

DIVERSITY IN CYCLING



**WRITTEN BY ANDY EDWARDS
COMMENTARY BY MANI ARTHUR,
YEWANDE ADESIDA
AND JUNAID IBRAHIM**

To Harry Edwards (Dad)

13 November 1937 - 6 January 2019

You taught me how to ride, so I always knew I belonged.

“The UCI are trying to make cycling a more global sport; but to be more global the sport has to be more open and diverse.” Maurice Burton, owner of De Ver Cycles and former professional cyclist.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD - JULIE HARRINGTON, CEO, BRITISH CYCLING	4
COMMENT - YEWANDE ADESIDA	5
INTRODUCTION	6
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	8
PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE	10
COMMENT - MANI ARTHUR	11
WHY DO WE NEED DIVERSITY IN CYCLING?	12
METHODOLOGY	14
COMMENT - JUNAID IBRAHIM	15
QUESTIONNAIRE – SUMMARY OF RESPONSES	16
SPECIFIC FEEDBACK FROM MUSLIM CYCLISTS	26
OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS	28
A COMPARISON: TEAM DE VER C.C. / DE VER CYCLES	33
FROM GRASS ROOTS TO WORLD CLASS	35
RECOMMENDATIONS	36
BAME FOCUSED CYCLING GROUPS	40
DATA CAPTURE SUGGESTIONS	42
FURTHER READING	43
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	44
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	45
PHOTO CREDITS	46

Written by Andy Edwards

Commentary by Mani Arthur, Yewande Adesida and Junaid Ibrahim.

Photo credits appear on page 46.

Design by Dave Ladkin, meaninfulldesign.co.uk

Copyright © 2019 by Andrew Edwards. All rights reserved. Please note, this is a collaborative project that is intended to be shared as widely as possible and in its entirety. Please share the downloadable links as freely as you wish, but if you wish to use excerpts or quotes please ask permission and please credit the project when doing so.

FOREWORD

JULIE HARRINGTON, CEO, BRITISH CYCLING

To truly transform Britain into a great cycling nation, we must strive to make a difference – not just for people who ride bikes, but for our communities, future generations and our country as a whole.

A crucial part of this is for us to not only champion our greatest achievements, but to recognise where we may fall short. Whilst continued success at the highest level is inspiring a boom in participation across the nation, and there have never been more opportunities to ride a bike, be it for fun or sport, the lack of diverse ethnic representation, and subsequent sense of belonging within cycling – for Black, Asian and ethnic minorities to reference this report – is clear.

This challenge doesn't just concern cycling. Across sport, industry, education and countless other sectors, efforts have to be – and are being – made to transform the profile of underrepresented sections of society. As with everything, sport can play an integral part in this society-wide drive. Some of the world's most successful, most recognisable athletes are helping to confront imbalances, and we as governing bodies should do all we can to support and accelerate this progress.

We'd like to give thanks to Andy for the hard work he has put into this report on diversity in cycling. Starting as a grass roots project to inform a conversation within his own cycling club and very much focused on road cycling, I'm proud to put the British Cycling name to a body of work that provides credible outputs and practical suggestions we can all play our part in implementing and support its launch.

We are on the cusp of something transformational and I hope that my words give some sense of the purpose within British Cycling and our partner organisations, the likes of HSBC UK, UK Sport, Sport England, Scottish Cycling and Welsh Cycling, to serve a sport that is truly reflective of the society we live in. The world is a diverse one, so we should be too.

Julie Harrington is the Chief Executive Office of British Cycling. Prior to joining BC in 2017, Julie held senior roles at the Football Association and Northern Racing Group. Earlier in her career, Julie worked in senior marketing roles for blue chip leisure organisations such as British Airways, Whitbread, Carlsberg-Tetley and Allied Domecq.



COMMENT

YEWANDE ADESIDA

I have been cycling for around two and a half years now and racing for two of those. During that time I have been very aware of the lack of other black riders, especially when it came to racing. My intention was always to race, but not seeing anyone that looked like me and the lack of role models made me question whether I was in the right sport. Also knowing that my skin colour makes me stand out on pretty much every start line made me fearful of making mistakes. These are things I think about less, but those thoughts are still lingering nonetheless.

Thankfully I have been fortunate to be surrounded by people who have been very supportive and I haven't experienced discrimination as a result of my ethnicity. I have also discovered role models like Ayesha McGowan (African-American racer) who are pushing for more diversity within cycling. I am keen to share my experiences too and help others from a BAME background get into cycling, whether that's for leisure or to compete, because I have seen how enjoyable it can be.

The Women of Colour Cycling Group and the Black Cyclists Network have been great in terms of creating safe spaces for cyclists of colour and I am grateful to those who have put in the work to set them up. I am also glad to have been able to contribute to this report; I think it will help others understand and be aware of the BAME cycling experience. Some of the recommendations are very easy to implement and increasing representation of BAME cyclists can go a long way.

Yewande Adesida is a former rower turned cyclist. She began racing with all-women's team Velociposse before moving to SES Racing, which coincided with her focus on track racing and sprint disciplines specifically. Competing in her first National Track Championships in January, she placed 10th in the Women's Keirin. Away from cycling, Yewande is undertaking a PhD in 'Wearable Technology and Rowing Biomechanics' at Imperial College London.



INTRODUCTION

This project started as a conversation between Mani Arthur and I, all because Hollywood actress and comedian Yvonne Orji made fun of me. I will save the Yvonne Orji story for another time, the bottom line is Mani and I became friends.

Mani rides for Finsbury Park CC and I ride for Kingston Wheelers and Sigma Sports. We both shared an observation: there seem to be more riders from Black And Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds taking up cycling. Yet most cycling clubs, even in racially diverse London, are still very white. There is also the question of what the sport looks like on a national level, including in cycling media and brands. It looks very white. So...

Mani decided to form Black Cyclists Network (BCN), more of which later, and I decided to write this report. The initial intention was to put together a document to inform a conversation about BAME diversity within Kingston Wheelers. It started with face-to-face conversations with Mani and others and then evolved into an online questionnaire.

Biola Babawale is someone I met at the traffic lights, a black woman in cycling gear, “Hello, can we talk about diversity, please?” and so it continued. Having already seen Brothers on Bikes in Cycling Weekly, when I spotted them riding in the opposite direction through Richmond Park, an about-turn was made to bring Muslim cyclists into the conversation. With each new contact the questionnaire was shared more widely. There were over sixty responses (see Methodology).

This project truly has been a collaborative effort. It could not have been anything else. As a white man, it is not my role to tell someone else’s story. That is why this report consists of numerous direct quotes from BAME contributors who speak their own truths. Yewande, Mani and Junaid have added their own additional commentary. My role has been to connect white readers like me to the subject of diversity, while also connecting those BAME riders relatively new to the sport to the culture and history of cycling. I have tried to keep the page count to a minimum but this is a big subject with a lot of nuance.



Readers wishing to go deeper should study the Further Reading section and particularly the work of Dr Marlon Moncrieffe and Professor Kevin Hylton. Both men are Black British cyclists and academics and both have worked extensively in the area of race, identity and sport. Equally, readers should explore the work of Black British author and cyclist Jools Walker and African American racer Ayesha McGowan, both of whom are prominent role models for women of colour in cycling who eloquently demonstrate cycling can be many things to many people.

This all started as a grass roots project and it remains very much a grass roots project: to inform a conversation to encourage cycling, in all respects, to be a more diverse and inclusive sport. This document asks questions, curates answers and makes recommendations that we can all play our part in implementing. If you see anything missing, then pick up the baton and continue the journey. **Let's all do this.**



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

While there are examples that do not reflect well on the cycling community, many BAME respondents had positive experiences of cycling clubs. The fact remains, cycling clubs and the cycling community as a whole can do much more to improve diversity.

PROMOTE VISIBILITY (BUT BE AUTHENTIC)

If your club has members from BAME backgrounds, with their permission, include those members in any visual representation of club membership. This helps make BAME participation visible to others; consider deploying ambassadors as a point of contact.

If you do not have many BAME members or none at all, do not try to be something that you are not, but do promote your values: if you are open to all newcomers regardless of race and gender say so. We all have to start somewhere, but let's make a start.

PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY

Many larger clubs have different rides across the week with different start times. Not everyone can make 9am on a Sunday morning. Promote a range of options.

