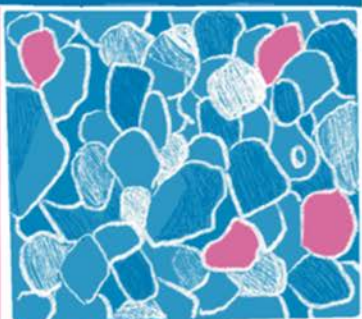




# UNDER OUR OWN POWER

A TNBI CYCLING ZINE





## 1: Welcome to the zine

This zine was made as part of a research project to better understand the experiences of Trans, Non-binary and Intersex (TNBI) people who cycle, have cycled, or face barriers to cycling. The project was a collaboration between me (Dr Matt C. Smith) at the University of Brighton, Beck at The Clare Project, and Lea (zine and cycling aficionado).



When writing the intro to this zine I wasn't sure where to start because of the different potential audiences of it. As a budding academic I want to provide a literature review of research so far on TNBI experiences of mobility and how there's been <sup>no</sup> specific TNBI utility cycling research in academia, until now! As someone interested in planning I want to speak to planning practitioners and those working in active travel and local government and let them know why they should care. But most of all I hope this zine is a resource for TNBI folks to find connection, inspiration, and some affirming joy. For me, this project has already done all three and so much more. In this intro I hope to address these different audiences in a way that is ultimately unsatisfying for each.

For me, cycling is important as it increases my autonomy of movement. I live in a queer and trans housing co-op, and just like not having a landlord is liberating my bike increases my freedom of movement. I can be into Brighton in 15 minutes whereas the bus is twice this. Overall, it's good for my mental health and feeling connected to my surroundings (despite traffic noise and angry or inconsiderate drivers – srsly why so angry?), and it's good for doing exercise but it doesn't feel like a chore. As a genderqueer person cycling opens-up space to be myself, facilitates experimentation with my presentation, and is how I connect-up spaces of affirmation such as the home and attending community events.

As a geographer (perhaps my true gender), I'm really interested in how people experience and move around cities, and how these spaces are governed and regulated by people and policy. During my PhD research on trans experiences of the city and inclusion in urban planning, mobility came up as a key area that was often overlooked in policy and practice, and under researched considering it's importance for people's wellbeing. Mobility is how we can or cannot link together where we can afford to live, where we socialise, where we work, access services, and do everyday tasks. Previous research on TNBI experiences of public transit has highlighted the often-negative experience due to harassment and hypervigilance, with good experiences being neutral where nothing bad occurs. A couple of participants in the PhD research spoke about cycling as "liberation" and affording "good gender feels". This zine builds upon these experiences and enables multiple voices and perspectives to be shared, providing a more complex understanding.

I could be anything I want...  
with no name and with no type of story  
Where do I live? Tell me, where do I exist?  
♪

'Active travel' e.g. walking, wheeling and cycling is increasingly seen as a way to meet sustainability and health & wellbeing goals or agendas. However, research has highlighted that building physical infrastructure alone can increase the number of cyclists but not increase the diversity of those who cycle. This is where what we can call supplemental or social infrastructure can play a key role in starting and sustaining cycling for minoritised and marginalised folk who may face oppression and discrimination due to their gender, race, disability, sexuality, size and more. The benefits from active travel and increased autonomy of movement are likely to be greater for minoritised and marginalised folk and even more so if it can be a means of connection with each other. Especially, during times of increasing hostility and moral panic, organised anti-trans and migrant activity, and continued forms of economic growth that move us towards and not away from environmental collapse.

I hope this zine provides an engaging overview of the TNBI Cycling project, provides a thoughtful contribution to our collective knowledges, and is a source of joy and connection. This project was made possible by all the amazing zine contributors, participants in the discussion groups, and funded by a grant from the University of Brighton Development Fund. I am indebted to the amazing research and experiences shared in journals and zines that provides the foundations and inspiration for this project (see further reading!).

## Where we did it: Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove is a small (277,100 people) city on the south coast of England in the UK. It is wedged between the South Downs and the sea, and importantly if you're cycling spread across a few hills and deans (valleys). Brighton & Hove is officially the gayest (LGB+) city in the UK (Census 2021) and has been historically associated with the 'dirty weekend' as a place where the usual norms regarding sexuality were looser. It has been a place where TNBI folk who were beginning transitioning were recommended to live, it is home to the first Trans Pride in the UK, and has one the largest LGBTQ+ community sectors.



Despite this research has highlighted persistent health inequalities and ongoing harassment and discrimination faced by TNBI communities in Brighton & Hove. Often TNBI and minoritised communities form an integral part of the imaginary of the city as a 'progressive' place, find connection and support, and are marginalised socially, culturally, and materially.

*I wanna go outside,  
but I feel dead on the inside  
I wanna ride my bike,*

## METHODOLOGY

This project ran from March-July 2025 and consisted of two group discussions of people's lived experiences, two zine-making workshops led by Lea, and one hybrid policy discussion group where we were joined by a member of Brighton & Hove City Council's Planning and Regeneration team. We also did a call-out for further zine contributions. We recruited via call-outs on social media, email newsletters, posters in queer and cycle spaces, and personal networks. Participants and contributors received a voucher as a thank you for their time. Participants could contribute to one or more of the different group activities and all groups we co-facilitated by Matt and Beck. In total we had 20 TNBI folk participate with 14 contributing to the groups and 14 individual contributions to the zine. Recordings and transcripts of the meetings were made and Beck & Matt used NVivo to analyse the topics of importance using a form of reflexive thematic analysis. In the 'Findings' section at the end of this zine we present an overview of some of the key themes discussed with anonymised quotes from participants.

