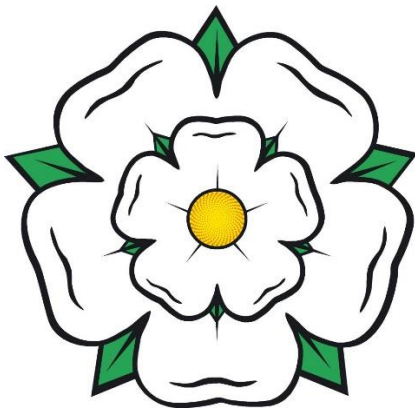


DALES DIVIDE



The Rules and the route

The rules are very straightforward and follow the basic 'Self-Supported Bike-Packing' ethos and rule-set. Like most similar events, there is nobody watching riders on the course, the rules are simple but rely on riders being honest and doing the right thing. If you do something outside the rules then that's fine, but please tell everyone you 'disqualified yourself' and don't then claim you beat people when really you caught a train around

some of the course or telephoned your partner or your mum out to bring you sandwiches!

- – You should ride all the course under your own power
- – You should not pre-arrange anything, but are free to take commercially available benefits that are equally open to all riders. That means you can use shops, hotels, cafes and the like that are open equally to all. You cannot arrange a friend to do something especially for you.
- – If you leave the route (for example to get your bike fixed, or yourself fixed...) you should return to where you left it, to carry on. NB - This is IMPORTANT, last year some riders left the route and re-joined further-down. Rider GPX tracks can be checked post ride. If there is a diversion that is needed, for example a track locked shut, then take a photo of the location.
- – You shouldn't do anything that brings Bikepacking into disrepute - PLEASE CLOSE ALL GATES behind you (unless a rider is immediately behind, not 200m off in the distance...)

That's it really – simple!

Because of the nature of the Dales Divide and the will to encourage as many people as possible to improve their own riding and the skills of UK riders in general there are a few rules specific to the Dales Divide.

Whereas normally in very strict races, helping others, giving them breakdown assistance is not really allowed, the DD is different. Unless you're at the sharp end of the race and going for the podium, you will be encouraged to help others should they need it, especially if they are stuck, but equally so if they just need help or encouragement with the route or some company.

Riding in pairs or larger groups is fine, especially if this is a way to encourage new riders.

The route crosses a few towns and a city. In these areas you can use any route you want to cross the built up town (see note on Scarborough, as we would like riders to follow the coastal promenade), otherwise you do not need to stick to the exact GPX line as you will probably be seeking out resupplies and the like. These towns are;

- – Boroughbridge
- – York
- – Driffield
- – Scarborough - But you need to visit the Sea Front Promenade and go around the 'Castle Headland'.
- – Northallerton
- – Catterick Garrison

Just go easy if in pedestrian zones or on one-way roads etc. (try not to go the wrong way!)

That was the rules, now the route... (suggest you read this in conjunction with the OS Map & GPX)

This is a detailed description of what to expect. If you are an expert rider then read no more – start packing your bike - this isn't for you! For anyone else, here is a brief description of the route that hopefully helps;

From Arnside the route climbs up to Arnside Knotts and enters the woods for some nice woodland singletrack before dropping onto the Silverdale road and then more woodland up and over Warton Crag woods. Don't worry if you think it is busy with riders, they will soon be strung out. Crossing the M6 and the A6, along quiet roads, sometimes gated, crosses the Lune at Gressingham. This must have once been a very strategic crossing as there is no other bridge for 10 miles in either direction. At Melling a couple of Km of gravel track gets to Burton-in-Lonsdale before crossing the A65 [Take Care!] to where the real climbing starts. You are entering the Yorkshire Dales National Park here. Crossing the river in Kingsdale either by the ford or the footbridge, the track turns into a grassy bridleway steeply onto Scales Moor with a few Km of singletrack, mainly level along the top, to reach the famous Ribbleshead viaduct. A short section of busy road before turning off onto Cam roman road, once the Lancaster to Richmond turnpike road climbs up about half of it before turning down the Pennine Bridleway to Ling Gill (400 year old pack horse bridge) and following the PBW over the UK's longest span timber bridge up onto Thieves Moss on the shoulder of Ingleborough and some great downhill into the hamlet of Wharfe and village of Austwick. Turn left at Alex Pilkingtons house (winner of the 2018 HT500) still on the PBW up to High Bark (Chris Ellison's farm) **[Food and Water here]** and down to Helwith Bridge **[Good Pub here]**. A short climb up a track gets to Malham Moor and on to Malham estate and Tarn. You have now crossed the divide and water no longer flows West to the Irish Sea but now flows East to the North Sea. This is the start of Mastilles Line the iconic Dales green lane. We only ride a third of it before turning off to Lee Gate and Bordley, a mixture of tracks and gated roads get to Hetton and the start of a stiff climb up to Rystone edge. It's steep but once up there level and downhill shooters tracks lead to Bolton Abbey the village and the estate. At the river there are tea rooms, a tap on the wall and crossing the bridge gets us to the road 50m away. Sometimes the gate is locked but hundreds, literally hundreds of cyclists a day cross it, or there is a 50m distance walk around that gets you to the same road, 10m away. A quiet road with a lot of ups and downs in it gets you to a climb up onto Pockstones Moor. A good track that leads to a couple of Km of road before turning off again. Through a farm and onto Braithwaite Moor. 100m

