

## Rosie Wilson Founder of a women's and gender minorities' club

**SET UP** Lunar Cycles because, riding with other clubs, I was often frustrated at being the only woman on a ride. The vast majority of cycling club members are men. I would also sometimes have my bike and equipment not-so-subtly assessed, and be on the receiving end of mansplaining. (I've been given unsolicited advice even on the height of my saddle.)

I realised there was a gap for women who do a lot of cycling (commuting, touring, road riding), who are passionate about the pastime and want to cycle with others but do not feel that a regular club is for them. While there are some initiatives for women in cycling, they tend to be aimed only at beginners. Lunar Cycles fills the gap by providing a space for, and increasing the visibility of women and minority genders in cycling – as well as trans and non-binary folk.

Club member and ride leader Sophi-Louise said: "Joining Lunar Cycles has been such a refreshing experience after trying so many other clubs where I never quite felt like I fitted in. It's helped me rediscover my love for cycling after a long break by rebuilding my confidence. I often found male-dominated groups overwhelming and full of unsolicited

advice. But Lunar Cycles has been completely different – friendly, welcoming and open. You can ask questions without feeling silly, and the club's ethos creates a calm, supportive atmosphere."

A study conducted by Cycling UK found that, compared to seven years ago, while men feel safer on the road, this has not changed for women. This is unfortunately not surprising. Like most city infrastructure, cycling infrastructure does not consider the ways women move around cities, and the differing threats to our safety. Beautiful, separate cycle tracks like the Bristol-Bath railway path do exist but only in places. After dark I am faced with decisions like whether to brave an underpass where I've been followed, whether to use a bike path on which I've received sexual

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harassment, or instead cycle across a major roundabout to avoid this, thus facing a different threat to my safety. (I was hit by a car last summer as the driver saw me as 'in his way'.) It's a catch-22 situation that most men do not have to consider.

Additionally, groups of women and gender-minority cyclists face more aggression or unwarranted comments (often sexualised) than groups of mainly men. One driver, who had to pull into a lay-by so we could pass, blurted that we were "naughty". Can you imagine a male driver calling a group of male cyclists 'naughty'?

It's clear that some road users still don't accept that it's our right to be on the road. We want to change that. Lunar Cycles rides always provide a sense of freedom. We discover beautiful routes, the chats are great, and cake is always a main feature. Lunar Cycles is more than a cycle club: it has become a community, and we continue to fight for our right to safe and enjoyable cycling.

[cyclinguk.org/group/lunar-cycles](https://cyclinguk.org/group/lunar-cycles)



Photos: Lunar Cycles

**Clockwise from top:** A club ride out to Portishead harbour. Enjoying a country-lane descent. Admiring the views after conquering Dundry Hill