

Sussex Nomads Women's Ambassador Report 2017

The role of the SNCC Women's Ambassador is to represent women's interests across all aspects of Nomads activities. This ranges from getting more women riding with the Nomads and becoming members, to ensuring that the Nomads continues to lead the way on equality matters such as equal prize money in races.

The headline news is that, building on the excellent work already done by Sally last year, we have managed to nearly double the female membership at the time of reporting, **from 10 women members in 2016 to 19 in 2017.**

It's worth outlining how we've done this, and worth noting that some of the reasons for the increase are not down to one person but the whole attitude and support of everyone in the club. So thank you!

Activities to increase female membership:

Sussex Cycling 4 Women cross-club initiative

This is an initiative set up this year by myself and three female representatives of neighbouring cycling clubs: Lewes Wanderers, Crawley Wheelers, and Brighton Mitre. The initiative is aimed at female cyclists who already had some experience but hadn't yet taken the leap to join a club. We know that joining a club can be intimidating for some women so want to give them some encouragement and signpost to our local clubs. We held a very successful launch event and ride in summer, attracting 40 riders, plus have run several rides hosted by each club, for women to test out club riding. We keep in touch with these women via social media and continue to add new members to the group.

One of the main benefits to the Nomads of this initiative has been the networking between clubs, meaning we have picked up some members who were known to the other clubs but were more local to the Nomads. We've also found beginner cyclists that we've been able to point to the Breeze rides to get them started, who might then become members in the future.

Supporting female riders on club runs

We've got better at this and this is borne out by more women joining, however I think we can get even better at this and we've perhaps lost a few ladies due to groups riding at speeds faster than advertised. Group riding speed generally is a point for discussion at the AGM.

When I've been able to get out with the club – which has been less than I would have liked recently due to racing – I've tried to ride with the majority of women and keep the pace reasonable. We've had some very good rides this way and am grateful to people who have "looked after" new female riders when I've not been out, and given me updates. We do still sometimes get negative feedback about people getting dropped. I think this is a point for all of us not just re prospective women riders – we

all need to work hard to ensure people get a good first impression of the club and have a pleasant first ride. Although it is tough if you can only ride hard on Sundays, occasionally we need to sacrifice a hard ride to support others.

Shameless Nomads promotion!

Again we all have a role to play here, but I often see ladies out riding alone or in pairs in the local area and so take the time to chat to them and ask if they have heard of the Nomads and say we are always looking for new female members. Responses to this can be mixed (“not today please” was the best response as if selling double glazing) and some people are happy to do their own thing but just letting female cyclists know about the Nomads is a start so please do spread the word.

Equality matters:

This is something that we (not just me as Women’s ambassador but all Nomads) keep an eye on, to ensure that female riders have parity with the chaps. There has been and still is a big issue with prize money for female cyclists running right from local races to World Tour level. I’ve seen this first hand in some hill climbs recently. The good news for us is where we are offering prize money – primarily the SNCC hill climb competition – we have put women on a equal footing in terms of prize money. This was Sally and the Committee’s good work in previous years but this year it was great to receive an email from the women’s hill climb winner noting that the Nomads are well ahead of the curve on this.

As a closing remark I would just invite anyone with any ideas or suggestions as to how to get more women into the Nomads, or how to better support female Nomads, to drop me a line at mem2000_uk@yahoo.com

In the end, this is a role that should become obsolete but in the meantime thanks again to all of you for supporting female Nomads!

Gemma