

Rocko Club FAQs

What does the club do?

- Our main activities are road and off-road cycling, though we also do some track cycling.
- We try and cater for all abilities, from recreational through to racing, women and men, and we are now restarting our youth club activities.

Is there a social side to the club?

- Yes, it's a big part of our club.
- Most of our rides have a social side, and we have our own clubhouse where we host weekly get-togethers and other social events throughout the year.
- We arrange cycling holidays once a year, where we go somewhere warmer in the spring, challenge ourselves and enjoy the sun and company.
- We also arrange a long-weekend event which is hosted alternately in France, Germany and here in a 3-year cycle.

You have a clubhouse?

- Yes, we are very lucky in that the members in the 60s and 70s bought and renovated properties in Middleton to give us a clubhouse. It is a rare thing!
- Every Wednesday evening, we gather for social chats, technical advice, training and shared cycle race spectating on the TVs in our bar.

Do I need to be in the club to come on a club run?

- Not at first, we'd want you to be sure that you wanted to join. You'd be more than welcome as a guest on a couple of our club runs until you are decided.

What sort of bike do I need?

- Anything that is road-legal (something with brakes, wheels (normally 2 !), pedals). Most members have road bikes, some single-speed, but most with a range of gears.
- Mountain bikes are fine on road, but are heavier and so slower to get up the hills!
- Hybrid bikes also tend to be a little heavier than out-and-out road bikes, but are more forgiving and a good place to start if you already have one.
- For off-road cycling, you would almost certainly want a mountain, gravel or cyclo-cross (CX) bike.

- For track riding, you need a track-specific bike, which is fixed wheel (no gears) and also no brakes(!). The velodrome we use at Derby Arena can hire you one if you want to try things out.

Can I ride my mountain bike on the road?

- Yes, though it will be heavier than a road bike, and therefore would be harder to get up the many hills we have around here.

What should I wear?

- Simply whatever you are comfortable and safe in.
- You should consider a helmet essential for road use (they've saved me from serious injury on more than one occasion).
- Cycling shorts with a seat pad are also advisable to help protect your delicates!
- Tight stretchy cycling jackets avoid having flappy fabric, which can catch the wind and sap your energy.
- You DON'T have to pay the earth for decent cycle gear. Like most items of clothing, it is a mix of function and fashion, but stuff from Aldi or Lidl often perform perfectly well and won't break the bank.

Will I be fast enough? What if I can't keep up?

- This is usually the reason people don't join a club; they think we will only be interested in cycle racers. Nothing could be further from the truth. While we welcome already-quick cyclists, our purpose is to promote cycling to everyone, and getting fitter than you are now is often a prime motivator for new members. We can provide coaching advice and training facilities at our clubhouse.
- Try riding about 30 miles in 2 - 2.5 hours on tarmac: if you can do that then you're fit enough to join our club runs. That is about the speed that our steady group does (and it is always much easier to ride when you are in a group than on your own). If you start to struggle, don't worry, we've all been there, and someone will ride with you to ensure you are ok. We will never leave you behind in the middle of nowhere.

I'm not good enough to come out with you yet.

- If you don't think you can do the above, still contact us; we'd love to see you and ride with you at your pace to help you get to the level our Sunday rides take, and you can always join us simply for the social side of the club.

Will I be too fast?

- Possibly, but you'd have to be good! We run several groups so I expect you'd find someone wanting to go at about the same speed as you.

How will I cope riding in a group?

- If you are concerned about the 'rules' of group riding, don't be. Come along and we'll help you feel comfortable riding with others around you, and you'll quickly pick up the best practice behaviour from your fellow riders. If in doubt, ask!

Are there any female members?

- Yes, we have several female members at various fitness levels, and we would love to get to the point where this question doesn't have to be asked!

I'm pretty interested, but want to get some advice on kit. Could you help?

- Of course, just contact us from our website and we'll give you all the advice you could need.
- If you join us, you'll get a discount in your first year off our club kit, which is made by a company that provides several of the leading professional teams with their kit.

I don't like riding near cars or on busy roads

- Neither do we. Generally, all our rides are on quiet back roads and lanes, away from cars as much as possible. We get out to these lanes as soon as we can. Of course, off-road and track cycling is away from traffic.

Do I have to race?

- Of course not. Some of our members race on road, Cyclocross (CX) or at the velodrome; some ride time trials (which are mostly testing yourself against the clock) but a significant proportion of our members just ride for fun.
- On road, off-road and on boards; all are accessible to our members on a non-competitive basis.

You haven't mentioned much about off-roading

- We run fun off-road training sessions for a mixed group of adults and youngsters in Corby most weeks: these take place in a safe but physically testing area with coaching supervision.
- A number of our members are keen off-roaders, and would be happy to show you the routes they like best in the area, for either gravel or full MTB territory.
- CX is getting more popular and several of our members race regularly.

Are there any other benefits?

- As a Rocko member you'll benefit from discounted rates at ...
 - [Richardsons Cycles](#) in Corby
 - Market Harborough bike shop, [George Halls Cycle Centre](#).
- One of the big benefits of joining a club is to gain access to decades (maybe centuries!) of our members' experiences of cycling. Whether that is technical maintenance, best equipment to use or finding great routes in our area, we are here to help.

You haven't answered all of my questions!

- Contact us with any questions you have that we've missed; we will be happy to help! GenSec@rockinghamforestwheelers.org.uk