A major limitation of the research is the underrepresentation of voices from TNBI Black Indigenous Persons of Colour. The contributors and participants of the research were disproportionately white. This is in-part due to the research team being white, the predominant whiteness of cycling as an activity, and that in Brighton & Hove there are longstanding issues of racism and the predominance of whiteness within queer and trans communities. In the future, further specific QTIBIPOC mobility research that is QTIBIPOC-led and truly collaborative would help address this absence. There was also an overrepresentation of transmasculine and non-binary people. This combined with the

predominance of whiteness means it's important to reflect on visibility and the affordance of cycling for some a degree of passing more smoothly through space than for others.

A Project Steering Group provided advice and guidance on the research, feedback on findings, and ways to further engage different audiences. The group involved those working in the Public Health Team and Transport Projects Teams in Brighton & Hove City Council, and in academia with Prof. Rachel Aldred (University of Westminster) and Laetitia Zeeman & Alex Sawyer (University of Brighton).

The project received ethical approval from the University of Brighton Cross-School Research Ethics Committee C.

#### IN THIS ZINE:

Individual contributions pp. 5 - 32

Findings from discussion groups pp. 33 - 41

Recommendations for change and further research pp. 42 - 44



I N V O L V

HEY. I'M BECK. I'M NON-BINARY. AND  
I'M SUUUUUUPER INTO CYCLING. ✨

SO WHEN MATT ASKED THE CLARE PROJECT  
(WHERE I WORK) IF ANYONE WOULD BE  
BEING A CO-RESEARCHER ON THIS  
PROJECT I JUMPED AT THE CHANCE.

I AM PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HEARING  
STORIES OF HOW CYCLING LEADS TO JOY &  
CONFIDENCE TO BE YOURSELF IN YOUR GENDER  
OR HOW YOU EXPRESS IT. MAKING SURE OUR  
CITY IS A SAFE SPACE FOR PEOPLE TO  
EXPERIENCE FREEDOM, WHETHER A BIKE GIVES  
TRANS PEOPLE THAT FREEDOM OR IT'S THE  
MODE OF TRANSPORT TO GET YOU THERE.

zine



AND NOW I'M HOOKED ON  
ZINES. THANKS LEA !!

This is me with my dad on my fifth birthday.  
My dad bought this bike second-hand



It was red and blue, but he took it apart and  
spray-painted it hot pink and vivid purple

I would have preferred it red and blue



BECOME A TARGET

I'd Rather Be  
**BREATHING!**



# Why i like

WHEN I WAS A KID I WOULD RIDE MY BIKE EVERY DAY TO DIFFERENT FRIENDS HOUSES. I LOVED IT.

THEN EVERYONE STARTED TO CALL ME A TOM BOY.

I DIDN'T LIKE IT. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE BOYS WERE JUST ALLOWED TO RIDE BUT I WAS GIVEN A LABEL FOR IT. SO I STOPPED RIDING BIKES. FOR 25 YEARS

THEN!! I REALISED I WAS NON-BINARY... AND BEING STRONG & FAST WAS FUN

AND OKAY AGAIN.

AND I LIKE THE FUCK YOU FEELING OF BEING FREE.

# yikes!!!



Too Fat  
Too Trans  
Too Visible



"Boys"  
"Girls"



# CARRIERS TO CYCLING

Target?



Invisible?  
Vulnerable  
Breakable



"BIKE"

"NOT BIKE" (In UK)



>£500  
Shoes/clothes  
Locks/helmets



<£200  
Free  
needs work

EU  
casual

easy, fun  
simple, cheap  
useful, fast  
common  
efficient  
accessible

England

Conflict (with cars)  
expensive,  
Rules, Difficult  
"Appropriate wear"  
Visible, Class  
A Target, Bias  
inaccessible  
Dangerous, accidents  
Angry people.

LE25

As a **CONFIDENT** CYCLIST

I never believed I would get into an accident on my bike. I had cycled for days and weeks across Spain and the UK, camping as I went. Now I never go a ride without my helmet.

HAVING A HEAD INJURY IS A VERY CONFUSING

**C** **O** **N** **F** **U** **S** **I** **N** **G**



**EXPERIENCE**

Suddenly it's unclear whether a difficulty is stemming from the physical brain/head damage or the emotional trauma. Without sounding like a cautionary tale, my love for my friends often looks like saying "WHERE'S YOUR HELMET?"

In this case alone, I let myself speak (parentally) and suffer the social consequences. It's worth it to protect those I **LOVE**. **PERHAPS THAT MAKES ME A HELMET FOR THE COMMUNITY**

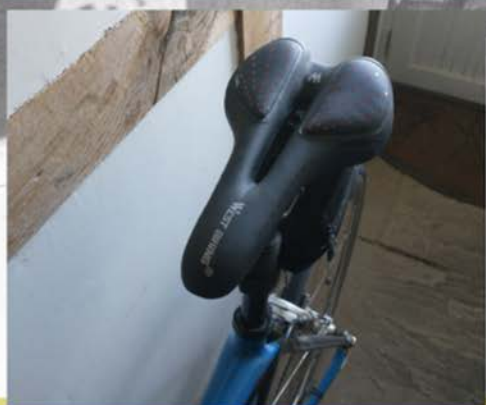


For context, here is a little bit about me:

I'm a 61 year old trans woman. I started my transition in 2020. By accessing private care I was able to start HRT relatively quickly, and had my bottom surgery in March 22, followed by FFS in Jan 23. As I look back on my life it is now clear to me now that I was a trans teenager, although at the time I did not have the knowledge or visibility to understand how I felt. I just knew I was a bit different and never really fitted in. My first clear recollection of gender incongruent thinking was when I was 13. I did a bit of cycling in my teens, but it was just a method of getting around, rather than as a sport or keeping fit. No Lycra shorts back then!

