



BANBURY STAR
— CYCLISTS' CLUB —

GROUP RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE BOOKLET

February 2018

WELCOME TO BANBURY STAR CYCLISTS' CLUB

Banbury Star CC was formed in 1891 and is one of the UK's oldest cycling clubs. In recent years we have started to attract more members and enjoyed particularly rapid expansion in 2017 with record numbers of riders turning up for our weekend rides. This growth reflects the overall increase in the popularity of recreational cycling in the UK, the catalyst for which can be traced back to our world-beating success on the velodrome and in Grand Tours.

Whilst we may organise many cycling-related events, the club ride will always be the bedrock of Banbury Star CC, it's a sociable activity for members of any ability with our qualified leaders taking groups out into the beautiful Cotswold countryside which offers terrain that can test the most competent of cyclists.

Your safety is of paramount importance to us and riding in a group can be radically different to when riding alone. It offers greater benefits in terms of skill and bike handling learning, uses less energy and increases the safety of the group when on some of our busier roads. It's essential for everyone in the group to understand its dynamics, where they fit in, their responsibilities to themselves and the rest of the bunch and this guide has been put together to complement practical road-based learning sessions that the club will conduct.

Please read, understand and practise the disciplines and etiquette described. If in any doubt, ask a ride leader or committee member who will be more than happy to help you.

Thank you.

Paul Dean
President
Banbury Star CC



CONTENTS

Welcome to Banbury Star CC	2
Sharing the Road	5
Riding Tips on Group Etiquette	6
New to the Group?	7
The Basics	7
Warnings and Hand Signals	9
Cornering Skills	10
Riding in the Group	12
Common Reasons for Accidents	16
How to Survive Road Hazards.....	17
Banbury Star Ride Rules, Protocol and Small Print	20

Thank you to Sydney CC as the inspiration for this booklet

Disclaimer
This Banbury Star CC Group Riding Etiquette booklet is one of a number of initiatives undertaken by the BSCC Committee in an effort to promote and encourage safety during Club events and training rides.

Please be aware that the sport of cycling always contains an inherent element of risk. Despite these initiatives, the safety of the individuals is their own responsibility. The club and its Committee takes all care, but does not accept responsibility for the safety of its events and training rides. By joining Banbury Star and taking part in a club ride or event you automatically agree to the ride rules, protocol and small print that are published on the website:

<http://banburystar.co.uk/banbury-star-cc-ride-rules-protocol-small-print/>

The Club and its members rely on you to READ, UNDERSTAND and COMPLY with the acceptable code of conduct detailed in this booklet, for your safety, and the safety of other members.



SHARING THE ROAD

Practising courtesies and our etiquette within the group is important; furthermore, responsible, non-aggressive cycling in the bunch is important to gain mutual respect and harmony on our roads. To improve safety and consideration, when sharing Banbury's busy roads, members on club rides are asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

Obey the Highway Code and Law at all times, particularly traffic lights

Respect other road users, be courteous and anticipate mistakes (that we can all make).

Be predictable and always indicate your intentions, use hand signals from the front of the bunch to the tail.

Ride two abreast if indicated by the Ride Leader but be courteous if the road narrows changing to single file when necessary and when the bunch is small.

At traffic lights and junctions, stay in position behind queued vehicles rather than rolling up the side of stopped traffic.

Wear a helmet at all times.

Use lights when riding in low light conditions.

BANBURY STAR
— CYCLISTS' CLUB —

RIDING TIPS ON GROUP ETIQUETTE

WHY RIDE WITH A GROUP?

Some do it to motivate themselves to get up and train, others do it for safety in numbers on the road or simply for social reasons. Many friendships have been forged while spinning away the miles. Some view bunch riding as a personal challenge: if only I can keep up with them going up this hill then I know I've really made it.

SO HOW DO YOU JOIN A GROUP?

If you join on the road, keep on the back unless you have permission to move towards the front. Some bunches are groups of cyclists who are paying a coach and others are not keen to ride with a cyclist that they do not know.