Provide context to cycling club culture, what it means to be in a club, to ride in a group and general dos and don'ts. Clubs are intimidating, but especially so for BAME riders.

BE INCLUSIVE

Inclusion is essential to diversity. It is not just about having BAME riders present but ensuring riders of all backgrounds feel included and visible. Work with others both within your club and the broader community to share knowledge and promote pathways. Connect with groups such as Brothers on Bikes (BoB), Black Cyclists Network (BCN) and the Women of Colour group (WOC) featured in this report and be sure these groups are aware of your club.

TELL MORE THAN ONE STORY

Challenge stereotypes that cycling is the preserve of middle-aged middle class men in Lycra. It is not. Cycling in the UK and Europe has been traditionally a rural and working class sport that has grown so much its appeal is universal. Cycling is for everyone.

Get to know riders from BAME backgrounds, both on social media and in real life. Listen to many different stories. Visit Dr Marlon Moncrieffe's Black British Champions In Cycling exhibition and learn about these powerful stories of confronting racial barriers in cycling.

RAISE YOUR OWN RACIAL AWARENESS

Many white people are uncomfortable talking about race. That is because most of us are not equipped to have the conversation. Read, listen and learn. If one person stands out in a group, be aware they may feel an extra level of intimidation than any other newcomer. Be sure that person feels welcome without overdoing it. What may seem a curious encounter for you is often incredibly uncomfortable for the other person. **Don't stare, smile and say hello!**

MONITOR PROGRESS

Quantify your membership through capturing ethnicity data on joining/ renewal forms. Monitor progress over time. Larger clubs and organisations should certainly do this.



PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

This report is underpinned by qualitative analysis but is deliberately written in a first person style to help connect white readers like me with the subject of diversity. Let me first share a bit about my background and how I came to write this report. I hope this will enable white readers like me to contextualise and act upon the contents of this report.

My journey into cycling began as my family bounced around various rural towns and villages across northern England. Being the “new kid” was not fun, but cycling was my escape. My Dad had been a club cyclist in the 1950s and on moving up to secondary school in 1982, I learned that Karl Smith, who was in the 5th form, had just won the National Schoolboy Championships. That prompted me to join a club and start racing. Only one British rider finished the Tour de France that year, Paul Sherwen in 111th place. **Cycling was a very esoteric sport but I knew straight away that I belonged.**

On returning to the sport in 2009, a lot had changed. Cycling was now popular. There was more investment. It was more middle class. There were more women. These were all very positive and welcome changes. Yet, the basic feeling of **belonging** was just as strong as it had been in the 1980s with old friendships rekindled and new ones forged.

Yet, as the sport has grown there has been some friction. Cycling is a deeply traditional sport with a lot of etiquette. Some of that etiquette still makes sense, while new technologies and approaches have challenged conventional wisdom in places.

As a roadie (i.e. a road racer), I belong to a part of the sport that has more etiquette (and outright snobbery) than most: mountain bikers and triathletes are viewed with amusement, although disc brakes and aero kit are now commonly accepted on the road; we (rightly) maintain that sportives are not races, but that should not detract from the achievement of completing one; we roll our eyes at the Velominati aka “the rules”, which is really making fun of us. All this is daunting to like-minded newcomers.

In many ways I am quite a traditional cyclist. My winter bike is fitted with full-length mudguards with a flap. Both my road bikes have Campag groupsets. I get irritated when riders do not acknowledge one another on the road. Yet throughout my life I have always embraced difference. My adult life has been spent living and working in racially diverse environments. Recent experience of workplace diversity and inclusion further enhanced my understanding and provided me a sense of how I can contribute to this conversation: to try and join the dots and bring people together around shared values.

If there is one thing that drives this document, it is a desire that all of us who call ourselves “cyclists”, whatever our background, feel the same sense of **belonging** that cycling has always given me, especially when growing up there where times when I did not feel like I belonged anywhere else.

COMMENT

MANI ARTHUR

This report is important because it encourages a much needed conversation about diversity within the cycling community. Let me tell you my story.

My journey into cycling began in 2009. Like most people, I bought a bike so I could commute to work and stay in shape.

In 2011, I joined three friends for an epic 11 day, 800 mile ride from London to Copenhagen to raise money for charity. I had no idea what I was doing but I was bitten by the cycling bug.

In 2013 I decided to join a cycling club. One in particular caught my eye. I phoned up and was invited to a club ride. On arrival, everyone seemed friendly and nice. I remember looking around and seeing only white faces. An hour into the ride, the road captain kept telling me that they were a racing club. I initially internalised that as; “oh, he thinks I am too inexperienced. That’s fine. I will work hard and hopefully show him that I can be just as good as some of the fast lads”. At the end of the ride we stopped for coffee. Cue, the return to the ‘we are racing club’ messaging. A few minutes later, a black guy on a bike rode past us. The road captain quipped something along the lines of “you would be better off joining that guy”. We shared an awkward laugh. I suddenly got the feeling that I did not belong and was annoyed at myself for not picking up the obvious signals.

I couldn’t help but feel like I was in the wrong sport. As far as I was concerned that interaction put me off joining a cycling club for good. Until one day, I came across a rider in a Finsbury Park CC jersey. Gray Turnock. We started chatting and Gray invited me to join a club ride. I haven’t looked back. Finsbury Park CC has been going since 1883. Their members made me feel welcomed on my first ride. I still had plenty to learn about group riding etiquette and tactics. Their road captains Simon and Jeremy had a field day, but I soon learned and in 2014 I started racing.

By 2018 I was now a regular fixture on the scene and had established connections with BAME riders from all over London. Yet my first encounter with a cycling club stuck with me. I wanted to create a platform to connect BAME riders who do not ride with a club and utilise our collective knowledge to help create pathways, including encouraging BAME riders to join traditional cycling clubs. So I formed the Black Cyclists Network (BCN). We started off with 15 members in October last year and have reached over 90 members including women in little over 6 months. We are an inclusive club and have members from all ethnic backgrounds, including white members such as Andy. We are constantly looking for new members, so if you are interested you can find us on Instagram, Strava and Facebook under Blackcyclistsnetwork (links at the back of this report).

Mani Arthur rides for Finsbury Park CC and is the founder of Black Cyclists Network (BCN). He competes in road races and crits and is regularly in the mix with a race win to his name. While not riding his bike, Mani is a civil servant.



WHY DO WE NEED DIVERSITY IN CYCLING?

If you are wondering “**but why do we need diversity?**” or “**how does this benefit our sport?**” then this section is for you.

Within a cycling club, greater diversity can lead to a far richer experience and very often in ways you could not possibly foresee. Let me give you an example.

Earlier this year I needed some advice before meeting with a heart surgeon to discuss a gravely serious matter affecting my family. Thankfully, I have a friend who is a heart surgeon. His name is Tain-Yen, he is Chinese American and when he lived in London, he – like me – was a member of Kingston Wheelers. Who would have thought you could find a heart surgeon in your own cycling club? That, for me, is the power of diversity and is what diversity looks like in action. Diversity makes us stronger.

One could argue diversity has already been proven in transforming cycling in a number of ways. Up until the mid 1990s cycling in the UK received little attention and minimal funding. The sport was barely visible to the media and the public. British Cycling, the sport’s governing body, was close to bankruptcy.

Through the leadership and vision of key figures within UK cycling combined with the introduction of Lottery funding, cycling grew from nowhere into Great Britain’s most successful sport. This was achieved, in part, through diversity. **The sport became more diverse in terms of gender, social class and diversity of thought.**



It is worth remembering Lizzie Deignan did not discover cycling, cycling went out and discovered Lizzie Deignan. She had no connection to cycling, but when the BC Talent Team visited her school and tested some of its pupils, Lizzie's potential was identified. Think how many more future champions from all backgrounds are out there.

Cycling's growing popularity and media profile in the UK has meant more money flowing into the sport, from amateur riders of all social backgrounds. This means more money to support amateur shop teams and even professional UCI Continental level teams.

Moreover, professionals began applying their experience to the sport, helping it grow. This includes marketing, PR, the legal profession, physiotherapists and engineers. **Diversity of thought has helped propel the sport forward from what was a very traditional mindset.** From Team Sky to amateur club riders, there is a willingness to try new techniques and all of these marginal gains have combined to produce a bigger, better, brighter British cycling.