I was not able to start fully exploring my desire to cross dress until I bought my first house at the age of 27. This was always in private. I think it was in my early 30s that I started cycling again, initially as a means of getting fit (sedentary office job!). The whole lycra shorts and bright colour clothing thing was also very affirming of my desire to feminise myself, and being visible in public without being attacked, or getting arrested! Once I was fit enough to get up the hills without my legs turning to jelly I took the plunge and shaved my very hairy legs, and a little later all the other bits that did not show when wearing normal men's cloths. The cycling was the perfect cover story, but I did actually enjoy getting out on the bike. 100k's most weekends was my typical level. I never got involved in group rides or competitive races – no desire to do so. Just me, the road race bike, country roads, big hills, and the challenge of going a bit faster each trip. I kept that up and till about 10 years ago. I started getting a lot of neck pain while out on the bike, so I switched to walking on the South Downs instead. I kept the Lycra leggings. Men styles to start with, and later more female patterned varieties. That very much led to my egg crack moment...

I carried on cycling at a lower distance and frequency post transition, until my bottom surgery (PIV vaginoplasty). I had this vision of getting out on my bike again in late summer 22 after the 3 month recovery period. Some cute new cycling attire awaited! But.... Owwww! It was just too painful. Think squeezing your clitoris in a vice is the best description. Over a year later, and more healing, I finally figured out a solution. A new saddle with centre line cutout, more padding and support, change in saddle height and angle (see attached photos). I'm not sure how typical this experience is. I'm ashamed to admit it, but walking is now my main activity. I'm hoping to get my cycling mojo back this year, because I miss it. Roll on a nice warm dry summer.



*Matt: You said cycling provided a cover story for transitioning clothing and your presentation, did cycling also increase your independence of movement and how did that feel for you? Did this contrast with other means of travel such as bus, train etc.?*

My adult cycling was not so much about getting to a place, but rather trying to improve my fitness. The whole clothing thing was a big motivator to get out of bed and do the work. It allowed me to express my colourful self, and enjoy the way these clothes looked (and felt) on me. This was my only public outlet to express my real self in what felt a safe way. This was not possible with other forms of transport, public, or private.

# DREAMS OF A CAR-FREE CITY

community gardens  
on every street

clean air and  
less noise  
pollution

universal  
"basic"  
income

free trans health-  
care, no waiting  
lists, no GICs, no  
gatekeepers

community-led  
housing + housing  
co-ops

free, fast, eco-friendly  
public transport

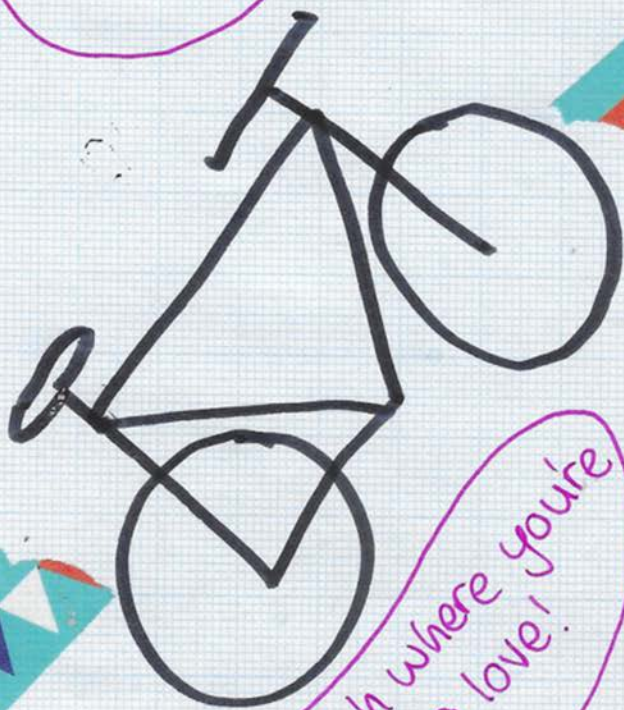
infrastructure for  
pedestrians, cyclists,  
wheelchair users,  
scooters, public transport,  
and skateboards!

no cops  
no terfs  
no prisons  
no landlords

# EUPHORIA

## GENDER

after you,  
mate!



watch where you're  
going love!

## GENDER

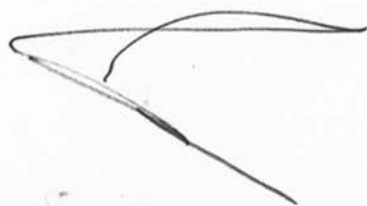
# DYSPHORIA

## Rules I break:

- Go through red light
- Go up one way street ~~unlawfully~~  
way
- Cycle on pavement (sometimes)
- Lock bike in not allowed places
- DIY hammocks
- Lie to doctors
- Lie to GIC
- Lie to the state

---

I do these things because they both involve systems which are not made for us. The road rules prioritise cars, and not the safety of cyclists. I use my judgement + prioritise the safety of pedestrians, who I have more power over as a cyclist. But I do not obey rules that only serve to benefit cars. Some with being there. I do what I need to to run the NHS + the government + ~~survive~~ survive.



Trans-masc cycling:

On the bike I pass as a boy. Cyclists' default is seen as male.

People treat me with more ~~less~~ respect when I pass as a man on the bike.

However, people also view me as a teenager + can be patronising eg. telling me where/where not to lock my bike. I am in my 30s.

On the bike I travel through  
the world quickly, without  
scrutiny. I am an object,  
a vehicle. No gender. On the  
bus <sup>or the street</sup> ^ people are close to  
me. Can talk to me. Have  
to try to pass, or think about  
it. I am a person there, and  
so I am trans. On the bike  
I am outside-of-trans.

Transcend gender. Transcend  
personhood. Freeing. Fast.  
Anonymous.

Rules I break:  
go through red light  
go up one way street wrong way  
cycle on pavement (sometimes)  
lock bike in not allowed places  
DIY hormones  
lie to the doctors  
lie to the GIC  
lie to the state

I do these things because they both involve systems which are not made for us. The road rules prioritise cars and not the safety of cyclists. I use my judgement and prioritise the safety of pedestrians who I have more power over as a cyclist. But I do not obey rules that only serve to benefit cars. Same with being trans. I do what I need to navigate the NHS + the government + survive.