Don't join a group unless they show some kind of support. Some will support slow riders by waiting at the top of long hills or having some kind of recognized short cut on the course. Others support faster riders by having some fast sections for them that don't break up the group too much.

There should also be some support for those suffering punctures or mechanical breakdowns when either the whole group stops or one or two people stop and help. Most groups ride two abreast as it is safest to take up one lane of the road.

NEW TO THE GROUP?

1. Take time to practise your bike and group skills; attend scheduled skills sessions.
2. Take corrections with a smile. Good group skills improve your safety, that's worth a smile!
3. Be courteous to other road users, many are protected by steel.
4. Get help from experienced riders, or a properly trained cycling coach.
5. Ride towards the back of the group.
6. Introduce yourself to the Ride Leader before the ride.
7. Be familiar with the published Ride rules, protocol and small print that you agreed to when joining the club.
8. Listen to your Ride Leader and obey their instructions.

THE BASICS

- Be on time
- Maintain your bike in good order
- Carry enough food, water and spares
- Wear the correct clothing for the weather conditions
- Learn to call and signal all hazards
- Stay alert, and chat only when it's safe
- Pass the Calls up and down the group

ACCELERATING

Accelerating away from lights and across lanes should be done in a more dignified manner than when you are on your own, so that other cyclists are not dropped.

BRAKING

Avoid braking as much as possible and give warning beforehand. When stopping for lights or junctions, do so gently without harshly applying the brakes. The same goes for stopping pedalling suddenly, this can cause an accident.

CORNERING

Give your partner plenty of room in the corner and keep level with them. Corner at a safe speed so that everyone behind can keep up and hold your wheel. If you find that you are continually 'losing wheels' then it is time to do some cornering practice.
(See next article on Cornering)

DOWNHILL

If you are at the front of the bunch, keep pedalling down gentle gradients. If you don't everyone else will be putting on their brakes.

HALF WHEELING

Half wheeling is one rider always riding in front of his partner, which then puts the whole bunch out. It is essential that you keep level with your partner if at the front: keep your handlebars level with the handlebars of the rider next to you, rather than your front wheel level with theirs.

SITTING ON

Keep reasonably close to the cyclist in front of you and again keep level with your partner. If too much of a gap is left the bunch is always playing 'catch up'. Keep your head and eyes up. Don't watch the gap between bikes. Scanning ahead will give you early warning of changes.

UPHILL

In some groups everyone splits up and goes up at their own pace while other groups try and stay together. If that is the case and you feel like dropping off, pull off quickly so that others don't get caught behind you. When climbing a hill and deciding to get out of the saddle do it in one continuous flowing movement. Otherwise the wheel slows momentarily and can hit the wheel of the cyclist behind, causing a fall.