Yet in 2019, cycling still lags behind other major sports in terms of income. This is true at World Tour and domestic level. Elite level road racing in the UK continues to face enormous challenges and a number of British UCI teams have folded including the very successful JLT-Condor team. **Cycling cannot rest on its laurels. As any competitive person will tell you: if you stand still you are really going backwards.** We have come a long way but there is so much more this sport can still achieve.

In terms of financial success, Lance Armstrong accumulated the highest net worth of any cyclist in history with a net worth of \$100m, far in excess of any other cyclist. Ever. Yet Serena Williams has a net worth of \$180m, almost double that of Armstrong. Lance had a personal story that went way beyond cycling, but Serena is even bigger. In football, around half of the England team is made up of players from BAME backgrounds. **Clubs like Arsenal and Manchester United have massive global appeal, in part, because the diversity of their players appeals to "people like me" the world over.**

In 2009 Sir David Brailsford said his goal for Team Sky was to win the Tour de France with a British rider within five years. People laughed at him. I know because I was one of them. Brailsford and the British cycling establishment dared to dream.

The example British Cycling set is this: if you are going to dream, then dream big. Cycling has come a long way, but there is so much more this sport can achieve. It is my belief that greater diversity within both the British and international cycling scene offers more opportunities to grow the sport further both in terms of impact and value and on a global level.



METHODOLOGY

This report is a qualitative assessment of the experiences of BAME cyclists who are engaging with the sport on a meaningful level and are prospective cycling club members. Meaningful level means riding with some level of sporting intent, in that the rider is a potential member of a cycling club. Some respondents ride with clubs already and race in road, track and TT events. Some are content to ride charity events and sportives. Some are entirely new to the sport.

The focus is BAME diversity, rather than gender or disability. For those unaccustomed with the term, BAME is a commonly used acronym that refers to those of African, African-Caribbean, South Asian (i.e. the Indian sub-continent), and East Asian heritage. 'BAME' is very a broad term and as such it is not ideal, however it is commonly used and understood. For the purposes of this report, BAME is focused primarily on riders from black African and African-Caribbean, south Asian backgrounds and includes many Muslim contributors.

A combination of one-to-one meetings and an online survey of ten open ended questions enabled contributors to share their experiences as freely as possible in their own words. Contributions came from men and women and from the black and Asian communities, including a significant number of Muslim riders. In total over 60 individuals contributed between November 2018 and January 2019.

This is not a quantitative study. Little data currently exists and this is addressed in the recommendations. This report focuses on core themes and more data will help monitor progress. Nor is this an exhaustive study. Examples of cycling groups that encourage BAME participation are included but there are other groups and clubs doing great work too. Similarly, the report found a range of experiences amongst respondents and there may be further experiences and perspectives not captured by this report. Nevertheless, with the help of key contributors, great care has been taken to ensure the themes and recommendations in this report are credible and robust. It is hoped this report will help inform a conversation and serve as an agent for change, progress and continued work.

The key contributors, who are listed in the acknowledgements section, were consulted extensively as this document took shape. It is intended to be accessible and to encourage a conversation.



COMMENT

JUNAID IBRAHIM

Cycling, for me, remains by and large a unique phenomenon. There are debates on absolutely everything: leg warmers over or below socks, Garmin vs Wahoo, glasses below or above straps, is Shimano allowed on Italian frames? Do you wave to anyone and everyone? Discs or rims? The discussion is endless. It has been an incredible six year journey navigating through this minefield. And of course, I all still get things wrong! Just the other day, I was told there are rules about turning your bike upside down while fixing a puncture!

Isn't it fantastic that there are now a number of clubs, namely Brothers on Bikes and Black Cycling Network which enable more people from minority backgrounds to meander through this seemingly treacherous river of rules? For many BAME riders however, the bigger challenge is approaching and feeling included with clubs where there are very few, if any, people 'like them'.

I am personally thrilled to see the publication of this report and a broader desire to create a more diverse and inclusive sport. The efforts of Mani, Andy and others including, obviously, my Brothers on Bikes compatriots should be commended. As Mani from BCN points out in an interview with Francis Cade [see YouTube], the experience of riders within our respective clubs can be limited, but we can encourage those riders to continue their development, to join more established clubs also and to broaden their riding experience. Nevertheless, as this report points out, in some instances there are challenges but we can all play our part to overcome them.

Junaid Ibrahim is the co-founder of Brothers on Bikes (BoB), which promotes cycling amongst the British Muslim community. BoB now has more than 600 members and regional groups across the UK. Junaid is a schoolteacher and also encourages cycling amongst school-aged children.



QUESTIONNAIRE – SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

There were over 60 responses to the questionnaire in addition to face-to-face meetings, providing a good qualitative overview of the issues. As follows:

Q1 When you are out on your bike, would you say there are more or less riders from BAME backgrounds in Lycra than there were 5 years ago?

The majority of respondents said they felt there are more BAME riders on the roads compared to five years ago. Asking specifically about riders in “Lycra” helps distinguish those riding with some sporting intent, i.e. prospective cycling club members, but as we shall see this distinction can be problematic and nuanced.

Q2 If your answer to Q1 is yes, why do you think these numbers are increasing?

Q3 What motivated you to start riding seriously?

There are a variety of responses, centred on two core themes.

VISIBILITY: this came up a lot and is incredibly important, it speaks to a core need of belonging and seeing “people who look like me” in the sport of cycling.

“People like myself encouraging more people of colour to ride with me if I see them at any event i.e. sportive/charity rides. Also when I see others on commutes or in bicycle shops.”

“Being exposed to other black riders who are in the scene invites them to the sport while being comfortable.”

“I think that more of us are gaining confidence in getting out and actually being able to ride equally to the white majority.”



One respondent stated in answer to question 3:

“Another black female cyclist”.

Another dynamic is the growing prominence of black riders at pro level, **“Perhaps it is due to an improvement in cycling infrastructure and social media and maybe some notable performances by riders like Daniel Teklehaimanot wearing polka dot Jersey in the TdF. In terms of social media, I think riders like Justin William’s has done a great job. I know a lot of black riders who follow him.”**

Social media and Instagram specifically is a key ingredient. US pro Justin Williams has a strong global following, as does Ayesha McGowan, who documents her own racing exploits as an African American woman.

ACCESSIBILITY: many respondents felt cycling is becoming more accessible. By making cycling more accessible, not only are greater numbers attracted to the sport, but there is also an increase in the diversity of those taking up the sport for the first time.

Examples of greater accessibility include: charity rides, sportives, ride-to-work policies, corporate challenges and so on. This was a common thread:

“Completing my first London to Brighton.”

“A charity bike ride and my white step dad.”

“Finding a club of like-minded people who shared my goals! Other clubs I was in did not cater to me as a female cyclist wanting to race, so it was very hard to ride ‘seriously’ until I left for a different club.”

“Commuting and then triathlon because there was a race series near where I lived. Inspired by people I knew (boyfriend at uni).”

“Started from commuting to work then got more interested and got a road bike so I can go out and enjoy more than just commuting.”

“My workmates and wanting to experience see more of the outdoors. Cheaper than public transport.”

“Charity ride sparked the interest.”



Q4 Once you started riding, did you consider joining a club? If so please describe the experience of approaching a club and going on a club run for the first time.

Many respondents had joined a cycling club and of those most found the experience broadly positive. Some of these respondents had mixed experiences with unfriendly and unwelcoming clubs before finding the right one.

A recurring theme is that cycling clubs can be “intimidating”, even where the club is friendly and welcoming it is a big step for any newcomer. The extent to which clubs are “intimidating” is heightened when people do not feel represented in the club they are joining, whether that is gender or ethnicity, in other words, a lack of **“people like me.”**

One black female respondent had this to say:

“Encountering stares when you turn up to a coffee spot can make it a highly uncomfortable atmosphere for a novice cyclist like myself. It feels like every move or faux pas receives extra scrutiny. This scrutiny is even stronger if you are a BAME female cyclist as you’re seen as even more of a curiosity. For example, I’ve been out with my white, middle aged cyclist work mates and I have received many stares and curious looks. All of which can be excruciatingly uncomfortable even when you are with friends”.

Everyone’s first club run feels like boot camp. The rider next to you telling you “your saddle’s too low”, “change gear”, “spin the legs”, “relax the arms,” when the group rotates the next person says the same thing. I am guilty of this. You are trying to help a newcomer become a better rider, but coupled with the stares and the curious looks this can be way too much for a BAME rider and especially BAME women.