Trans-masc cycling:

On the bike I pass as a boy. Cyclist's default is seen as male. People treat me with more respect when I pass as a man on the bike.

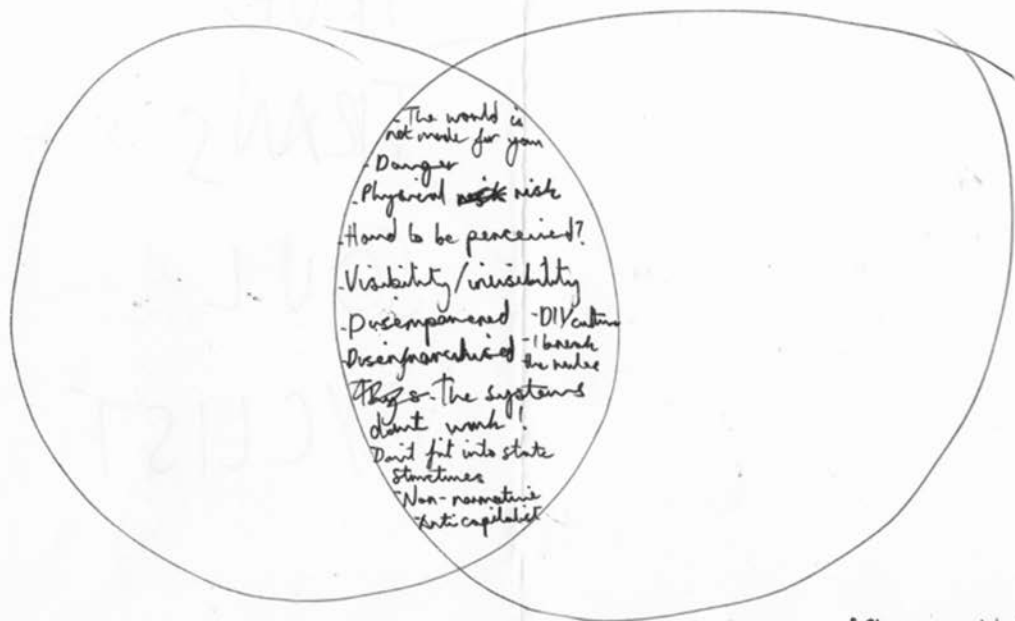
However people also view me as a teenager + can be patronising eg. telling me where/where not to lock my bike. I am in my 30s.

On the bike I travel through the world quickly, without scrutiny. I am an object, a vehicle. No gender. On the bus or the street people are close to me. Can talk to me. Have to try to pass or think about it. I am a person there, and so I am trans. On the bike I am outside-of-trans. Transcend gender. Transcend personhood. Freeing. Fast. Anonymous.

# Venn Diagram

TRANS

CYCLIST



(Please could this be for legibility?)

**Trans**

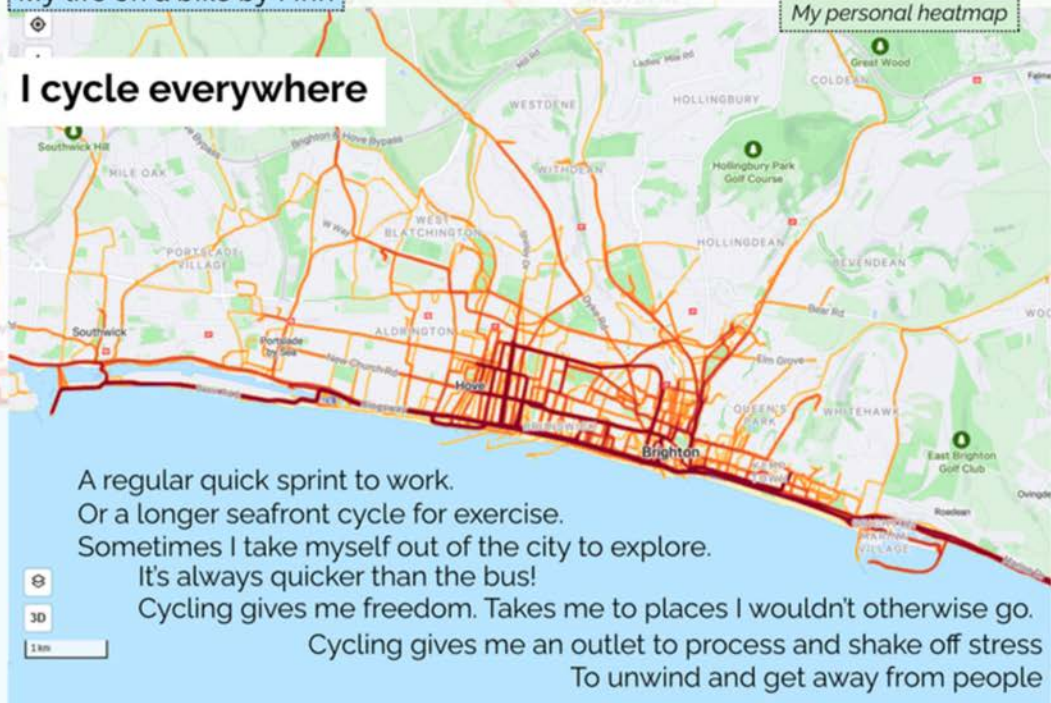
**Cyclist**

- The world is not made for you
- Danger
- Physical risk
- Hard to be perceived?
- Visibility/invisibility
- Disempowered
- Disenfranchised
- DIY culture
- I break the rules
- The systems don't work!
- Don't fit into state structures
- Non-normative
- Anti-Capitalist

My life on a bike by Finn

My personal heatmap

## I cycle everywhere



A regular quick sprint to work.

Or a longer seafront cycle for exercise.

Sometimes I take myself out of the city to explore.

It's always quicker than the bus!