WARNINGS AND HAND SIGNALS

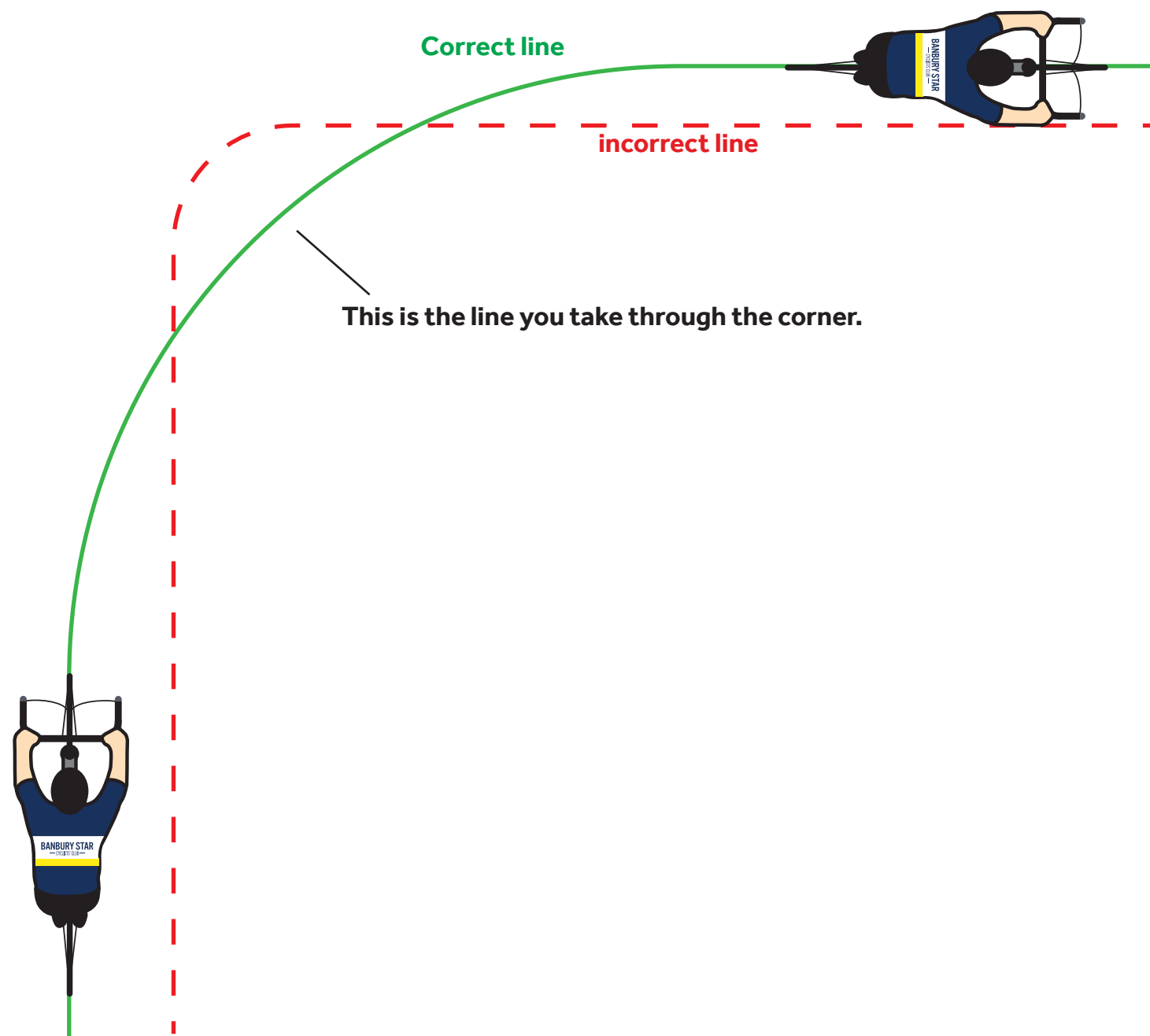
Group riding means all members of the bunch need to make calls. Calls need to be passed by all riders through the group, so that a call from the back makes it to the front etc.

Below is the list of 'Critical calls' which are the standard for BSCC and no other variation should be used on a BSCC ride.

The Call	Hand Signal	Meaning
n/a	One arm straight up in the air	Attention getter by the Ride Leader prior to another call/signal
'wait'		It is not safe to proceed, e.g. at a junction
'single'	One finger extended on one arm in the air	The group needs to change from two abreast to single file
'double'	Two fingers extended on one arm in the air	The group needs to change from single file to two abreast
'stopping'		When the group needs to come to a stop
'slowing'		When the group needs to reduce speed
'clear' or 'clear left/right'		It is safe for the group to carry on rolling
'hole'	Point towards the hole	A dangerous pothole or other sunken hazard has been spotted by the front rider and passed through the group by ALL riders
'debris'	Point towards the obstruction	A dangerous obstruction has been spotted by the front rider and passed through the group by ALL riders
n/a	Left arm bent and placed behind back	The group is approaching an object (e.g. a parked car) and the line needs to be changed to avoid
'door'		Passing a parked car with an occupant who may open their door into the group
'car up'		A car is approaching the group from behind
'car down'		A car is approaching the group from in front
'horse'		A horse and rider are in front, the group must slow to a fast walking pace
'ease up'		Used when a rider or number of riders have been dropped from the group. The front riders reduce speed to allow those dropped to regroup.
'mechanical'		A rider has experienced a problem requiring the group to stop
'gravel'		A patch of gravel has been spotted by the front rider and passed through the group by all riders

CORNERING SKILLS

Cornering is not just an important skill for racing cyclists who want to survive criteriums, when performed correctly it allows you to safely carry the speed through the bend without risking the safety of yourself or other riders.



