

RIDE SAFETY – TIME FOR REFLECTION

An almost tragic accident occurred in last Saturday's ride when one of the group was hit by a car passing the group on Canal Road. This aggressive driver was leaning on the horn the whole time while passing the group, hit one rider at the back and almost hit one at the front. Guess what - the driver had no licence!

Fortunately, injuries were not serious and to my recollection, bike-car collisions have been very rare in the history of the club's group rides – indeed this may have been the first.

By all accounts the group was riding responsibly, in double file, with good sight lines for traffic wishing to pass but this is not always the case on our group rides.

The potential severity of this incident should make ALL OF US think once again about how our group riding practices can be improved. I believe this is a GROUP responsibility.

My thoughts:

- The apparent safety of riding as a “tight” double file group is just that – apparent – and is no protection from the actions of a rogue driver.
- All GROUPS need to have a process for establishing when they should be in single file – for example: on winding roads; roads with disappeared shoulders; roads with limited visibility on hills; where there are double yellow lines; etc.
- **EVERYONE in the group needs to STEP UP, SPEAK OUT and be responsible for the group's behaviour.**
- Those at the front need to TAKE RESPONSIBILITY for calling SINGLE-UP when road conditions dictate and BREAKING UP THE GROUP when it is too long for the road conditions (or even pulling to the side, if traffic is being obstructed).
- Those behind need to FOLLOW the instructions of the lead rider.
- Those at the back need to warn of vehicles that cannot get past and CALL FOR A SINGLE-UP when needed.
- EVERYONE in the group needs to CALL THE MESSAGES UP THE LINE and EVERYONE needs to move over in an orderly fashion.
- Those at the back need to be aware of riders being dropped, crashed or with a mechanical.
- ROTATIONS should be SINGLE (i.e. the passing pair of riders should not ride between the two front riders).

And speaking of group rides, it would not be too difficult to accept that the Thursday Night Ride is one that could well benefit from such improved practices. Watch for further announcements of its 2011 launch date.

Andrew