

## Finding balance again

A serious accident forced **Don Harding** off his bike. He rediscovered his joy of cycling thanks to recumbent tricycles and electric assistance

**JUST** after retiring at the age of 60 in 2003, I lost my left leg above the knee in an accident (not cycling related) and was fitted with a prosthetic leg. When I resumed cycling, I found my balance precarious on two wheels due to the SPD pedals I needed to keep my tin foot in place. Eventually I fell off and dislocated my shoulder, ending up back in hospital.

I then read a magazine article about the Windcheetah recumbent trike, a Mike Burrows design. I went to try one, whizzed around the car park and was immediately hooked. Initially I rode without electric assistance, winching up Cumbria's murderous hills with the help of a mountain bike cassette and three chainrings. After seven years, I added an electric motor. I could cruise up the hills without risk of an over-exertion heart attack, and I got about 25 miles from each battery charge.

### Assisting others

Since my accident, I've volunteered at the Bendrigg Trust near Kendal. It's a specialist outdoor centre for people of all ages and with a wide range of disabilities, offering activities such as climbing, canoeing and adaptive cycling. It was here I met Alan.

Now in his early 70s, Alan had a serious car accident in 2005, which was not his fault. He has little use of his legs and drags himself around painfully on two sticks. Yet he still rides, thanks to a battery-powered wheelchair-trike made by DaVinci in Liverpool.

We've done many rides together. Our longest, over hilly country in Cumbria and North Lancashire, was 65

### Try inclusive cycling

Cycling UK's Inclusive Cycling Experience scheme offers free try-out sessions and non-standard cycle loans for disabled people to trial cycling as an active travel option for everyday journeys. The scheme is available in two areas, Greater Manchester and Inverness, and is funded by the Motability Foundation. For more information, see [cyclinguk.org/inclusive-cycling-experience](https://cyclinguk.org/inclusive-cycling-experience)

miles. Alan carries up to four batteries in a handlebar basket. Cycling delights have included trips to and through the Trough of Bowland, Barbondale and Gummers Howe. We've cycled in all weather conditions, including winter snow cover.

### A new trike

I recently replaced my old Windcheetah with a secondhand ICE Adventure with 20-inch wheels and electric assistance. It was thanks to ICE Trikes agent Paul Hallinan at Adapt-e in Cheshire that I got this. Paul is himself an adaptive rider. He specialises in enabling amputees, stroke sufferers and others with physical disabilities to get back on the road.

My ICE Adventure can fold but fits comfortably in the back of my estate car without doing so. The trike has nine power settings and I generally ride

Don on his ICE Adventure trike with electric assistance, which makes light work of Cumbrian hills

using modes six to nine, depending on the terrain. At the time of writing I have ridden 4,600 miles on it, including ascents of the steepest Cumbrian hills. It is comfortable to ride and has full suspension, which enables it to tackle rough conditions. I have been amazed at its stability and reliability.

### Three wheels good

Riding an electrically assisted trike and overcoming my disability has been a rejuvenating experience and a joy. My e-trikes have taken me with friends to wonderful, memorable areas in UK. I once again have the sense of freedom I used to love so much when walking on the hills, something I still miss.

I'd be pleased to hear from anyone interested to know more about my triking journeys and experiences. My email address is: [donaldharding123@btinternet.com](mailto:donaldharding123@btinternet.com).