A few important points to keep in mind about cornering:

LINE

This is the line you take through the corner. (See diagram left). You need to flatten the line as much as possible. This will depend on how much space there is to manoeuvre. In most cases there will be a car's width. It is always important to visualise the line that you will take as an imaginary line on the road. If you suddenly see a pothole or a slippery manhole readjust your line. Do not look at the pothole!

BRAKING

The next point to remember is braking. Never brake in a corner as you risk losing control of your traction. Brake before a corner. Get into the habit of being at the correct speed before you reach the corner.

EXITING

Exiting the corner is the third point. Keep your line in mind as your bike returns to upright. To maintain your general average speed, pedal straight away when there's no risk of the inside pedal hitting the ground.

BODY POSITION

The lower your centre of gravity, the better you can corner. In other words: be on the drops, drop your body down and back over the rear wheel. Lean into the corner and keep the inside pedal up. Keep your weight on the outside pedal.

ROAD SURFACE

Oil, gravel, rain and ice on the road on the corner will influence your cornering. Always scan the road and make quick decisions for the prevailing conditions. Be prepared to change your line at the last minute. If you do not know the road, then do not ride the corners to your limit. Knowing the corners well will enable you to push it.



RIDING IN THE GROUP

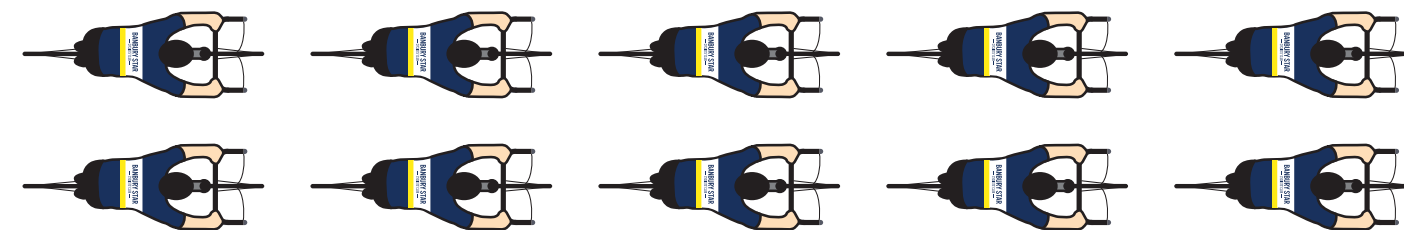
The only way you can learn bike skills and group skills is to practice, but without basic knowledge of the rules and responsibilities involved, practice alone will get you nowhere. Here is a more complete list of the Do's and Don'ts of Bunch Riding.

1) FORMATION - the group is one vehicle

Riders should pair off in 2 by 2 formation. You should not sit directly on the wheel of the rider in front. Try to maintain about a 30cm distance off the rear tyre and ride slightly off to the side of the rider in front. Newer riders may need to leave a larger gap, up to one and a half wheels behind.

The reason you offset slightly from the wheel in front is for better vision down the line and to allow more time to react to problems. If single file is called to allow a car or truck to pass, the rider on the left slots in behind his partner on the right.

Use one whole lane and ride side by side, even with your partner, slightly offset by a tyre width off the wheel in front.



Single file – may be called to allow other vehicles to pass the bunch.



2) SITTING ON THE WHEEL

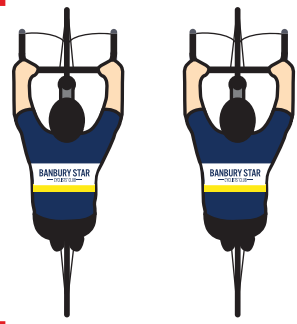
You should focus on the rider in front, and scan ahead. By focusing on the person you will be more aware of what is happening in the bunch. It won't take you long to judge the distance between you and the rider in front.

