EZoomers a zine for NZ ebike enthusiasts

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Staying On Two Wheels, by Jace Hobbs

Note. This article by Jace was published in the Greypower National Magazine and is reprinted here.

One of the saddest things about getting older is having to give up activities or lifestyle favorites that we deeply enjoy. While some of this accommodation is inevitable, many of our activities can be kept with adjustment to the way we do them. Perhaps the most important factor in being able to continue doing something is to never stop doing it.

The old adage 'use it or lose it' comes to mind.

Perhaps this is easier said than done when it comes to cycling. Many of us have spent a life on two wheels and with the onset of middle age, begin to wonder if we are doing something that we should refrain from. Safety is a concern and the hills can be troublesome in a way that they never were before.

For most of us, the answer is to continue cycling and preserve, if we can, the improved mobility and health benefits that come with this delightful exercise. Our balance is something to practice and improve; our stamina something to protect and nurture. Maintaining an active lifestyle is identified with so many physical and psychological benefits that we must weigh all the known gains against the risk of falling over on the bike.

For some, the locale that they live in has an impediment like a hill or windy bit that makes them think twice about cycling. For many, the last straw that stops them is not being able to start their bike on an uphill grade anymore, and the wobbling and instability is both unnerving and embarrassing.

One technological improvement for this kind of elderly rider is the electric bike. While not just for the old, e-bikes can game-change all the things that frustrate people about cycling while extending the range and utility in a most pleasant way. Starting e-bikes on hills is rather easy as it's like having Lance Armstrong riding tandem with you. The power assisted bikes are legal on the bikepaths, can be ridden right to the door of your destination, and are super cheap to operate. Would they solve your transportation needs?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

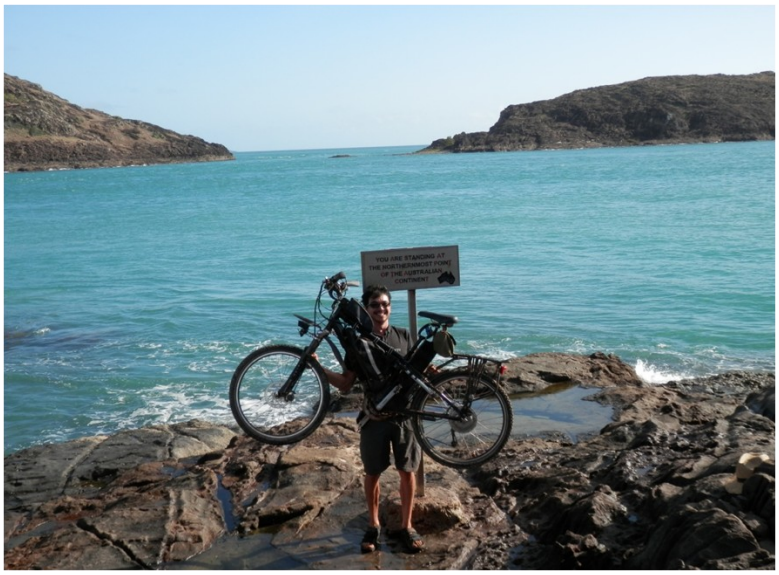
Did you know?

The EU had an amazing uptake of electric bikes last year, selling over 700,000 e-bikes and reducing car travel by a significant margin. Will NZ follow suit?

Did you know?

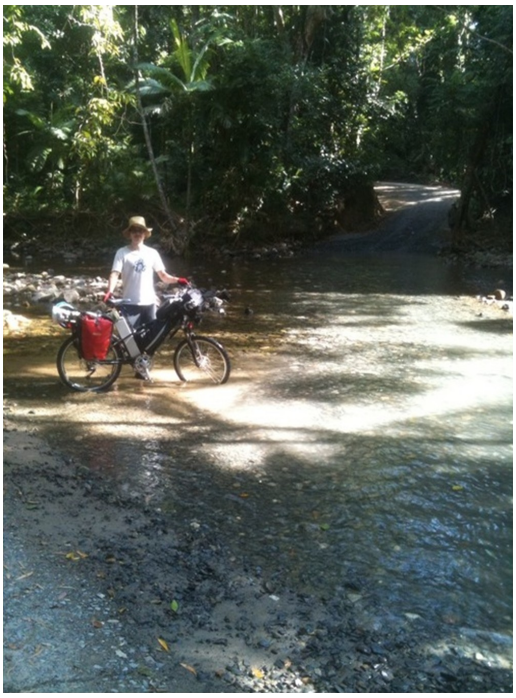
The 300 watt e-bike limit in NZ does not mean that your bike cannot exceed this wattage. On hills and acceleration, your e-bike will draw far more wattage; on the flats far less. It's the average wattage that is the key component of this and using them over varied terrain will determine the average wattage. The wattage will also be determined by the maximum capacity of the controller. More powerful motors and controllers must be integrated intelligently to make a reliable e-bike.

