

WHEN Simon Sandi, 55, was growing up in the 1970s, cycling was the most natural thing in the world.

From Form One to Five, he cycled to school, which was 5km away from his home in Kampung Seratau, Siburan (about 25km south of Kuching).

"It was simply the most convenient choice," he says. "My late father cycled to work in Kuching everyday back in the 1950s and 60s, until he bought himself a Vespa motorbike in the 1970s. He was the man who inspired me to cycle."

Simon cycled to attend lectures while studying at UPM, Serdang and he has been cycling to the office since he started working in 1984. His different work locations have been 9, 25 and 18km from his home.

"The first two locations were favourable to cycling in terms of bike parking and security, changing rooms, and understanding bosses," he notes.

"But my present work place is less conducive. They restrict parking for my bicycle, maybe because no one else

Sarawak cycling

has been cycling to work."

"Even when I took my folded-up bike into the lift with me, the security personnel tried to stop me. I don't see the rationale behind it. And there is no changing room at my office floor!"

As for obstacles, Simon says, "As usual, there will always be inconsiderate drivers who won't give space or slow down when overtaking. Bike lanes are still nonexistent in Kuching City. Our roads were never designed for 2-wheeled vehicles it seems."

Simon, who is married with three grown kids, also runs short errands on his bike around his home. With his regular cycling, this 55 year-old is as fit as a fiddle, and he has cycled the "Borneo tip to tip" route from Sarawak to Sabah.

"But I don't consider myself a sports cyclist, as I never race. Cycling as commuting has not caught on here in Sarawak. People will cite the weather, traffic, road conditions, inconvenience, safety, absence of parking and so forth, as reasons for not cycling to work.

"So apart from the odd *apeks* who still ride their old steel-framed bikes around Kuching, the only people who cycle to work are the expats, which you see in Miri especially.

"And of course a few 'weird' guys like me. Recently, a close riding friend gave me a new title, SCOM or 'stupid crazy old man'. He was just joking, I hope!"

■ *Simon Sandi's Facebook cycling group is Slow Loris WilWil.*

A full car park is not a problem for Simon Sandi when he cycles to work!



PARKING
FULL

PERHA
BERHENTI
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KESELAM