Some respondents specifically referenced prominent BAME riders/ bike shop owners as reason for joining a particular club. A sizable number of respondents had not joined a cycling club. Of those who did join a club many had good experiences but there were negative experiences also:

“I had a black owned bike shop on the road I was living on when I moved to Penge. Told the owner I did 40-50 miles daily just commuting. Was asked to come on a club/shop ride.”

“No I didn’t initially but later on I did. The experience was welcoming in most clubs apart from one.”

“I did consider it but I had no idea how to go about picking one. In the end I was approached by a club who invited me to join them so I did. I didn’t go on a club run for ages for a variety of reasons (scared, work commitments) but they did also put on weekly skills sessions that I attended instead.”

“I’d ride for a while and decided the next step would be to join a club and gain more experience. I went to my local club straight away, but was rejected as I didn’t have enough experience and they were not interested in teaching/ developing riders which was fine. A few months later I went on a group ride with London Dynamo and joined their group of juniors a few weeks later. They accepted me with open arms and taught me most of what I know, hand signals, road rules etc. My first club run with them went great too, they looked after me, made sure I didn’t get dropped and even bought me a fanta for doing so well.”

“I rode for a year or two then joined my uni club. I then moved down South and rode for about a year before joining Kingston Wheelers. You’re obviously a bit nervous joining a club run for the first time, but I found everyone at Kingston Wheelers super welcoming and was keen to join immediately after my first ride.”

“I wanted to join a club pretty quickly! It was hard to find the right fit.”

“I created my own club with a poster asking if anyone wanted to ride with me because I didn’t know of any other cyclists who were as slow as me.”

“I did join a club group ride. Didn’t feel welcomed as being the only Asian guy with a beard on bike. Hence why I never went back cycling with them and don’t go with any clubs because of the remarks passed around. I think to me riding solo is same as in the group because of the reason I mentioned and it gets awkward.”

“I’ve not formally joined a club but have ridden with numerous clubs, the joy of using Regents Park as a stomping ground. Every club I have ridden with has been nothing but welcoming and very social.”

“I was looking for cyclists that I could feel comfortable with that had a similar background, culture and viewpoint on life. I found Brothers on Bikes on Strava and on the first ride knew I had found what I was looking for.”

Q5 Do you feel a club cycling is for you and do you ride with a club regularly?

Q6 If the answer to Q5 is no, why is club cycling not for you?

Q7 If the answer to Q5 is yes, why do you enjoy club cycling?

The majority of respondents who had joined a cycling club had a broadly positive experience, but there were also some noticeable negative experiences. There were very few responses to question 6, which is pleasing but those that did respond cited “lack of diversity” as a reason.

There were two core themes central to joining a cycling club:

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE: riders acknowledged that joining a club helped them develop new skills, learn the sport, get fitter and to push themselves alongside stronger riders. Several noted that although they were initially intimidated, they soon realised they were fitter than they imagined and could engage with the sport on a meaningful level.



SOCIAL LIFE: riders enjoyed the social aspects of club riding, meeting new people from varied backgrounds, coffee stops and the camaraderie.

Responses include:

“Yes 2 clubs LVCC & BCN being with people who enjoy the same thing as you who are all friendly makes you enjoy the sufferfest”

“Club cycling is for anyone in need of a real push and some guidance into the world of cycling. I try to get out with mine every weekend or represent in a race.”

“I couldn’t have done any of the things I achieved this year without the support of my club.”

“Cycling clubs are a great way to socialise, improve your cycling ability and techniques. I ride on weekends and join in club rides where possible.”

“Camaraderie and advice. In my club which is mainly people of colour there’s an “ancestral” bond.”

“I like riding in a club as there are always other riders that you can learn from to enhance ones experience.”

“Social aspects, it pushes you more when riding with stronger riders. You learn tips, tricks and routes”

“Being part of club has made me achieve things I probably wouldn’t have otherwise (or not as quickly) and has meant I’ve met some pretty inspiring people too as a result.”



“I like club cycling as you can build a good network with like minded people. You can make new friends and learn new things from each other.”

“It’s amazingly motivating to ride with people who share some of your goals. We build each other up, encourage each other and inspire each other to be the best we can be.”

“Sharing experience of kit and routes plus drafting :)”

“It’s a good way to socialise whilst also doing something you enjoy. Riding in a club means safety in numbers and some big days or weekends out which I wouldn’t necessarily enjoy or be comfortable doing on my own.”

“Because it is sociable and I made new friends and it helps improve your cycling in a peloton. Share cycling ideas and also do sportives together.”

A number of respondents noted the lack of diversity and not only in clubs but at cycling events in general. One respondent described a visit to an event at Lee Valley Velodrome:

“My daughter noted the absence of any non-white people inside the technical area in the centre. There was only one black rider competing.”

There were some responses that implied a lack of knowledge about etiquette for club runs and training rides on the part of the rider, but also a lack of communication from more experienced riders within the group. Rules and etiquette are a fundamental part of club cycling and especially so for those with aspirations to race or ride in bigger groups such as in a grand fondo, but it is worth considering how riders are prepared for such rides and how expectations are communicated before, during and after such rides.

Q8 What are cycling clubs doing well in appealing to BAME cyclists?

The majority of answers to question 8 were pretty blunt:

“Nothing that I can see”

“I don’t know of anything they are doing“

“I don’t think they are”

“Not Much as far as I can see,”

“Not doing anything at all to appeal to black or minority groups,”

“I don’t think they are doing anything specifically,”

“As far as I’m aware nothing.”

“I wouldn’t say anyone is doing well - to be honest, I’ve not come across any club that actively promotes/appeals to minorities expect for Brothers on Bikes CC.”

“Not much to be honest, no clubs make an effort to get involved with BAME”

“Nothing, I don’t think they do generally”

“Nothing that I can see or have come across. I’m sure most clubs welcome all but not sure I have seen any specific measures to appeal to BAME cyclists.”

“Nothing. The ethos hasn’t really changed. The only thing we are really a difference in gender based.”

One respondent summed up the nuances of BAME riders joining a cycling club and whether or not clubs are encouraging BAME membership as follows:

“They are opening themselves to all kinds of riders and not discriminating against anyone. Depending on the club, you may feel like this isn’t the type of place where a black man or woman, should actually be, as if, that quality of riding or service, isn’t for us. But there are clubs that are more casual about the fact that everyone wants to ride, rather than their image. There’s only 3 black riders in my club that I know (that includes myself) out of 100+ members, so there’s not a lot going for us there, but I don’t ever think about it when I’m at the club because it’s not an aspect that I feel matters at the time. Which is good, because more black riders can feel at ease about joining and not worry about feeling bad.”

It would seem that while most cycling clubs are doing very little to engage with and encourage riders from BAME backgrounds, the experience of joining a cycling club for BAME riders in many cases is a positive one. The challenge, it seems, is that not enough BAME riders know this.

Q9 How can cycling clubs better appealing to BAME cyclists?

Q10 Do you have any further thoughts or comments on cycling, club level cycling and the participation of BAME riders?

The majority of responses centred on visibility and engagement. This includes:

- Finding and supporting BAME ambassadors within clubs
- Engaging with riders on the road in an open and welcoming manner
- Demystifying club culture for those new to the sport, regardless of background
- Sharing knowledge and twinning between clubs
- Accessibility to a certain degree was also a factor. Signposting rides that start at different times and on different days other than 9am on a Sunday is helpful.

These responses are worth highlighting:

“Using marketing and imaging that’s more reflective of the diverse culture we live in. I feel put off sometimes by not seeing ‘someone like me’

Another respondent said:

“As I am a example of a keen cyclist, I would love to be the face of any cycle club that would be willing to include more diverse members”

“Don’t look at BAME cyclist as from an alien planet when you get to that coffee stop.”

“Make sure it doesn’t seem complicated, elitist, overly male or reserved for the Dura Ace crew. ... Try to find ambassadors. And push visibility If they see it, they will come.”

“Change the perception of it being an elitist sport. It is very white middle class for sure.”

“More ethnic minorities represented in club advertising/website/etc”

“Reach out to ethnic communities and ensure that any members don’t feel isolated.”



“The difficult is that cycling clubs are predominantly an activity primarily of white middle class men. Through no fault of the clubs this alone tends to serve as a barrier for black and minority cyclists to join clubs. Despite cycle club members being the most friendly and welcoming of human beings. The difficulty is that the appeal has to really come from within the minority communities to really kick start things and from there I feel it can snowball.”