after the farm, make sure you go through the next gate to be on the other side of the wall and follow the GPS line. The bridleway on the ground is not well defined for 500m, just a sheep trod, but then at a small stream crossing becomes a proper shooting track, and good downhill to the road. **With the exception of the climb out of Summerbridge you've finished the hardest part of the course**, by far. For new riders it's important to know that this is the end of a pretty tough section and from now on things get a lot, lot easier for a long way – phew! Now there is 8km of road to Summerbridge, mainly downhill, but out of the village is a punchy 1.2km long bridleway that gets you back up onto the moor level. Once there though it feels generally downhill for 20Km! This is a long section of track, gravel, road, track, gravel, road all very fast that goes through hamlets and farms (including one particularly stinky pig wiener unit!) Eventually the route crosses the A1 at Boroughbridge.

There are good shops and places for food in Boroughbridge but the main shops and town is 200m off the route. As you leave the town though there is a large Morrisons (7am to 10pm, filling station 6am-11pm). 2Km of track across fields and 4km of gravel gets onto the quiet roads of the Vale of York, now absolutely flat for miles. Over the toll bridge (free for bikes) soon at Benningborough Hall. At night the gate is locked but the chain has a large loop on it to allow pedestrians (and bikes) to pull the gates apart and go through and ride the estate road. Still flat roads, still on the Sustrans route, lead to cross the East Coast main railway line and soon you are on the York cycle track following the river Ouse into York. The elevation here is just 12m above sea level. Into the middle of York, you must pass the Minster and there are endless opportunities for resupply or even a more formal café stop if you want. The route through the city, especially inside the walls, is complicated but just head in the right direction and you'll soon be at the site of the Easterly cycle track that starts near Morrisons/Halfords/Starbucks. An old disused railway line it's fast but with the usual obstacles of anti-vehicle barriers etc. This is the Sustrans C2C Way of the Roses track. Nearing the end, the shortcut to Osmotherley turns off here but carrying on a series of cycle tracks and minor roads gets to Stanford Bridge, scene of the famous battle of 1066 which so changed the history of the UK. Flat Sustrans roads go through several small villages culminating with Bishop Wilton just after which a hill appears from nowhere and gives a steep road climb up to Great Givendale. Crossing the dale is steep for a short distance including a 200m push up but then rewarded with a fantastic downhill across the fields and into a beautiful secluded valley. Again a steep escape from this valley gets up onto a roman fort of 200m altitude so from there a long, long slowly descending grassy route of over 10km . A short road climb gets to where the track turns off again and about 1km of track that is rideable but with some massive ruts sadly caused by recreational offroaders. A short distance and you are in Driffield. Lots of opportunity for resupply and especially the café that is part of Bike Cave on the main street which is highly recommended.

Leaving Driffield on quiet roads you seem to cross the train line many, many times but finally come to the village of Burton Agnes where the route takes a track out and up before descending to Rudston a pretty village that is home to the tallest stone monolith in England and then another track up and down to level roads through Burton Flemming and leading to a pretty wooded bridleway climb up at Cansdale. At the top the BW comes through a farm and really steep road down to Flixton. The way goes out on a dead end road to the marsh land. At the end of the tarmac the BW crosses a couple of fields, a drainage dyke (all dry!) and a railway line before going through a farm yard. The way through the yard isn't obvious but any of the many gates gets you to the tarmac road out into the estate of Eastfield and the famous McCain oven chip factory! Out of the housing estate a bridleway climb takes you to Oliver's Mount, a historic motor racing circuit that drops you into the bright lights of Scarborough with all the usual seaside 'charm' of candy floss, kiss-me-quick hats burgers and stuff that you never knew you missed! Again take any route you like through the town **[However you need to visit the Sea Front Promenade and go around the 'Castle Headland']**, make the most of resupply but beware of the one-way streets and busy traffic. After this town, apart from a few village shops that have limited hours, there is very little until Northallerton 120km away.

