



## Novice Rides

### Purpose

A led, not coached ride, that will be around 40k to 60K in length depending upon rider's ability and undertaken at a speed all can manage. There will opportunities for faster riding if some wish to, but within the confines of the group, the main aim being to learn to ride together, socially and at a pace where talking and getting to know others is a priority. There will usually be a coffee and cake stop or two. Where we can, and route or numbers allow, this coffee or tea stop will also be on one of the other ride groups routes to allow you to meet others you might be riding with soon!

All rides will be led by an experienced rider, some qualified as ride leaders and will have an experienced rider at the back to make sure everyone keeps up and no one is left on their own! If you are trying clip in pedals for the first time, let us know, it's a perfect place to practice but tell us first. Otherwise SPDs, cleats, flat pedals, toe clips are all just fine.

### What bike?

Pretty much any bike. BUT most will bring a road bike, or a hybrid, like a commuter bike. We don't encourage single gear bikes, or commuter bikes like a Brompton, they're simply not safe enough in group conditions. A mountain bike is acceptable, but be aware that by their very nature, knobby tyres, heavier etc., you may well have to work a bit harder than those of us on road bikes! What we ask is that in the poorer or wetter weather you fit mud guards on the rear wheel please, so that the person behind doesn't get covered in your spray. Some also fit at the front to stop their own wheel soaking them. We do ride in the wet, and sometimes it rains! The only time we probably don't ride is when it's icy or snow is forecast, but we're a long way off this at the moment! Our speed will be dictated by the ride leaders or the slowest rider, so don't worry about that, that's why they're called a novice ride.

### Bike Condition

Please make sure your bike is working! It's not fair on others to pitch up with gear issues, flat tyres, brakes not working etc. So take it down to your little bike shop to get fixed, it will make your ride so much better and more fun. Others with you will have some knowledge of bike related issues, and we can generally fix most things on the ride, and offer advice before the ride starts. The ride leader has final choice of who starts and who doesn't, we've never had to say to anyone yet they can't start, don't be the first!

### Helmet?

**YES, mandatory, no discussion, no helmet, no ride**

## Will there be hills?

There may be hills, depending upon the weather and route. The only way to get stronger and better at hills is to go up, and down them. You'll get tips for doing this, and we always wait at the top, or the bottom. Talking about waiting, etiquette is that the group, IF you are left a little way behind, will ALWAYS wait for you at the next junction, so don't worry if on the odd occasion you lose sight of the rider in front, you'll soon meet up again, usually within a couple of minutes!

## Routes

Routes will normally be around the Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Denham area and may take in some parts of the Chilterns, most will be circular and will all end up where we start, at **the Nursery at Denham**. Usually at 8-15am. Keep an eye on the Facebook page or club website to see if anything is different, and that the ride is going ahead. You are welcome to peel off and head for home or lunch earlier, if you know the way! If you do this tell your ride leader or someone else, then we know you're safe! Where we can we'll upload a route in advance for you to download and put it on the Hillingdon Facebook page, don't stress if we don't you'll still have fun. Parking is around the nursery garden centre if you come by car, please don't block house drives, we're out for a **couple of hours...**

## What to bring!

- a) Your breakfast, inside you! Eat before you come out
- b) **Helmet**
- c) Serviceable **bike**
- d) One or two **water bottles** attached to your bike, with water or your favourite energy drink
- e) Under seat bag or pocket containing, tyre levers, spare inner tube with a valve that is long enough to be visible for an inch when fitted, a pump or a gas cylinder to inflate, maybe a small multi tool
- f) In your pockets or a bum bag, a light gilet [for the wind], a gel or two, or something you like to eat to keep you going 'just in case', your phone, some money for refreshments and other things. We don't allow use of the **phone** whilst riding, or earphones or music, in case you were wondering, sorry.
- g) Your choice of bike wear, usually layering up is a good idea, so you can take kit off and stuff in a pocket, items might include base layer, arm warmers, cycle shorts or tights, socks and shoes, cycle top, long or short sleeved, a gilet or cycle jacket, and **GLOVES** please. These keep your hands warm and protect your hands in two ways, vibration from the road when you are riding, and in the case of a spill, from the road gravel itself. Sunglasses an option, but a fly in the eye is never good.
- h) If you want to ride with lights that's great. We may or may not need them, but they're always good if it's a bit misty, or wet. We may also ask you to turn them off if they're very bright and you have riders behind you, but generally don't worry either way
- i) Ensure your phone has its emergency contact visible, or simple to access. One simple way for any phone, is BEFORE you turn up to the ride, get your contact's details up on the phone, screen shot or take photo of the screen, and save that photo as the wallpaper or background for the phone. Easy to see, easy to do!
- j) A sense of humour!