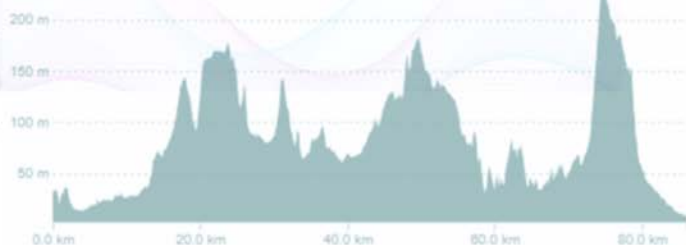
Cycling gives me freedom. Takes me to places I wouldn't otherwise go.

Cycling gives me an outlet to process and shake off stress  
To unwind and get away from people

As a data nerd, I track all my rides.

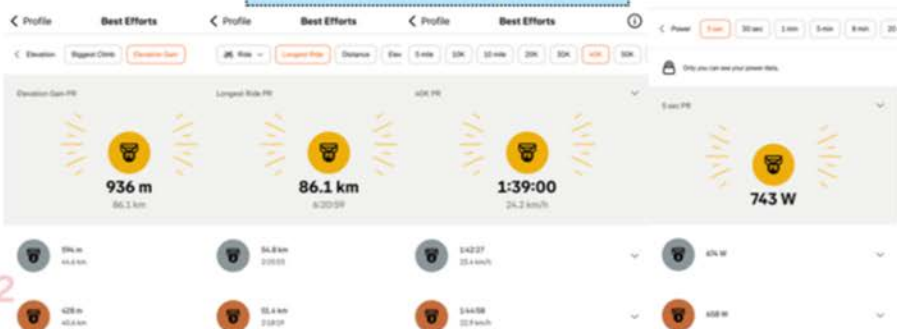
I use **STRAVA**  
to help keep me motivated.

(distance and elevation of the  
London to Brighton bike ride.  
Not an everyday occurrence)



I compete with myself. Can I conquer a hill, go further, go faster

My best efforts (according to Strava)



# Riding rough

Pretty in pink

Let's hear it for BUGgers

You're being clocked.

Bent on risks to cyclists

My bike and I

Outed!

Oh blow it

unmasked this weekend as a closet cyclist.

'Cycling's Loss is Beef's Gain!'

Swinging  
both  
ways

Conservatism  
raises its ugly  
head

I remain  
impervious

opinion  
Anti-

why are there  
so many  
potholes



CYCLING HAS ALWAYS MEANT A LOT TO ME. WHEN I WAS YOUNGER IT MEANT I COULD GO EXPLORING, AS I GOT OLDER AND WENT TO UNI IT MEANT ACCESSIBILITY. BUT WHEN I REALISED I COULD DO CYCLE TO WORK I COULD GET A BIKE WAY BETTER THAN I'D EVER RIDDEN. IT'S THEN THAT I STARTED GOING ON RIDES FOR FUN, NOT TO GET SOMEWHERE. IT STARTED BEING SOMETHING I REALLY ENJOYED, GETTING STRONGER AND FASTER. I WANTED THE KIT, AND WAS REALLY FEELING LIKE I'D FOUND MY THING. THEN I GOT DYSPHORIC, IT STOPPED ME CYCLING FOR A COUPLE YEARS, I LOST MY CONFIDENCE. THEN I GOT MY PARTNER INTO CYCLING AND THEIR EXCITEMENT OF IT HELPED ME FEEL BETTER. CYCLING IS NOW A CORE PART OF ME, BOTH GETTING FROM A TO B AND GOING ON TRIPS THAT WE CAN GO ON CYCLE RIDES AT. EXPLORING AND FEELING CONNECTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

it's the closest thing to flying



my teleporter!  
i'm often late because it feels like  
it takes no time to get there

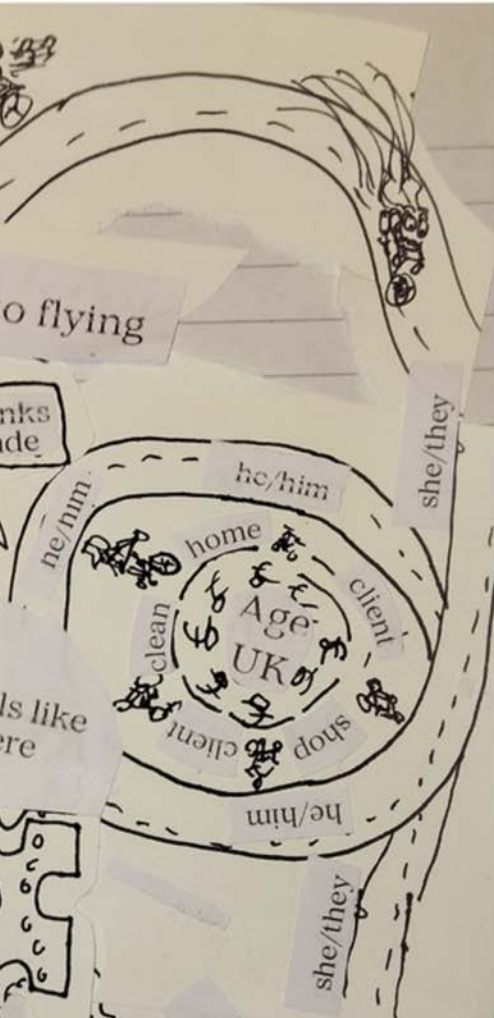


unfortunately the  
council hates birds  
unless they are on a  
very specific jigsaw

(↪ = cycle lanes)



i don't have to walk  
home at night





"NATURE HELD ME CLOSE  
AND SEEMED TO FIND NO FAULT WITH ME." - FEINBERG



My dream bikes  
don't look like  
yours #disabled

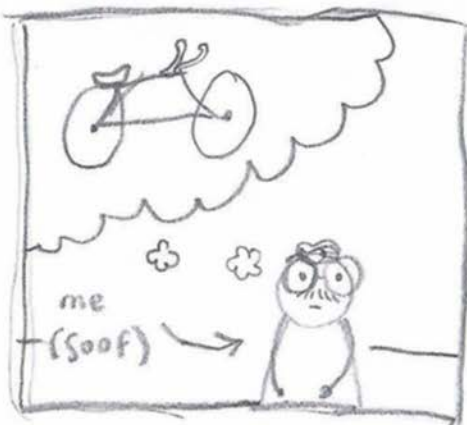


# THIS PARKING ENDANGERS CYCLISTS



PARKING LIKE THIS FORCES CYCLISTS  
INTO THE ROAD WHICH MAKES US MORE  
LIKELY TO GET HIT BY PASSING CARS.  
PLEASE THINK OF US WHEN PARKING IN  
THE FUTURE. THANK YOU!