3) POSITION ON THE ROAD

Cyclists have clearly defined rights that allow riders to occupy a full lane, ride in pair formation and have the same responsibilities as motorists.

It is dangerous to ride to the far left of a lane. This exposes you to gutter debris, drain covers and there's a greater danger from cars trying to squeeze past. A car must give you a 1.5m gap when passing. When possible give parked cars with or without an occupant a one metre clearance. Ride 0.75m out from the gutter to avoid hazards, riding too close to the gutter also can create problems for riders.

THE LEAD RIDERS



4) THE GROUP

THE LEAD RIDERS

The two riders on the front of the group have a huge responsibility. They must set the pace, call all road obstacles and warn the group of any traffic changes.

When approaching a set of traffic lights or a junction the front riders have sole responsibility in making the call to either slow, stop or continue if clear. Remember that the group is one vehicle so if the bunch is committed to roll, then don't make decisions in the middle of the bunch to suddenly stop unless it's for safety reasons. This will otherwise cause heavy braking towards the back of the bunch.

It is better to be more cautious than gung ho!

All calls should be relayed down the line.

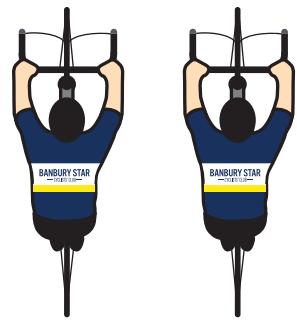
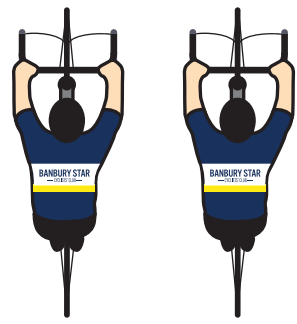
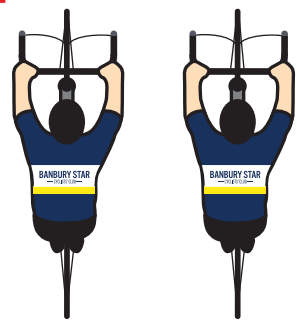
INSIDE THE GROUP

Maintain your separation far enough from the rider in front to avoid any risk of touching wheels (an almost certain crash for the rear rider who touches if it happens) but stay close enough to stay in the wind shadow of the rider in front - less than half a wheel diameter separation for experienced riders, up to 1.5 wheel diameters for newer, less confident riders.

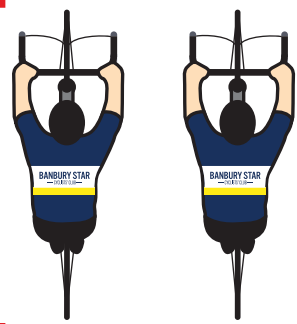
Watch the rider in front – not just their back wheel – it's easier to maintain your separation that way and there is valuable knowledge for you to be learned from those in front of you.

Warn those behind (and in front) of hazards coming their way. ALWAYS point to and/or describe shortly (but loudly) holes, broken glass, or anything likely to endanger those behind you – they may not be able to see the danger and at pack speeds you come on them quickly. Typical calls are hole (left/centre/right); glass, car (up/down). Once warned those behind need to watch for the item called and look for the path that clears the problem – Do not look at the problem or you will travel there!

INSIDE THE GROUP



THE BACK MARKERS/ RIDE LEADER



THE BACK MARKERS

The riders on the back also have a big responsibility, particularly the rider on the right hand (outside) side. This person must call the bunch across lanes or warn of trucks, cars etc that are approaching when on narrow and/or single lane roads. The rider on the outside rear must use and maintain distinct hand signals when the group is turning until the manoeuvre is completed.

On a narrow single lane road the last rider must warn of cars behind. A call of 'car up' is a simple call to understand.