The Great Aussie E-bike Trek

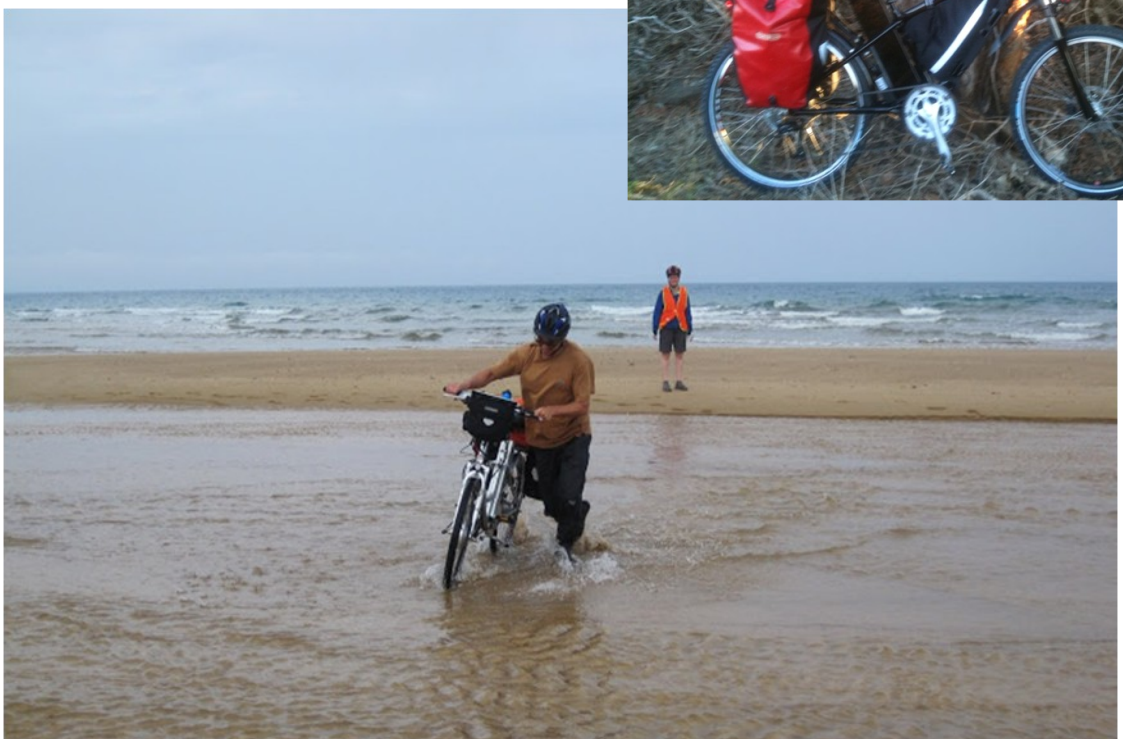


Mauice Wells has biked 4400km mostly off-road on a six week tour of the Australian coast. He did this on the new eZee Forza, in part to demonstrate the toughness and durability of this new model from eZee. For a bit more than half of the journey he was joined by two other riders on eZee Sprints.

Remarkably, they had no mechanical issues with the bikes whatsoever, even the puncture resistant tyres came thru without a flat. This extreme endurance ride is written up in an interview with Maurice that is published on our website at www.electricbikehub.co.nz . He reports that this was a trek that an average bike rider could do with the help of the Forza pedal-assist and that he came out of it in good shape but not physically drained from the exertion.



If you would like to make up a group of NZ riders tackling a slightly shorter Aussie route, be in touch with Jace about a group adventure.



The eZee in NZ page

Steepest Street Climb

Browns Avanti-plus sent one of its employees out on the eZee Street to climb Baldwin Street, and indeed he did. That puts a spin on those who think e-bikes can't climb. Baldwin, of course, is the steepest street in the Southern Hemisphere, so riding up that on an unmodified bike is a bit of a bragging fact. We will do this again soon with cameras rolling. I will take the new Forza up that grade as well.