Your Friendly Neighbourhood cyclist



# DREAMING -OF- CYCLING

i'd love to cycle, but I feel scared. Its the same about driving there's so much to process Its so scary!



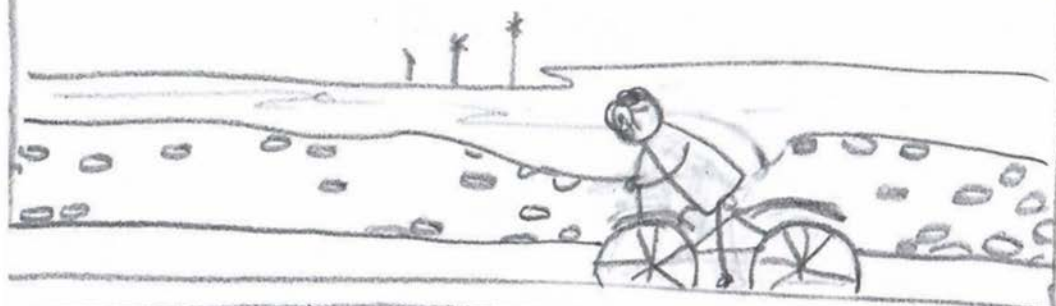
I wish I could grow  
in confidence...



and find a way to  
build a relationship  
with cycling



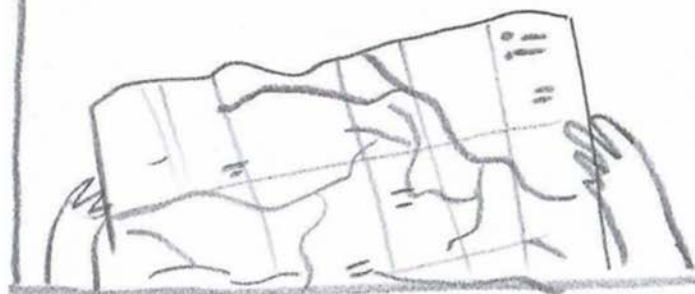
because I want to cycle on summer days across  
the same seapront I run across



I want to cycle to beautiful places and eat  
a picnic



I want to go further than I can just walking  
(I hate public transport as a gender non conforming  
person, and driving is scary + expensive)



I want to become a cyclist and make it my personality.

please stop talking about cycling!

cycling, cycling,  
cycling cycling  
cycle cycli



I want to cycle with my friends and feel just as brave and smart as them.

It's a red light we should stop

Smart!



okay, I'm gonna try.  
I've done  
scariest things  
before ....



2016

FINGERS  
CROSSED



## Benefits of Cycling

### Freedom and Fun

- For me, to cycle is a choice for enjoyment really. The buzz, and that wind in the hair, and freedom.
- It's just a really like joyful freeing thing to just, get on the cycle and go anywhere on your own and it's very liberating.
- In terms of growing up, not knowing that you're trans yet, and being like, 'oh, I just want to go really, really, really far and fast, somewhere, and I don't really know what that means for me yet'. So, I would definitely have that feeling of freedom, going really fast on my bike.
- I like not interacting with people. When I walk in the centre of town I found it very... it's overwhelming on the senses but also kind of mentally, socially a lot of information. I'm always bumping into people that I know or something. Which is kind of nice, but it's just like a lot. Whereas when I'm on the bike, people don't see, they don't recognise you as much, and they wouldn't interact with you in that way, like you're a vehicle. I find it very freeing to be like... It's like mentally quite a relief for me.
- I think how my body is, if I'm in public in a way that's not on a bike, like walking or on buses. It's socially mediated so I'm thinking about 'am I passing?' or, I am thinking about how people might socially engage with me. Whereas on the bike there's no, there's no passing [...] I'm not thinking of this social process that I'm having to be read or interpreted or act in a certain way. I'm just like, I just am on the bike and it's great.
- I've only been cycling since November, but I really enjoy it. I feel like a kid. It feels like a thing that I didn't know that I needed.

- Whenever I'm in a situation where I'm being perceived, all I'm thinking is how my gender is being read, like constantly. I think when that's a constant state of being in public and you forget how exhausting that can be. Even a bus ride to somewhere, that's a lot. I think that adds to why a bike feels very playful and free because you're just you and your bike, and you're going past people so quick that none of them are really taking in anything about you, or you're not thinking about what they're thinking about you, so it makes it feel even more free, aside from being just like fun.

### **Affirmation and Feeling in the Body**

- It makes me like my body because of what it can do and where it can take me. Whereas some of the rest of the time, I've got a normal kind of complex and difficult relationship with my body.
- When I am on public transport or in the world, I do like to cover up as much as possible. I loved wearing a mask in Covid, I still do. It's just really nice to be completely not witnessed. I know when I'm on my bike, my butt looks so good... I have a relationship with my body because I'm like, all these cars that are lining up behind me, they've got a great view. It doesn't feel like a gender butt, it's just feels like an objectively good butt. That feels really nice.
- I think connecting to the body makes a huge difference to me and I don't think I'd been able to think like that until relatively recently. I don't think I could understand it... On the bike in the city, it feels like I'm connecting in a similar way to like lying in a field.

