



**Advocate:** Catherine McEvoy

**Age:** 42

**Province:** Ulster

**Club:** Apollo Cycling Club

**Discipline:** Leisure/Road Cycling

**What age did you get involved?** 41

**Why did you start cycling?** To improve my level of fitness.

**What has been your involvement in cycling, your story?** I first started cycling in 2015 through a local Sofa to Saddle programme, however with a 6 month old baby at home, I found the time commitment required to get me up to the necessary fitness levels was too much and I withdrew from the programme. Having purchased a new road bike via the Bike to Work Scheme, in 2017 I decided it was time to try again and once more signed up for my local Sofa to Saddle programme, only to discover that baby number 2 was on the way! Undefeated, in 2019 I saw an advert for a local Women on Wheels programme and decided to give cycling another go! It was third time lucky for me and I completed the programme and “graduated” via a final sportive with 4 other ladies who started the programme alongside me. I had well and truly got the cycling bug and completed a number of other sportives during the course of 2019, cycled 300 miles during September 2019 while raising money for Cancer Research UK and subsequently undertook my Ride Leader Training.

**Do you have a quote that you live by or inspires you?** Not really a quote, but I always remember being told “the hills are only in your head.” It is something I often think about as I’m pedalling like crazy and the top of the hill still seems to be a million miles away! On a wider level it is probably something that could also be applied to many situations in life.

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**What is your favourite thing about cycling?** Having the opportunity to jump onto the bike after a busy day at work or home and being able to clear your head while getting a bit of exercise thrown in as an extra bonus. As predictable as it sounds, I have also met some great people via cycling and it is lovely to get a catch up with them and a bit of craic both while cycling or over a mid-cycle cuppa and a bun!



**What have been your cycling highlights?** Completing the Carlingford Loop Sportive in October 2019 with a group from Apollo. It was a beautiful day weather wise, the scenery was great and I was able to keep up with other club members!

**How do you feel cycling has benefitted you?** My fitness and energy levels have improved, I have met new people and I feel a sense of achievement in actually having completed the WOW programme; in joining my local club and in having been able to participate in wider club runs.

**What would you say to other females who may be interested in cycling?** Give it a go, you may well surprise yourself! You don't have to be super fit to get involved in cycling but by giving some commitment to getting out on the bike, you will reap multiple rewards in terms of both your physical and mental health.



**How do you feel about becoming a Bike Like Me Advocate?** I feel fortunate to be selected to be a Bike Like Me Advocate, to be given the opportunity to share my story and hopefully thereby to encourage other females to get involved in cycling.

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'To promote cycling as an accessible and enjoyable pursuit, where every cyclist may participate and develop to their full potential'