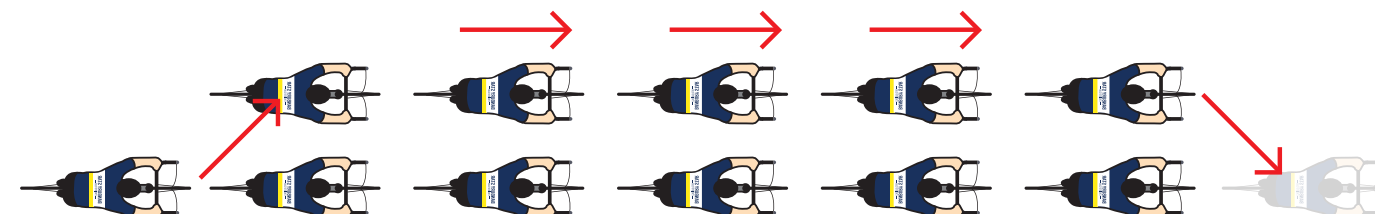
6 ROLLING OVER (ROTATING)

The lead riders should not attempt to stay on the front for too long; three miles is plenty and rotating the lead gives everyone a chance to go to the front. If you feel that you are not fit enough or strong enough to do a turn, go to the front, advise your partner and both immediately roll off. Do not suddenly pull out of the line prior to getting to the front - this only leaves gaps.

The rotate/roll-over procedure is simple. BSCC uses the "chaingang" method, where every rider in the bunch moves position, similar to a slow paceline. The riders on the left nearest the kerb are moving slightly faster than the line on the right, the front rider on the left moves ahead slightly, and moves to the right line in front of his previous team mate. The rider who was behind him on the left side moves forward to take the lead position on the left side. At the rear of the bunch, the rider on the right moves across to the left side of the bunch.

It's important that riders joining the right hand line start to soft pedal to gently reduce their speed. The new rider at the front on the left line must not pick up speed and surge through, maintain a constant speed to prevent gaps from forming.

Riders in the right hand line must stay on the wheel of the rider in front and must not stop pedalling.



7 AVOIDING HAZARDS, RUBBISH, CAR DOORS

If you are following the wheel properly and the riders in front have identified an obstacle and given advance warning, then nasty incidents should be avoided. Always pass warning calls down the bunch. Wherever possible ride one metre clear of parked cars and the gutter. This stops motorists pushing past and also avoids most of the glass and rubbish on the side of the road.

COMMON REASONS FOR ACCIDENTS

THE PROBLEM

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

Lapse in concentration	To help you stay alert at all times when riding in a bunch, carry enough food and liquids so you don't get hungry or dehydrated
Lack of bike control	Don't freewheel if you are forced onto grass or gravel, keep pedalling to keep control of your bike. Brake when you have control of your bike.
Lack of proper communication	Talk if you must, but watch what is happening within the group up ahead of you. Listen for calls and always pass them down the line.
Lack of proper bike and equipment maintenance	Pre-ride M check, learn to service and prepare your bike
Choking the handlebars leading to poor control	Learn to ride your bike without your hands. Steering with your hips rather than choking your handlebars will give you better control.
Rolling back into the riders behind as you get out of the saddle up an incline	Keep pedalling as you get out of the saddle. Making sure you are at the top of the pedal stroke and keep the pressure on the pedal.
Sudden panic braking in the middle of the bunch	To slow without braking, sit up to increase wind resistance, pedal softer or pull slightly out of the line. If you must slow down yell, slowing loudly to warn others.

HOW TO SURVIVE ROAD HAZARDS

Cycling is a unique sport because its arena is the open road. That's the same place frequented by traffic, potholes, dogs and absent minded pedestrians. But sometimes we're our own worst enemy. Inattention and poor technique can put us on the pavement as fast as any hazard. Use these tips and you'll be less likely to take a tumble.

Always ride with your head up. While cruising along, it's tempting to stare at the whirling pattern of the front spokes or fixate on your bike computer's numbers. A momentary downward glance that lasts just a second too long can mean riding into a problem that could easily have been avoided.

Focus. The smooth and rhythmic motion of pedalling can have a hypnotic effect. Daydreaming cyclists have crashed into the back of parked cars, wandered far into the traffic lane or blithely ridden off the road. Don't let yourself be separated from the outside world by the vivid canvases created by your imagination. Keep your head in the game.

