



Bankrider briefing document (2022/2023)
Oxford University Rowing Clubs

To be read and understood by all Bankriders prior to
bankriding OURCs-run regattas:
IWLs, A4s, Torpids, ISLs, and Summer VIIIs.

Legal stuff: The Isis towpath is part of the Thames Path, which designated a bridleway, with access controlled by the Countryside Act, which specifies that “Any member of the public shall have, as a right of way, the right to ride a bicycle, [...], on any bridleway, but in exercising that right cyclists shall give way to pedestrians and persons on horseback”.

While cycling: cyclists are guests on the towpath, hence cyclists must: give way to pedestrians, including people who are temporarily pedestrian (e.g. standing beside cycles), and people who suddenly dash out into cyclists’ paths; not assume they have a right of passage on the towpath, and; ensure their cycles are well-maintained and have lights if necessary, as highway rules still apply on the towpath. There are no formal rules on which side of a bridleway a cyclist should ride down nor on bells - be considerate!

During racing: any bankrider involved in an incident on the towpath must stop and ensure all parties involved in said incident are uninjured or must remain with any injured parties until further assistance arrives. Before returning to their racing crew, the bankrider must also exchange information with any parties involved in the incident if appropriate. If either of these actions leads to the bankrider being absent from a racing crew with an N-status cox for any period of time, the bankrider must notify the nearest marshal, who shall notify Racedesk to ensure the crew is adequately supported until the bankrider can return to their crew. This may include holding the crew at the finish until the bankrider can return and ‘collect’ their crew.

During warm-up/return to boathouses: any bankrider involved in an incident must stop, as must their crew. The bankrider must alert the nearest marshal and proceed as above, with Racedesk expediting substitute bankriders if the crew is yet to race.

In summary: while cycling on the towpath, keep a very sharp lookout ahead, especially when accompanying a crew to avoid any accidents. Give way to pedestrians and be considerate to all users of the towpath. Ensure your bike is well-maintained, bike lights and bells are used when necessary, that your cycling is competent, and all hands should be on the cycle’s handlebars at all times. Always remember that all other towpath users have as much right to be on the towpath as anyone else, including cyclists, regardless of how inebriated, unpredictable, vulnerable, distracted or any combination of the above.
If involved in an incident: stop, provide assistance, tell a marshal!