## Don't sweat it!

Finally, don't worry about learning all this, its general information and much easier, more fun and simpler to learn it whilst you are ON your ride. You'll find it great exercise, with some great people

who share your passion. Enjoyment and cake is the order of the day, everything else you'll just learn!

### Road etiquette and hand signals

Don't worry about these, you'll soon learn them. The main ones are reproduced on the following page for your information only. We'll go through them on every ride, and you'll soon get used to hearing them!



### Hand Signals

#### 1 STOP

Hand straight up in air. Group is stopping for a junction, puncture or because there is an obstruction in the road. If YOU have the puncture, or want to stop, just yell stopping, or puncture or mechanical, keep your hands on the handlebars, and use your voice!

#### 2 SLOW

Move one hand as if gently patting an invisible dog. Group is slowing down or just easing things back a bit.

#### 3 OBSTRUCTION

Waving/pointing behind back indicates that there is an obstruction such as a parked car or pedestrian and that the whole group needs to move in the direction indicated to avoid it.

#### 4 TURN

Left or right hand extended out to side. Direction of turn/change in direction coming up. When turning at a T junction, 'Clear' is an indication that the road is completely clear in both directions. BUT PLEASE NOTE: A shout of 'clear' is never ever a justification for not checking and pulling out. It is every rider's responsibility to ensure the road is clear for them and to be ready at all times to ensure safety.

#### 5 BELOW

Pointing down at road sometimes with a circling motion to obstruction on road such as a pothole or

drain cover that needs to be avoided. Be sensible with this one and only point out major obstacles. This signal is often accompanied with a call of "hole" for example.

Other signals to be aware of.....are:

"Single! Or single out!"

All riders to ride singly, not in pairs, if the road is narrow or a vehicle of any kind needs to pass, or we are passing through an obstacle like a gate

"Double up"

Resume riding or start riding in pairs, ensuring that your front wheel is level with your ride partner. This is the safest way to ride. Ensure that you don't ride your partner out into the middle of the road, and that you don't ride them into the gutter, or too near the kerb, a perfect place to pick up those punctures.

Arm extended and shaking of the hand maybe accompanied with "Loose" or "Glass" – This indicates a loose road surface such as gravel, mud or broken tarmac and is accompanied by shaking a hand over the road.

"Car up" – This warns of a vehicle coming towards the FRONT of the group.

"Car back" – This warns of a vehicle coming towards the BACK of the group.

Common sense.... this does not mean that every time a rider sees a vehicle there is a group shout of 'car'! You are riding on the road. Only shout it if its narrow, or there is a car waiting to pass on a narrow road, or there is a car coming in the opposite direction that will mean either it, or we, have to slow or move to the side for safety.

### **Timings**

See the Hillingdon Facebook pages or the club website. Usually most weeks, but not all, departing Denham Nursery in Denham at 8-15 unless otherwise notified by the ride leader or winter light. There are two garages just 400m from where we start, for those last minute purchases of food, drink or toilet stops.

### **Important**

Inform your ride leader if you have any health issues or niggles, before you go out. We are not medical staff, many are first aiders but the ride leader's decision is final on whether you ride, we've never turned anyone away but please bear this in mind.

### **Nice to do**

Thank your ride leaders, they're all volunteers who are doing this for you! Thank yourselves for a job well done too.