Keep your bike in top mechanical condition. Repair or replace faulty parts sooner rather than later. It's a loser's game to milk "just one more ride" out of worn brake pads, a frayed cable, or tires with a threadbare tread or bulging side wall. Your first line of defence against the challenges of the real world is a bike with all parts in good working order.

PUNCTURES

It's every rider's fate to flat. But it's relatively easy to limit the frequency. Choose your line with care. The best way to avoid punctures is also the easiest: Steer around broken glass,

road rubble and potholes. Use tires with a Kevlar belt under the tread. This does a good job of stopping nasty things from penetrating. Inspect the tread after every ride for embedded debris. Remember, most punctures are caused by something sticking to the tread and working through during numerous wheel revolutions. Replace tires before they become so thin that they're virtually defenceless against pointy things.

Check the inflation pressure before every ride as tubes are slightly porous and may lose several pounds of pressure each day. Soft tires slow you down, corner poorly, wear fast, and don't protect your rims against metal-bending impacts

POTHOLES

Hitting potholes can bend your rims beyond repair. If the chasm is deep enough, it will send you hurtling over the handlebar when you bury the front wheel and the bike suddenly stops.



Plan your line well in advance to avoid them. Don't expect the road to be in the same condition every day. Potholes have a habit of sprouting up out of nowhere, especially in the winter and early spring due to the daily freeze/thaw cycle. Treat potholes like glass. Ride around them, first checking behind for traffic. Be mindful of riding partners when you change your line. Newly minted potholes present a



double hazard—the chasm itself, and the chunks of shattered pavement around it. If the pothole doesn't bend your wheel, the sharp bits of rubble might puncture your tire. Give these highway craters a wide berth. Jump your bike over a pothole, if you have the skill and are unable to ride around it because of traffic or adjacent riders. Learn this move on a grassy field. Level your pedals, crouch off the saddle, then spring up and lift with your feet and hands. Start by jumping over a line on the ground, then graduate to higher but forgiving objects such as a rolled-up towel or a shoebox

RAILWAY TRACKS

Unlike most dangers, tracks can't be ridden around. You can suffer an instant crash if your tires slip on the shiny steel rails. Ride with extreme caution and follow these safety tips.

Slow down! Even if you don't crash you could get a pinch flat. This happens when you ride into something abrupt, like a rail, and it pinches the tube between the tire and rim, slicing two little holes in the tube. Rise slightly off the saddle with equal weight on your hands and feet. Let the bike chatter beneath you. Use your flexed arms and legs as shock absorbers. Cross tracks at a right angle. If the rails are diagonal to the road and you cross them at an angle, your front wheel can be twisted out from under you. A perpendicular passage is essential in the rain. Wet metal tracks are incredibly slippery. The slightest imbalance or abrupt move can send you sprawling.

Jump tracks if you have the pace and skill. Racers who need to cross tracks at maximum speed will jump them, using the same technique that works for potholes, but with more speed and lift because they must clear two rails. Coming down too early means the rear wheel will hit the second rail, guaranteeing a ruined rim or a pinch flat. In most cases, jumping isn't worth the danger. It's better to slow down, square up, and creep across.

ADDITIONAL SLICK SPOTS

PAINTED LINES

These can be slippery, especially the wide markings for pedestrian crossings. The paint fills in the asphalt's texture, producing a surface that's uncertain when dry and deadly when wet. The danger is worse when the paint is new.

DRY OIL SLICKS

These may be nearly invisible, but you can spot them as darker streaks on a grey pavement. Be real careful in corners. You aren't safe if you ride through oil on the straights. The greased tread might slip in a corner just ahead.

WET OIL SLICKS

If it rains, a small oily patch can grow until it covers the whole lane. Be on the lookout for the tell-tale multi-coloured water. There's no pot of gold at the end of this rainbow, only a black-and-blue meeting with the pavement.

WET METAL

If it's been raining and you come across anything metal in the road (manhole cover,

road-repair plate), it's as treacherous as riding on ice. Cross it with the bike absolutely upright. Even a slight lean can cause the wheels to slip.

