

CYCLING HAS CHANGED MY LIFE.....

Rashmi Barker from Blackburn is a fantastic example of someone who has truly embraced the world of cycling despite her disability.

Having been diagnosed with Polio at a very early age, Rashmi made a decision to never differentiate herself from anyone else and not let her disability affect her ambitions. *“Polio has not stopped me from doing anything I have wanted to do. As a child there were always two things I wanted which I could not have because of my condition; a skateboard and a bike. But when my husband bought a bike for himself, I found myself wishing for one too and that was where my friendship with Quest 88 began!”* she explains.

Rashmi’s first bike from Quest 88 was a Topend Excelerator Handcycle, which was ideal as it was stable and provided a good introduction to handcycling with a higher seating position and a small turning circle.

As part of Rashmi’s growing friendship with the team at Quest 88 she was invited to help out on the stand at the 2014 Cycle Show and this is where she met Simon Lord from EMpowered People for the first time. EMpowered People was founded by Simon and is a charity that aims to inspire disabled adults to take up cycling as a means of increasing their fitness and independence. It also provides training and support for new cyclists, or those returning to cycling after injuries or illnesses.

While at the show, Simon invited Rashmi to take part in a forthcoming ride in Anglesey. *“The event would involve cycling up to 30 miles a day which was way beyond anything I was doing at the time but Simon and Rob from Quest 88 both encouraged me and before I knew it I had a training programme in place”* continued Rashmi. To tackle the event Rashmi knew she would need a different bike that would help her tackle the steeper hills and uneven road surfaces found on the cycle route in Anglesey and Rob suggested a Hase Kettwiesel handcycle.

When Rashmi saw it for the first time she was “blown away” as she puts it! *“The Hase is an amazing machine; I call it my 007 bike. It has taken me to a completely different level in terms of cycling and fitness and gives me the freedom to tackle hills*

that were out of the question previously. I loved my Topend hand cycle but this is just a different world. During the two-day event in Anglesey I covered a total of 68 miles and there is no doubt that I would not have been able to achieve this without my new handcycle and the support of Simon and the teams at EMpowered People and Quest 88”.

As with many users, Rashmi often transports her Kettwiesel by car and the team at Hase have worked hard to make this as easy as possible.

It is the aim of everyone here at Quest 88 to make cycling accessible to all and Rashmi is a fantastic example of how someone can take the journey from never riding a bike to exploring their capabilities with an easier to access cycle and then finally pushing boundaries further with something more advanced for more miles and bigger challenges.

If you would like to find out more about the full range of cycles available, cycling opportunities in your local area or advice on funding sources for purchasing a specialist cycle, please contact Quest 88 on 01743 790191, visit www.quest88.com or email: cycling@quest88.com

For more information on EMpowered People and news on forthcoming events please visit www.empoweredpeople.co.uk or call 01706 839008 / 07702 784916