unless it is very quiet like now. I saw a bike accident a few years ago that left a mark on me. I knocked out my front tooth on my Raleigh 20 when I was 9 because I was trying to ride it on gravel on a steep hill and the bike was too big for me. My dad banned me from riding for a year. I am pretty short so I take care to have a bike that is the right size for me.

I've done a couple of cycle trails, Hauraki and Otago rail trail and last summer did one in Nelson. I love it, so long as it's not too hilly. The Nelson one was hilly so I got an ebike from the tour company, which was perfect, I'd have struggled without that extra power for the hills and not enjoyed the scenery. I recommend ebikes for anyone who is keen to get out and about and isn't keen on doing challenging riding; for me it's all about enjoying the ride, not the workout so much.