WET LEAVES

Be very careful in the autumn. Even if the road is dry, there can be moisture trapped between leaves littering the road. When you see leaves in a corner, slow down and round the bend with your bike upright, not angled.

SEWER GRATES

Some old ones have bars that run parallel to the street and are wide enough to let a bike wheel fall through. Many councils have replaced such grates with bicycle-friendly versions, but it always pays to be prudent.

MUD

The bane of our lives and the most likely reason for an involuntary dismount. When wet it can leave a slippery film across the road surface which makes cornering highly risky.



BANBURY STAR
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BANBURY STAR RIDE RULES, PROTOCOL AND SMALL PRINT

Banbury Star CC organises club rides each weekend which are open to members and also invited guests who have a view to joining the club. Non-members are allowed to take part in two club rides before joining the club and must declare their presence to the ride leader and also provide an emergency contact name and phone number.

In addition to weekend rides, one-off events may also be organised and will appear on the club's ride calendar published on the website, e.g. on Bank Holidays, Reliability Rides etc and these rules and protocols are also applicable. For brevity in defining the rules, the term "event" is also a "ride".

Rides may be cancelled at late notice due to adverse weather or non-availability of a ride leader. Members are advised to check Facebook and the website on the morning of a ride to check for any last-minute changes and possibly avoid a wasted journey.

The minimum age to join a club ride is 13 years and riders aged under 16 are to be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Riders who are 16-18 can ride unaccompanied but must have lodged a parental consent form with the club's secretary before the ride.

By participating on a club ride, you agree:

- that Banbury Star CC, its officials and ride leaders are not responsible for your safety and welfare and that you join at your own risk and liability and assume full responsibility for your own safety in relation to other road users and riders.
- and understand that all applicable rules for participation must be followed and that sole responsibility for your personal safety remains with you, including your physical and emotional preparation and fitness to participate in the ride.
- that you are aware that the rides are held on open public roads and the organisers cannot be held responsible for actions, accidents or incidents caused by other road users.
- to notify a ride leader and remove yourself from participation if you sense or observe any unusual hazard or unsafe condition or if, during the ride, you feel unable or unfit to safely continue for any reason including being unable to maintain the ride's advertised pace.
- to give a full release and waiver of liability and all claims that you have, or may have in the future, against Banbury Star CC and its officials from all liability for any loss, damage, injury or expense that you may suffer as a result of your participation in

any part or parts of a ride or your presence, due to any cause whatsoever including any form of negligence.

- it is your responsibility to ensure you are physically and mentally fit to take part and if you suffer from any medical condition or illness that may affect your fitness or ability to take part in the ride it is your personal choice to take part and the organisers accept no liability for exacerbating your condition or any ill effects you may suffer during or after the ride.
- to follow the rules of the Highway Code.
- your bike is roadworthy, properly maintained and suitable for the type of ride and you carry the necessary tools, food, water and if required (e.g. a reliability ride) a course map, either on paper or on a bike computer.
- that Banbury Star CC may use photographs of you for promotional purposes without notification.
- to wear a properly fitted cycling helmet.
- to not use tri/aero/clip-on bars if they are fitted to your bike.
- to not half-wheel.
- to notify a ride leader if you are unable to maintain the advertised pace.
- to behave courteously to other riders, members of the public and other road users.
- to carry your club membership card which declares any medical issues and emergency contact details.

Club rides are not to be used for race training purposes, they are social rides.

Unless they inform the ride leader, nobody will be left behind on a club ride. If the group splits whilst climbing a hill, it will wait at an appropriately safe point at the top for the last rider to ascend.

At various points during a ride, the group will swap between being single or double file in accordance with British Cycling best practice and the Highway Code rules. The ride leaders will signal which formation will be adopted.

Club rides during the winter months will encounter wet and/or muddy roads and mudguards are to be fitted to bikes as a courtesy to the rest of the group by preventing spray from the period 1st November to 31st March.

Bikes are to be fitted with legally compliant lighting and reflectors for rides outside of daylight hours.

Banbury Star CC strongly recommends members hold third party insurance cover, e.g. as a member of British Cycling or another comparable service provider.