## Autonomy and Independence

**PA5:** You mentioned autonomy and that's definitely a reason I cycle because I'm always running late for stuff and the buses are always late and they're not the most enjoyable experience anyway. But I figure I can always speed up my pedalling to get to appointments, even if I'm sweating profusely, at least I'm there on time.

**PA4:** Yeah, I can rely on what I can do, I can't rely on public transport. I can normally get there faster on a bike, than on public transport.

**PA7:** It's a very fun way to get about but it's also nice like getting from A to B it's just you. You're completely free, there's no one in the personal space, you don't have to interact with anyone which is quite nice, because often if you're going to something, you're going to have some interactions and stuff, and it's nice to just have the, the journey there by yourself, with your thoughts.

**PA6:** Yeah, I really like when I do have annoying cars or annoying people step out into the road or whatever, within a couple of seconds I'm far away from them, where that happened physically, I'm far away from the incident and that just makes it feel like way easier to get over for me.

- Something that's in common for me when starting to cycle and being trans is that both of the things I have decided something and I can make it happen and I'm not relying on other people. I'm not relying on some public transport and I'm not relying on someone's approval of what I'm meant to be and how I am.

## **Barriers to Cycling**

### **Confidence**

#### **To cycle on roads and in traffic**

- I want to cycle more for leisure but I, I'm also quite unconfident with places I don't know, and routes I don't know, and roads I don't know and so I feel like I don't get out of my comfort zone as much.
- I'm just not confident in navigating alongside a car, it makes me feel really anxious. I would like to be able to be a confident cyclist in that way, and I would definitely like to cycle more. So if there's any projects like that, or groups, or where it feels safer to do that, getting confidence would be really good.
- I didn't learn to ride my bike until the pandemic. Before that I could ride a bike, basically I could make it go forwards. But I'd never ridden on roads or anything. So it was only really in the pandemic when there was hardly any traffic when I like felt that I had the confidence to actually ride on the roads because I don't drive either. So I have no idea how roads work and luckily being able to learn at that singular point in history where there wasn't much traffic on the road meant that I could learn in a safer environment. I imagine for other people learning as adults, getting that confidence if you don't drive I can imagine it's very intimidating and difficult.

#### **Angry, impatient and dangerous drivers**

- I think the problem is the car traffic, the vehicle traffic are bullies on the road. We have every right to be on the roads and to use them.

- if there is a bike lane but I need to turn right... I need to come out the bike lane, into the right lane and then do a right turn. I'm in their way for all of 15, 20 seconds, and they lose it, every time. There are certain bits where I just get off and go across the pedestrian crossing with my bike, to get across the road, because it's just not worth pissing a driver off.
- For me in Brighton it feels more like attitudes from drivers are very, very different. At least in Glasgow like, it didn't feel like they were trying to kill me on a daily basis. But here it really does [...] I live in Bevendean, I'd really like to know how to deal with if a car passes really close to me, which they do all the time, because it's just crazy the way people drive there, and I've never experienced it anywhere else.

### **To 'Take the Lane'**

- When I first started riding in the city it took me time to like be like 'no, I deserve to be on this road too, they need to see me'... That's such a barrier if you're just trying to get back into cycling or just started and you have to be really visible but also I'm terrified of these cars. If the paths connected, that might not be necessary.

### **Knowledge of where is safe to go.**

- Is there like a bike map of Brighton with cycling lanes, is there something like that, does that exist?
- And don't ever use Google maps to save you, because they'll put you on things like the A27...

## Not a Proper Cyclist

**PA1:** I sometimes worry it's a bit embarrassing, you know, like, that it's not a proper bike. I'm just commuting, I'm not a proper cyclist. But then it's comparing myself to the Lycra people, the people that clickety clack at the train station and it's not me.

**PA5:** My partner gets so annoyed at the people in Lycra and their clickety clack shoes and I'm like, I used to be one of those but it's...

**PA1:** There maybe some in the room...

**Facilitator:** No judgement here, it's a judgement free space.

**PA5:** But I don't know, those people also cycle in different ways as well, like it's, I think it's quite nice to know there's lots of types, there's no real cycling or proper bike or anything, but yes, I think that sometimes can be a little bit intimidating.

## Cycle Spaces are Cis-Male Dominated

- Suddenly I really worry about how I'm being perceived again, when generally on the bike I don't, and feeling like I have to prove myself to all the cis men and be like, no, I'm just as strong, I can do this, I can do that. Yeah. It, it plays into all of my insecurities.
- I always feel like I've got to psych myself up to use something, to be like, 'hi, I'm trans is it okay? Do I have permission to come to this?' Obviously, I didn't say that, when I went to [cycle workshop] but I feel like that's always something I've got to consider. Especially when it's a slightly more involved activity.

## **Cost**

- I think a lot of the accessibility in terms of cost for cycling, I mean I couldn't for years, because I just couldn't afford to get a bike and all the other bits as well.
- The really basic stuff like the cost of having a bike or buying a bike and to store.
- My bike got destroyed, someone tried to nick it and couldn't so they just trashed it and couldn't afford to replace it or get it fixed, so just scrapped it, went without for years.
- Thinking about like the intersection with disability and if you want to get an adapted bike and having the ability to get grants or ways to bring those costs down... that's like such a massive barrier.

## **Long Covid**

- Over the past year I've had long covid and I'm still figuring out as it's a chronic fatigue thing [...] going for a run is fine, but going for a cycle really tires me out and I think it is all of the decisions. And I think, it definitely takes a lot of energy to navigate the city on a bike, even if I do enjoy it, it's still exhausting. Even to the point of like using gears, like deciding which gear to be in going up a hill and planning ahead.

## **Dysphoria**

- I didn't cycle a huge amount in the days before top surgery because when it was windy and it pulled the top tight, massive dysphoria triggers, like absolutely not dealing with that.