“I think it will take clubs like Brothers on Bikes and other BEM clubs to really help make a significant impact so that we can feel confident enough to join “regular” clubs without feeling that we are outsiders to the sport.”

“Being more open. Not casting judgement whenever they see a cycling of a smaller minority. They should embrace their will to learn and develop, rather than belittle them for their quality of kit, current skills or ability. Clubs should always be out to help as many cyclists as they can, showing them the crucial skills they need to ride safely and develop.”

“Black Cyclists Network is an awesome example of a club set up specifically for people of colour. It’s got good visibility on social media and they look like a really friendly club. Other cycling groups set up a women of colour meet-up recently, which again looked like a great event. Otherwise I don’t see clubs reaching out to people of colour, which is a real shame as those riders are out there!”

“If white cycling groups / clubs behave unconsciously in a way to make other ethnic groups feel unaccepted this behaviour is no different to why you see some black and white only pubs in a black neighbourhood. When you find the cause, fix it for the good of the sport.”

“The more diverse cycling is, the better the experience will be for everyone.”



SPECIFIC FEEDBACK FROM MUSLIM CYCLISTS

Muslim cyclists accounted for approximately one third of respondents. Experiences were mostly consistent with other BAME cyclists, with some important additional points:

WEARING LYCRA

Wearing Lycra, which is functional for cycling and part of “fitting in” as a “serious” cyclist is problematic on a religious level where Islam teaches modesty. A majority of Muslim riders surveyed prefer to wear some form of loose shorts over their Lycra shorts, but this can attract negative comments from other cyclists:

“Some of us wear loose bottoms over Lycra shorts as modesty is a big part of our religion (Islam). This can sometimes attract negative comments. Being open to stuff like this can make a big difference.”

“Don’t look at us in a weird way when we don’t wear Lycra, I mean we wear Lycra but we also wear shorts on top to cover our aura.”

Clearly a lot of education needs to be done to convey this important issue, including my own perspective given how I framed the first question to the questionnaire. This is huge.



PUBS AND BACON

There were a few negative experiences where there is a heavy emphasis on social club rides stopping at the pub. Greasy spoon cafés with bacon and other such menu items can also be problematic from an Islamic perspective. Clearly, this aspect requires a respectful but pragmatic approach.

“Less of a drinking culture and identify riders from ethnic backgrounds at local events to encourage them to join.”

“Don’t think the issue is cycling specific, its a cultural difference issue I think especially with Asian population. a lot of cycling clubs base their social side around beer and pub visits.”

“Understanding constraints of minority groups such as in the field of diet etc. Some ethnic faith groups might have prayer timings and constraints, being aware of this shows understanding and in turn a sense of inclusivity.”

TIMING

Offering different rides on different days with different start times helps improve diversity overall but specifically addresses prayer requirements for Muslim riders.

“I once did a tour and nearly missed my prayer because the route did not pass any public places except a pub.”

CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL CHANGES

One factor, especially noticeable amongst Muslim respondents, is a generational change. While parents or grandparents were mostly focused on establishing themselves and building careers in the UK, this generation pay more attention to lifestyle and fitness. Cycling is appealing to this generation in a way it did not to previous generations.

“The minority community are a few years behind with regards to embracing cycling. Many of the current cyclists are second, maybe third generation migrants of parents who have come from a country where only those in poverty cycle. They have come to this country to seek a better life for their children where the idea of success is to have a detached home with a Range Rover parked outside and having plenty to eat. Only in the past few years has ethnic minority groups in general started to consider health as a metric of quality of life. There are wider social dynamics at play that have a bearing on cycling participation within ethnic minority groups.”

As with any religion some individuals are more observant than others and not every Muslim rider will hold these views, but a significant proportion of those surveyed do.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Diversity in cycling is a national concern, but the lack of diversity is especially troubling in London, given it is one of the most diverse cities in the world. The demographic profile of London boroughs with prominent cycling clubs is as follows:

Proportion of Population Non-White

Hammersmith & Fulham	32%
Islington	32%
Kensington & Chelsea	29%
Southwark (includes Dulwich)	46%
Wandsworth	29%
Kingston upon Thames	26%
Richmond upon Thames	14%
Sutton	21%

* 2011 Census

If cycling clubs in London were representative of their communities at least 14% of their membership would be non-white and typically should be around 25-30%. In reality most London clubs, even those with membership in the hundreds, have perhaps a handful of BAME members when the potential is so much greater.



Percentage of households in gross weekly income bands by ethnicity

	< £500pw	£500-999pw	>£1,000pw
All	42%	35%	25%
Bangladeshi	40%	38%	20%
Chinese	36%	33%	32%
Indian	29%	35%	38%
Pakistani	39%	41%	18%
Asian other	34%	37%	30%
Black	46%	36%	17%
Mixed	43%	35%	22%
White British	43%	35%	25%
White other	34%	35%	30%
Other	42%	35%	24%

* Source DWP Family Resources Survey

While income inequality in the UK is a major issue and although there are significant disparities in income by ethnicity, the fact remains there is a sufficiently large enough proportion of people across all ethnicities with the means to take up cycling as a sport.

Riders who have participated in this report ride anything from high end racing bikes with aero kit and top-level group sets, to the standard set-up that frequents most club runs. One participant, a student, successfully races on a relatively inexpensive but perfectly acceptable set-up on both road and track.

Neither income nor expense was cited as a significant barrier to entry by anyone, but there is a perception by some that cycling is an elitist middle class sport. That being said, those BAME riders who get into the sport quickly discover a means of purchasing kit that works for their budget in the same way as any other rider.

SOCIAL CLASS AND PRIVILEGE

The perceived middle class nature of cycling is a very recent phenomenon. Club level cycling in the 1980s and 1990s was very niche and skewed heavily towards rural and less privileged communities. No one I knew in cycling had gone to private school, for instance, and I knew a lot of people in the sport. Cyclists tended to be the sons and daughters of the skilled working class and lower middle class: plumbers, engineers, small business owners and so on. Cycling has never been a cheap sport, but the “elitist” tag is a very recent perception. This view is consistent with the experiences of many of my contemporaries across the UK and was also validated by journalist Matt Seaton.

Cycling participation has grown enormously, especially so since the 2008 Olympics, the emergence of Team Sky and the London Olympics in 2012. **Cycling has become “visible” to riders from all backgrounds and more accessible than ever before.** The media, which is mostly based in London, does seem to emphasise cycling as middle class, middle aged and

“the new golf”. It is a perception that does not reflect the heritage of the sport and the reality of club level cycling, even in London.

The “elitist” tag is problematic, not because of cost or income, but because it implies a lack of inclusion and “whiteness”. It reinforces the perception to prospective BAME riders that cycling is not for “people who look like me”. Overcoming the “elitist” perception, especially in London, is an important step forward.

GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality refers to the overlapping and interdependent concerns of race and gender facing women of colour which, in the context of cycling, means navigating the twin challenge of fitting into either a diverse cycling group that is predominantly male or a women’s group that is overwhelmingly white. On a practical level, care should be taken to ensure women of colour feel included regardless of the make-up of the group.

A Women of Colour cycling group has recently formed in London and meets at Look Mum No Hands. Prominent members include writer and broadcaster Jools Walker (aka Lady Velo) and Jenni Gwiazdowski, founder of London Bike Kitchen.

Intersectionality is especially relevant to Muslim women. For observant Muslims there is an aversion to mixed groups of male and female riders. WOC and women’s groups in general can play a particularly important role in providing pathways for Muslim women, although there are plans to launch “Sisters on Bikes” for Muslim women. Again, not all Muslims hold this view and feminism in the Muslim community is growing, so there will be many Muslim riders, both male and female who are happy to ride in mixed company.



It should be noted non-Muslim black women taking part in this report are supportive of the need for single sex rides for observant Muslims. Given the growth in women’s only cycling groups there is plenty of opportunity to cater to observant Muslim women.

RACIAL AWARENESS IN THE (WHITE) CYCLING COMMUNITY

While the cycling community does not seem to be consciously discriminatory there is room for improvement in terms of unconscious bias and racial awareness. This is a broader social challenge, but it is very apparent within the cycling community.