Fleet uptake of eZee bikes

The eZee rollout in NZ has made some big strides lately, and I thought I would crow a little about them. We now have fledgling bike fleets working for Auckland Council, Hamilton Council, Palmerston North Council, New Plymouth Council, Nelson City Council, plus industry fleets and hundreds of personal riders. New Plymouth has been at the vanguard of electric bike use and they formerly had another brand. They now have changed and are replacing those with new eZee models. We have won the quality and features competition on each bid we have entered, despite being a little more expensive. I think it comes down to value. eZee delivers that.

Upcoming Shows and Festivals

It's looking to be an expanding season for Electric Bike Hub e-bike representation and the promotion of e-bikes in general in New Zealand.

We have been chosen once again to put our display in Womad, and are excited by that event. We are presenting at the NZ Smart Energy Expo, at the Auckland Sustainable City Showcase (in the Cloud) at Ecofest, motor home rallies, Press events and of course our business displays at the many shops that carry our bikes.

Electric Bike Hub is expanding all the time, with improved warehouse space, new diagnostic test equipment, and training of the tech agents in various parts of the country.

We have several new shops that carry our bikes, new Councils that are running eZees in their fleets, and industry uptake on the eZee models that best suit them.

We are stocking the electric cargo bikes, and are expecting their popularity will soar, along the lines of their popularity in other EU and North American countries.

Where are the eZee products made?

The eZee factory uses so many products from around the world that it is a difficult question to answer. The tyres are made by a German company in Indonesia. The spokes are from Scandvik in Sweden, the rims are Weinman from Germany. The gearing and components are Japanese. The forks are Italian, and the controllers, motors and electronics are designed and quality controlled in Canada and produced in the eZee factory in Shanghai. The whole bike is finally assembled and tested in our eZee factory in Shanghai. I guess you could say that eZee's bikes are made where they make each part the best. It's a world encompassing production of a world class e-bike.

Perhaps like many products today, a product has many roots in many countries and come all together to be enjoyed by the end user.

eZoomers NZ
News and views
on electric bikes

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Please pass this newsletter on to anyone who would like to get it.
To include or exclude yourself from the next issue, just email us with your wish.

Your next bike could be an e-bike

We encourage submissions about Ebikes and issues surrounding Ebikes for publication in subsequent issues of EZoomers. Simply drop an email to Jace Hobbs at the return address and your ideas or article may well find its way to the many who want opinion and information about Ebikes in NZ.

Left Hand Throttles and Front Wheel Drive

The Case For The Left Hand Throttle

eZee is producing its NZ Ebikes with a special left hand throttle at the request of Electric Bike Hub. While the throttle is only necessary when zooming off from starts, its placement on the left has several advantages in countries that drive on the left. Hand signals to other drivers need to be with the right hand, and shifting of the internal gearing is also a right hand operation. Leaving the left hand to do very little means the rider could be overtaxing the use of the right hand. A stock of right hand throttles will be kept to supply those customers who want it the other way around. No-one has requested this so far, so we think the decision to go with the sensible left hand throttle has been right on for NZ.

Front Wheel Drive on a Bike, What's the Reason for That?

Many people ask "Why front wheel drive makes sense one Ebikes? and "What is the operational difference with rear wheel drive? For most people the answer is 'you wont know the difference.' eZee uses front wheel drive in almost all models, because it allows the brilliant internal Shimano Nexus 7 or 8 gears shifting in the rear wheel.

Rear wheel drive bikes have the motor where this internal gearing would be and must have external derailleur's. Derailleurs collect grit and service issues result.

Doing away with the derailleur is the single biggest reliability option on bikes today, and eZee offers that and a few other low maintenance component additions that cost more but enhance your enjoyment and remove you from the needs of constant bike servicing. Our Council customers love the ease of use and maintenance of the Nexus gearing.

Up very steep shingle roads, you will want to lean forward to keep weight on the front drive wheel. This is the natural motion of the body when you are needing to give the pedals as much assist as possible. It works quite well and steering is very positive.

Rear wheel drive e-bikes, like our Forza, need back wheel weight while pedaling up shingle slopes and requires sitting up and not standing on the pedals.

For all the benefits that front wheel drive offers, discriminating buyers will pick it.