## Cycle to Work Scheme Access

- It's deeply unfair that it tends to be the bigger organisations can offer these massive discounts to their employees, who probably already have good work place benefits as well. And yet, people who work for smaller charties, or ones that are unable to offer it for whatever reason, suddenly have to pay full price.
- My point was just around the cycle to work scheme and the inequalities that trans people face in terms of precarious employment. To access cycle to work, you need a permanent job or a job with a fixed term contract that lasts beyond repaying the bike [...] There'll be a lot of people in precarious employment, zero hour contracts that can't access that. You end up choosing a bike that doesn't necessarily fit them, so then also impacts on health and riding a bike that isn't the right size for you.
- It is also a massive financial risk you are committing with the cycle to work scheme to 12 months paying it back. If you lose your job, so not only just if you decide to leave, if the company decide to push you out, you have to pay it back immediately and you've signed a contract for that.

## Places to Pee

- A massive hurdle to doing the longer trips out for the leisure stuff, is if I need a wee, what do I do. It makes me really anxious and I would then just either deliberately dehydrate myself so I don't need to go or just not go.

## Fractured Infrastructure

- I feel like there's a thing where they put so many great cycling structure things in place, but then they just stop, "Well what do I do now?" Suddenly I'm in four lanes of traffic and I need to get across all of them.
- Connecting the few good paths there are, and thinking overall what someone's route would be from the centre of town to out into the Downs. Is there a dangerous small bit that they could do a small change to make it connected, because I think that limits people when there's those bits where there's this small area of high danger, like a really congested roundabout.
- I think we're living in a messy situation in Brighton & Hove and the UK in terms of how the years have gone by and standards keep changing. I think things are getting better over time and it's going to happen in fits and starts. [...] You only have to go over to the Netherlands and it makes you want to cry when you come back to Britain because it doesn't. It's not a political issue in the Netherlands. They've just rolled it out year on year since the early 1970s across the whole country with complete consistency and that's what cycle groups and individuals are into cycling should be campaigning for. To have comprehensive networks with a kind of consistent use of materials that everyone starts to understand.

## Recommendations for Change and Further Research

### TNBI Bikequity

- TNBI folks are more likely to face precarious employment conditions which can make it difficult to get going as a cyclist such as the cost of a cycle, a lock, and the luxury of somewhere to store it. TNBI folk faced barriers accessing the Cycle to Work Scheme because of fixed-term, zero-hour, and part-time employment.
- Building knowledge is often done through knowing other cyclists. Facilitating space for those with a bit more experience and those starting-out to come together is desired and beneficial in building confidence and connection.
- Building confidence and knowledge can help with understanding you are entitled to get what your body needs, whether that's the right size, shape, saddle, and colour of cycle.
- Low-cost or discounted cycle schemes particularly for those with disabilities and desire and require recumbent, hand or adapted cycles.
- Free TNBI cycle maintenance sessions to build, knowledge, confidence, and connection in an affirming environment. Cycle shops and workshops can give off bike-bro vibes or are perceived to, and there is a need to build-up TNBI confidence and sense of entitlement or belonging to cycle spaces.
- Bikeability schemes to advertise via TNBI organisations and have instructors who understand and help make a safe learning environment.

- Free TNBI starter sessions and group meet-ups. Many participants expressed the joy and desire to connect with other TNBI folk and that this can be difficult. One participant stated: I've never been on a group ride and I want that to be an inclusive space as well. I feel like I've withdrawn from other team sports because of gender rulings that have been made by various governing bodies. So like the idea of there being a queer community cycle group would be something that I would really want.

## **Education for Cultural Change**

- It is not enough to educate cyclists on their rights and need to combat the predominant violence enacted by motorists. As one participant stated, "It's important for cyclists to have to know their rights and be safe on the road, but surely we should also be looking at the ones who have more power on the road too." A preventative approach to cyclist safety is needed as interventions or education following an accident is too late.
- To improve motorists understanding of cyclists and other road users.
  - Specific inclusion of cyclists rights and safety in driving tests.
  - Specific training for motorists causing cycle collisions.
  - Better signage and marking for one-way contraflow cycle lanes e.g. Church Street and North Laine area.
  - Increase care and empathy for cyclists.

## **Prefiguring the Future: Build it and they will cycle.**

- Consistent and long-term investment in cycle infrastructure. The fractured and splintered infrastructure is a result of being beholden to changing political desires and government funding.
- Modal shift away from the car
  - Create actual diversity of affordable travel choices.
  - Make public transport cheaper and more efficient.
- Towards the cycle city
  - Easily accessible pump and tool stations for those routine and emergency situations.
  - Promote everyday cycling – wear what YOU want.
  - Cycle paths that are calming and connect with nature by providing easy lines of escape from the city.
  - Create continuity between the existing cycle infrastructure and materials used.

## **Further Research:**

- QTIBIPoC-led research on mobility.
- Comparative TNBI active travel and cycling research to understand the differences between cities cycling cultures and wider safety of TNBI communities.
- Action research on cycling and barriers to cycling for working class, low income, and those who are dependent on their cycle or low-cost transport for mobility.

Please reference this zine if using it to inform future research or policy. Please don't reproduce it without permission. It is not to be sold. If you would like to get in touch about the project, contact Matt at [mcsmithresearch@gmail.com](mailto:mcsmithresearch@gmail.com)

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Elly Blue, *Taking the Lane #14 Bikequity: Money, Class and Bicycling*  
Elly Blue and April Streeter (eds), *Our Bodies, Our Bikes*  
Elly Blue and Lydia Rogue, *Taking the Lane #15 True Trans Bike Rebel*  
Tiffany F. Lam, *Mind the Cycling Gender Gap*  
Tiffany F. Lam (ed), *Mind the Cycling Gender Gap #2 Freedom to Ride*  
Lea Cooper and Abi Melton, *Gears for Queers*  
*Other zines to check out: Cyclista, Taking the Lane, Raw Vulva, Hard  
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