The essence of racial awareness is to understand that identity plays a significant role in how individuals experience the world. A white man with a British name will have a very different life experience than a black woman with an African name. Ian McEwan and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie are both globally renowned novelists, however the latter has commented she is often stopped at airport immigration and questioned about her employment status, receiving comments such as “are you really a novelist?”

A key element to this report is the series of direct quotes from respondents, so that readers experience the authentic voices of respondents without fear or awkwardness. Acting upon this report requires a long-term commitment and an understanding of the nuances surrounding the subject. In this respect, this report merely offers a starting point with signposts for continued work and further reading (at the back of this report).

Communication is important in building racial awareness. Last year, Kingston Wheelers partnered with the Sustainable Cycling Foundation (SCF) in Nigeria to organise a kit collection. This attracted huge social media coverage and a feature in Cycling Weekly. Not only did we collect a lot of kit, we also presented an authentic view of the Nigerian cycling scene. “White saviour” stereotypes were consciously avoided and this did not deter anyone from giving. Working hand-in-hand with the SCF on the communication strategy, who had full oversight on everything, was critical to this success.



ETIQUETTE

Finally it is worth emphasising etiquette, which was touched on earlier. There is a lot of etiquette in cycling. Some of it is cosmetic, some of it is rooted in practicality, but fundamentally it is about feeling safe and secure in a bunch of riders where your own safety, to a large degree, is dependent upon the competence of those around you.

Etiquette is also about belonging: demonstrating your right to belong in the group. Whether riding in a club run group of 10+ or a race with 80+ riders, crashes can be painful and costly. Etiquette can be a form of shorthand to indicate competence. Etiquette begins at club level, goes up a notch within the racing fraternity and ever upwards through the racing categories to World Tour level.

Cosmetic etiquette could include whether or not adult males shave their legs, social etiquette could be acknowledging another rider on the road (a simple nod will do), riding etiquette includes not engaging in half wheeling (racing the person next to you), pointing out potholes, riding neatly and close together or riding smoothly in a rotating pace-line.

This can be daunting for any new rider, regardless of background, but especially so for riders from minority backgrounds. **One BAME woman felt hounded with criticism, when it is likely the person finding fault was only trying to help.** Placing careful feedback in context goes a long way towards overcoming barriers and encouraging newcomers and especially those who may not feel represented in the group.



A COMPARISON: TEAM DE VER C.C. / DE VER CYCLES

The majority of the contributors to this report have taken up cycling over the past five to ten years and they offer a fresh perspective on the world of cycling and cycling clubs. The initial reaction from white readers has been revelatory and, as this report reaches a wider audience, the cycling community as a whole will hopefully have a similar reaction.

Yet for Maurice Burton, none of this is new. He has been putting into practice the themes contained in this report for decades. In the 1970s and early 1980s he was the only black professional cyclist in Great Britain. Having experienced blatant racism and discrimination at home, he went to Belgium and built a thriving career on the tough six-day circuit. On retiring from racing, he acquired De Ver Cycles in south London and later formed Team De Ver C.C. a cycling club founded on inclusive principles. The club's website makes this very clear:

“Maurice wanted to change the sport which he loved and which meant so much to him. At that time, it was a sport in which only a very narrow section of society participated and was bedevilled with bigotry and discrimination.

Maurice’s vision was to increase the accessibility of the sport to all sections of the community irrespective of race, gender or background, and encourage a wide and diverse group of people into cycling and enjoy the sheer pleasure of riding a bike.”

Maurice Burton has proven what can be achieved. It is worth noting a few key themes:

LEADERSHIP:

De Ver’s success is not just because Maurice himself is a powerful and visible role model, although that plays a part, it is because he took responsibility as an agent for change. The lesson being that all cycling organisations be it cycling clubs, cycling media, British Cycling, CTT, CTC can **lead by example**. This includes white people. If you hold a position of responsibility then you are in a position to influence, provided always that you work hand-in-hand with BAME riders.



FAMILY:

Clubs can be like families and in the case of De Ver, it is literally so. Maurice's wife Mia is central to the running of the shop and the club and his son Germain is himself a proven champion and world-class rider. It is no surprise that De Ver is not only racially diverse but also has a healthy gender balance. **Team De Ver C.C. has over 60 members of which approximately half are BAME and approximately one third are women.** The profile of Team De Ver C.C. is far more diverse than the average cycling club. Not every club will achieve that level of diversity but all clubs can improve their diversity and gender balance.

Significantly, De Ver does not monopolise black cyclists in south London. It is not a silo. Other local clubs such as VCL, Brixton Cycles, Penge CC and Dulwich Paragon all have black and minority members and Herne Hill Velodrome attracts riders from diverse backgrounds. There are options but Team De Ver CC does stand out and the club makes its inclusive values very clear to prospective members.

Maurice Burton is a unique individual. Not every club will have a Maurice Burton, but by embracing diversity, more Maurice Burtons will emerge to help shape the future of our sport for the better.



FROM GRASS ROOTS TO WORLD CLASS

When interviewed for this report, Maurice Burton spoke about where he wants to go next with Team De Ver CC. “I have unfinished business,” he told me. “There are a lot of youngsters out there who don’t even know they can ride.”

The development of Youth and Junior riders, for the most part, now sits outside traditional cycling clubs and is, as Maurice recognises, an important strand to improving greater diversity in cycling. This is where we will produce the next generation of world-class British cycling talent. Promoting diversity and inclusion within the Youth and Junior ranks is vital, “You need youngsters and you need heroes and role models. Go to schools with Marlon’s [Black-British Champions In Cycling] exhibition and show youngsters what they can do.”

Similar points were made by a number of respondents to the questionnaire, for instance:

“You need clubs for children, accessible from schools,”

“Go to the schools and catch them whilst they’re young,”

“Approach schools and grow interest from a young age, especially schools in areas with minorities,”

An important mantra in diversity is: “Talent is everywhere, opportunity is not.” Opportunity or lack of it, does not necessarily mean cost and income, it is also about visibility, awareness and reaching places not previously exposed to the message.

In the workplace, that could mean advertising job roles more widely and to target certain groups, for instance “#BlackGirlsCode” in the tech industry. In cycling we see it with women’s racing. Listing a women’s race on the BC website is not enough, successful race promoters proactively target women’s cycling groups.

A specific recommendation for both British Cycling and Youth and Junior cycling clubs and teams is to proactively target prospective young riders from BAME backgrounds and to be racially aware in how those riders are included and developed. British Cycling can do a lot here to create more opportunities as they did for Lizzie Deignan to support and amplify the efforts of Youth and Junior cycling groups around the country.

This report focuses on creating greater diversity and inclusion in welcoming new riders to the sport and talent spotting future champions is a part of that. To gain a deeper understanding of the pathways for BAME riders through the sport from grass roots to world class, visit the “Made In Britain... Black British Champions in Cycling” exhibition.



RECOMMENDATIONS

A variety of approaches are needed: Black, Muslim and Women Of Colour groups can work alongside and hand-in-hand with the efforts of traditional cycling clubs. The efforts of cycling clubs themselves will vary depending upon size and location, but all cycling clubs can achieve greater diversity. Here are some suggestions to get the ball rolling:

PROMOTE VISIBILITY (BUT BE AUTHENTIC)

WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA: if your club has members from BAME backgrounds, with their permission, include those members in any visual representation of club membership. This helps make BAME participation visible to others.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICIES: develop a policy for your club and include it on your website. If your club has a policy to promote women's cycling, think how the two can work together. If you are unsure how to go about this, ask for help and be sure to include BAME members. **Inclusion is an essential ingredient to diversity.**

PROMOTE AMBASSADORS: ideally these should be existing members from a BAME background. Not everyone will want to take on this role and that should be respected, but try and make a start. Ambassadors can be a point of contact for new and prospective members from BAME backgrounds.

BE HONEST: most cycling clubs currently are not diverse, if you do not have many BAME members or even no BAME members at all, do not try to be something that you are not, **but do promote your values:** if you are open to all newcomers regardless of race and gender then say so. Work with groups such as BoB and BCN so they know you exist. We all have to start somewhere, so long as we make a start.

PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY

DIFFERENT RIDES WITH DIFFERENT START TIMES: many larger clubs do this already. Kingston Wheelers have multiple rides that depart from the weekly 9am Sunday morning meeting point covering a variety of abilities. There are also Saturday rides, midweek rides and early start rides (often non-stop) for those who need to get back early. Be sure these rides are signposted and promoted for new and existing members.

DEMYSTIFY ETIQUETTE: provide context to cycling club culture, what it means to be in a club, to ride in a group and general do's and don'ts. Much of this happens informally as riders are introduced to the sport and make their own progression. Cycling clubs are intimidating and this is true across the board, but can be especially so for BAME riders.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS: Cycling clubs are member organisations where people give up their own free time to help others. There are limitations, for instance the slowest club run usually goes from around 15mph average and it is difficult for clubs to accommodate riders not yet at that level of fitness. Breeze rides for women, for instance, do cater to riders not yet at that level. Most BAME respondents understood this constraint, but some seemed unaware, but new pathways (BCN, BoB, WOC) can play a part.

BE INCLUSIVE

INCLUSION IS ESSENTIAL TO DIVERSITY: Diversity is not just about having BAME riders present, it is about ensuring riders of all backgrounds feel included and visible, that we all feel part of one joined up community with shared values.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE: one suggestion encouraged twinning clubs or at least having a dialogue so that those clubs with more experience in building a diverse membership share that experience with other clubs wishing to follow suit.

SIGNPOST DIVERSE GROUPS: Brothers on Bikes (BoB), Black Cyclists Network (BCN) and the Women of Colour cycling group are all doing great things. Be sure your club is aware of these groups and that there are signposts to them on your clubs website and social media pages. Be sure these groups are aware of your club. Build a dialogue. so that if they have riders who want to step up their riding they may consider your club.

PROMOTE PATHWAYS: specialist groups already act as pathways into the sport for BAME riders. BCN founder Mani Arthur (also Finsbury Park CC) encourages other riders to join local cycling clubs. Riders coming through BCN have the opportunity to learn about cycling culture and etiquette before progressing to a club. Naturally some riders will just ride with BoB or BCN and that is sufficient for their needs. That's OK too.

REACH OUT TO SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: This is especially important for clubs and teams that focus on developing Youth and Junior riders, but also British Cycling on a national level. Where possible use role models, young men and women from diverse backgrounds, and harness their experience to encourage others.

TELL MORE THAN ONE STORY

CHALLENGE MAINSTREAM MEDIA: Specialist cycling media does promote kit from entry-level budget options upwards, but mainstream (non-cycling) media seems fixated on the “elitist” tag. This must be challenged, especially by the bigger names in cycling.

CHALLENGE CYCLING MEDIA: Cycling Weekly has already featured profiles on BoB and the Sustainable Cycling Foundation in Nigeria, but how often do we see black and minority faces in the pages of cycling magazines? Not much. The cycling media can do more to promote diverse stories and images and improve the visibility of BAME riders.

PAY ATTENTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA: Cyclists from BAME backgrounds are already active on social media, be it Facebook, Twitter and especially Instagram. Make sure you follow some of these accounts and promote them to friends and colleagues.

PROMOTE DIVERSE STORIES: There are plenty of stories out there if you look for them and especially so on social media. Some cycling brands are picking up on this.

Within the time it has taken to compile this report a number of cycling brands have featured BAME riders in their marketing. SRAM's latest marketing campaign features Yewande Adesida, a Black British woman who has recently switched from rowing to track cycling. Yewande has also featured in recent marketing for Rapha and also Attacus Cycling, another clothing brand, alongside BCN founder Mani Arthur. Support and promote these varied stories to your networks to break down unhelpful stereotypes and emphasise that cycling is many things to many people.

NEW ROAD PRODUCT



SRAM

RAISE YOUR OWN RACIAL AWARENESS

RECOGNISE THE CHALLENGE: if one person stands out in a group, be aware they may feel an extra level of intimidation than any other newcomer. Be sure that person feels welcome without overdoing it. What may seem a curious encounter for you is often incredibly uncomfortable for the other person. **Don't stare, smile and say hello!**

Don't overdo the "boot camp" drill for newcomers. Rethink how newcomers are developed within the club run set-up, be mindful of their needs, communicate with the rider to give context and communicate with peers to avoid duplication on a ride.

LYCRA is an integral to cycling, but be aware of cultural nuances e.g. Muslim cyclists.

IT IS OK TO BE CHALLENGED AND UNCOMFORTABLE: Many white people are uncomfortable talking about race. That is because most of us are not equipped to have the conversation. Read, listen and learn. The most powerful learning experience is to be the only white face in an entirely black place. You learn so much because you will hear a more candid message reinforced by multiple voices with a shared experience. Even the process of writing this report was a learning experience for me and I have been very involved in diversity for several of years.

BE AN ALLY NOT A SAVIOUR: Even if you have only one black rider in your club, take the time to understand that person's experience and support them if uncomfortable situations arise. Call out unacceptable behaviour if needed, but do not overdo it, being a "saviour" is not helpful and can be patronising but a good "ally" is always appreciated. Check out the further reading section, use Google and YouTube, search for: "white ally".

READ ABOUT DIVERSITY: check out the reading list and links at the end of this report.

MONITOR PROGRESS

QUANTIFY your membership through joining forms and renewals. Asking about ethnicity need not be awkward and is welcomed as part of the process of making progress. Data collection is important as progress can be monitored. This is especially important for large organisations such as British Cycling, CTC and CTT but it is also relevant to clubs themselves and especially those with large memberships.



BAME FOCUSED CYCLING GROUPS

This is not an exhaustive list, but members of these groups have played an important role in bringing this report to fruition. Some groups are more established than others and some are still quite informal, but all of them are doing great work that deserves the support and recognition of the cycling community as a whole.

TEAM DE VER CC/ DE VER CYCLES

Former professional cyclist and the first Black British cycling champion Maurice Burton acquired De Ver Cycles in Streatham, south London after he retired from racing in the mid 1980s. Team De Ver Cycling Club was started shortly afterwards. From the outset Maurice was determined to ensure the club was diverse and inclusive in its values. Team De Ver Cycling Club has over 60 members and is fully affiliated to British Cycling.

[Website: teamdever.com/](http://teamdever.com/)

BROTHERS ON BIKES (BOB)

Brothers on Bikes (BoB) began through one of its founder members Junaid Ibrahim connecting informally with other Muslim and Asian cyclists while out on his bike. Over time a network grew in London, Birmingham and elsewhere into a nationwide network of over 600 members. The club is fully affiliated to British Cycling. BoB has attracted media coverage from Cycling Weekly, Cycling Plus and Cycling UK and won the best 'Community Project of the Year' award at the London Cycling Campaign Awards in 2016.

[Website: www.brothersonbikes.cc](http://www.brothersonbikes.cc)

[Strava: www.strava.com/clubs/BonB](http://www.strava.com/clubs/BonB)

WOMEN OF COLOUR (WOC) CYCLING GROUP

A Women of Colour cycling group has recently formed in London, with prominent members including Jools Walker, aka Lady Velo and Jenni Gwiazdowski, founder of London Bike Kitchen. The group meets regularly at Look Mum No Hands, providing a network for women of colour interested in developing their experience of cycling.

[Link: www.lookmumnohands.com/events/women-of-colour-cycling-meetup](http://www.lookmumnohands.com/events/women-of-colour-cycling-meetup)

BLACK-BRITISH CYCLING CHAMPIONS

An exhibition that tells the story of a succession of elite level Black British riders from former pros Maurice Burton, Russell Williams and Dave Clarke, to former BC Academy rider Germain Burton, to junior national champion Charlotte Cole-Hossain. These stories are inspiring, but also contain the pain of exclusion and discrimination, which was often subtle and unconscious but damaging nonetheless. It is important that white people hear these stories.

The exhibition is the brainchild of Dr Marlon Moncrieffe, a former racing cyclist and an academic at the University of Brighton. The exhibition was first held in December 2018 in Brighton before moving to Manchester in February 2019 and there are plans to take the exhibition around the UK.

Instagram: www.instagram.com/blackchampions/

Twitter: www.twitter.com/BlackChampions

BLACK CYCLISTS NETWORK (BCN)

Black Cyclists Network (BCN) was founded in 2018 by Mani Arthur, a racing cyclist and member of Finsbury Park CC, with the aim of bringing together riders from black and minority backgrounds. Some riders may already be in cycling clubs or go on to join one, while others may just be content to just ride with BCN. Anyone is welcome to ride with BCN and I have ridden with the group a number of times, as have other white and Asian riders. BCN has made a big splash in a short space of time. Fifteen riders turned up for its inaugural ride, it has over 1,000 Instagram followers and the group has its own kit.

Instagram: www.instagram.com/blackcyclistsnetwork

Strava: www.strava.com/clubs/BlackCyclistsNetwork



DATA CAPTURE SUGGESTIONS

Census data is a helpful reference for effective data capture (see link below). Data can be summarised and sub-categories amalgamated appropriate to the size and make-up of the membership in question. Here is an example:

White British/ Other White

White British/ Other White

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

Asian/Asian British

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

Other ethnic group (please specify)

Prefer not to say

} These data fields are sometimes captured
} in a questionnaire, but then expressed as
} a total % BAME figure in a report, depending
} on the number of respondents, etc.

www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk



FURTHER READING

RACE, IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

Why I am No Longer Talking to White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge. The bible. This global best seller is a challenging read that will make you think.

Brit(ish) by Afua Hirsch. A beautifully written personal account describing her life a mixed race woman in Britain, who often does not feel entirely British.

Diversify by June Sarpong. A common sense approach to understanding diversity and inclusion issues that helps put good ideas into practice.

Back in the Frame: How to get back on your bike, whatever life throws at you by Jools Walker. A touching memoir about a love of cycling, wellbeing and diversity in cycling.

The Unbearable Whiteness of Cycling, by Kevin Hylton, Cycling Weekly, 24 August 2017. An expert opinion piece based on the writer's own lived experience.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC READING

Moncrieffe, M. (2017). **'Made in Britain': uncovering the life-histories of Black-British Champions in Cycling Exhibition**. 10-20th December 2018, Grand Parade Galleries, University of Brighton, UK and touring the UK during 2019.

Moncrieffe, M. (2019). **'Exploring power-dynamics through 'race' in cycling: A focus on Black-British Female Champions in Cycling'** in conference proceedings Examining Gender in Cycling Cultures: Insights and Methods. Manchester Met University, UK, 14 February 2019.

'Race' and Sport: Critical Race Theory, by Kevin Hylton, first published in 2008 this book applies academic theories to examining racial attitudes in sport.

Contesting 'Race' and Sport, by Kevin Hylton, published in 2018 explores themes such as whiteness, diversity, colourblindness, unconscious bias and identity in sport.

SUGGESTED WEB LINKS

A Quick Brown Fox, Ayesha McGowan's blog.

www.aquickbrownfox.com

VeloCityGirl, Jools Walker's blog

www.velocitygirl.co.uk

The Unbearable Whiteness Of Cycling, Kevin Hylton, The Conversation, 27 April 2017

www.theconversation.com/the-unbearable-whiteness-of-cycling-76256

Why Is Cycling Such A ‘White’ Sport? Matt Seaton, The Guardian, 10 August 2009

www.theguardian.com/environment/ethicallivingblog/2009/aug/10/cycling-white-sport

The Danger Of A Single Story, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, TEDGlobal, July 2009

www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?

SRAM Campaign featuring Yewande Adesida

Develo: www.develo.cc/yewande-adesida-diversity-in-cycling/

Cycling Tips: www.cyclingtips.com/2019/02/representation-matters-in-cycling-too/

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to a number of key contributors who not only responded to questionnaires and interviews, but also promoted the questionnaire to their networks and also have provided feedback on the various drafts it took to complete this report. Thank you to Matt Kumar and Alex Reid of Kingston Wheelers, Mani Arthur, founder of the Black Cyclists Network, Junaid Ibrahim, founder of Brothers on Bikes, Yewande Adesida, of SES Racing, Biola Babawale, of all-women’s cycling group Velociposse, Maurice and Mia Burton, of De Ver Cycles, Nasima Siddiqui of Wyndymilla, PJ Dulay, Fireflies and Cicli Artigianali, and all those individuals who gave their time.

Thank you also to Caroline Hemmington, Tim Lawn, Will Rostron, Chris Jennings, Phil Barella and everyone at Kingston Wheelers for supporting this work. Thank you to Alice Lethbridge, Yanto Barker, Adam Tranter and Fusion Media. Thank you to Dave Ladkin for making everything look good.

Thank you to everyone at British Cycling: Julie Harrington, Jonathan Rigby, Scott Dougal, Emma Wright, Nick Chamberlin, Rob Mace, Gemma-Paige Reynolds, Georgina Lindsay, Tom Millington, Phil Ball, Craig Myers, but most of all Chidi Onuoha who worked her magic and gave kind encouragement to help bring this report to a wider audience.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Edwards was born in Cheshire and grew up around the North West of England. He began cycling properly in 1982 on the roads of East Lancashire, joining Nelson Wheelers CC the following year, competing in Schoolboy crits and TTs. On moving to the Staffordshire Moorlands, he joined Leek CC. He competed in the Peter Buckley national Junior series, leading to selection to the West Midlands Centre of Excellence.

Contemporaries included Mark Lovatt and Matt Stephens. His local chain gang included the likes of Steve Farrell and John Herety. These were the cycling heartlands that would lay the foundation for Andy's lifelong love of the sport alongside individuals who went on to help shape British cycling as we know it today.

After going to university and moving to London cycling took a back seat. Andy returned to the sport in 2009 joining Kingston Wheelers and started racing again, quickly attaining a second cat licence and racing a mix of 2nd cat, Elite and vets road racing. He achieved three road race wins and in 2014, while racing for Sigma Sport, competed alongside Geraint Thomas, Simon and Adam Yates and other World Tour pros in the Elite Men's National Road Race Championships as a 43 year old amateur.

Off the bike, Andy led the Kingston Wheelers Skills Day which equips club riders with bunch riding skills relevant to road racing and grand fondos. He has hosted interviews with the likes of Rod Ellingworth, Yanto Barker, Alice Barnes and Daniel Lloyd.

Andy's day job is working in the music business. He has written many marketing reports during his career and is very involved in a number of music industry related diversity initiatives, which has been a hot topic in recently years. It was this experience that led Andy to formulate Kingston Wheelers' partnership with the Sustainable Cycling Foundation in Nigeria and writing this report.

You can follow Andy on Twitter [@andyedwardsster](https://twitter.com/andyedwardsster)



PHOTO CREDITS

Cover BCN, courtesy of Francis Cade

Page 4 Julie Harrington, courtesy of British Cycling

Page 5 Yewande Adesida, courtesy of Sam Holden

Page 6 Andy Edwards & Mani Arthur, courtesy of Andy Edwards

Page 7 Biola Babawale, courtesy of Simon Blackwell

Page 9 PJ Dulay, courtesy of Richard Lewisohn

Page 11 Mani Arthur, courtesy of Francis Cade

Page 12 BCN, courtesy of Mani Arthur

Page 13 BoB, courtesy of Andy Edwards

Page 14 Matt Kumar, courtesy of Matt Kumar

Page 15 Junaid Ibrahim, courtesy of Junaid Ibrahim

Page 16 Nasima Siddiqui, courtesy of Wyndymilla

Page 17 BCN, courtesy of Andy Edwards

Page 18 BCN, courtesy of Mani Arthur

Page 20 BCN, courtesy of Mani Arthur

Page 21 Biola Babawale and teammates, courtesy of Velociposse

Page 24 Mani Arthur, courtesy of Mani Arthur

Page 25 BCN, courtesy of Mani Arthur

Page 26 Zohaid Dada, courtesy of Junaid Ibrahim

Page 28 Alex Reid, courtesy of Pete Hair

Page 30 WOC group courtesy of Yewande Adesida

Page 31 Kingston Wheelers/ Sustainable Cycling Foundation, Nigeria, courtesy of Klearpics

Page 32 PJ Dulay, courtesy of PJ Dulay

Page 33 Team De Ver CC, courtesy of Mia Burton

Page 34 Team De Ver CC and De Ver Cycles, courtesy of Paul Christian

Page 35 Alex Reid, courtesy of Ellen Isherwood

Page 38 Yewande Adesida, courtesy of SRAM

Page 39 Nasima Siddiqui, courtesy of Wyndymilla

Page 41 BCN, courtesy of Francis Cade

Page 42 Alex Reid, courtesy of Ellen Isherwood

Page 44 Mani Arthur, courtesy of Mani Arthur

Page 45 Andy Edwards and Junior Peaks RR competitors, courtesy of Andy Edwards,
taken by Harry Edwards RIP