Leaving Scarborough on a cycle track [NB NEW ROUTE DIFFERS HERE TO 2021] you leave the old rail track at Staintondale, then heading back west across the busy A171 [Take Care!], then through the forest on gravel towards Broxa. After this there is another 10km of gravel with gentle climbing at first then gentle downhill comes to where a BW leaves the forest road. 2km of bridleway, all downhill but difficult when (very) wet although fine when normal or dry skirts the RAF radar listening station of Fylingdales and comes to the road at Eller Beck Bridge. This is the road where just about every car advert for 30 years has been filmed as it is an iconic road across the moors and stunning TV footage from the Tour de Yorkshire. It's a busy road though and packed with holiday makers and motorbikes but we only ride along 500m of this road before turning off downhill and onto an abandoned railway line that goes right into Goathland, scene for all the 'Heartbeat' TV filming and with cafes if you hit it at the right time. From here on some really steep up and downhill tarmac roads as all the roads seem to cross the valleys not skirt them! Don't underestimate the effort in the North Yorkshire Moors if you try to go too hard.

Down a short 1in5 hill and straight up an equally short and steep climb drops back down to Grosmont, crossing two spectacular fords (walk them if slippery) to another tourist honeytrap with steam trains, ice creams and cafes. A few Km of gravel track leads to a quiet tarmac road and some stupidly steep tarmac road, short but 33% to a BW through the woods and coming out at Glaisedale. A small shop there before starting the shallow climb of 11km of gravel up and over the Rigg and a tarmac section to the Lion Pub. A popular tourist pub but has an outside tap on the wall for water. In previous year the owner has let riders sleep overnight in the beer cellar! 16km of pretty level gravel abandoned mineral train line which eventually turns off onto a short BW crossing to road into Broughton Woods, on or near the Cleveland Way it turns into a BW that drops to the road and a caravan park. Take careful note of the GPS as there are many paths around here. The caravan park has toilets and a shop if open.

A climb up past the abandoned Gliding Club of Carleton Bank has a short steep BW descent to a road end the tarmac of which takes you for 1km before turning onto farm tracks towards Clain Woods, and a climb up before the long descent into Osmotherley. A couple of pubs here but not much in the way of resupply. The 'shortcut' from York re-joins the main track here too.

A couple of Km of road, under the A19, reaches a turnoff onto farm tracks for 2km across to another small road that takes you to Northallerton. The administrative capital of North Yorkshire there is plenty of resupply here and we are on the flat lands again for a while. A mixture of gravel roads and quiet roads takes us a good distance before crossing the A1M and into Hornby Park and the village of Tunstall. Through a farm on a BW which comes out at the edge of Catterick Garrison, don't be surprised to see military vehicles and training personnel at any time of day or night. The garrison is the largest in Europe so has lot of resupply including a 6am-midnight Tesco and every fast-food variety you could wish for (or not!) as well as 24hr filling station. **Again this is the last resupply for a while so make good use of it.**

Then there is some tarmac that gets you to Leyburn Moor where the track then climbs up on bridleways and shooting (gravel) tracks onto the high moors. There are 3 huts (bothys) all within a 10km stretch here. They have inside/outside flushing toilets, tables, chairs, a fire (if there are logs there) and a real good shelter for a rest or a night. They are owned by the shooting estate for shooters to lunch in but they welcome public use as long as they leave no trace. My favourite is the last one (Greenside Sweet William). Make sure you latch the door to keep sheep out.

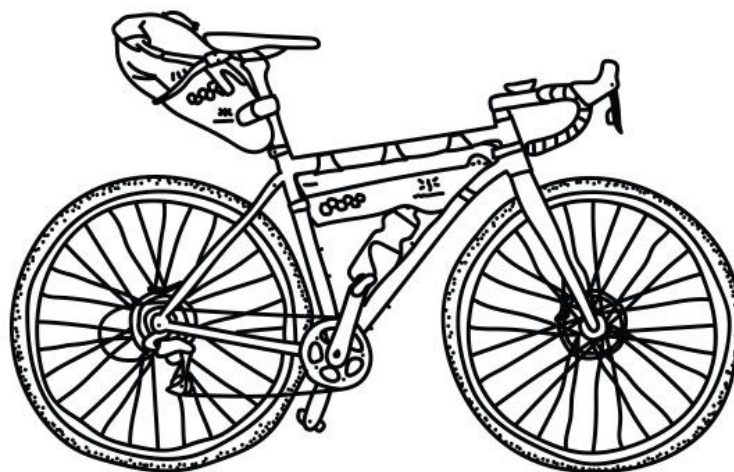
The gravel descent from Sweet William leads to 7km of fine grassy BW and the steep tarmac descent into Askrigg. A good café and shop before tarmac to Bainbridge and the start of the Roman Road climb up to Cam High Road. A relentless gravel climb that has been stripped of grass now by

offroaders but when standing on the top, it feels like the top of the world. At 590m it's the highest part of the course. From here the last 60km to Arnside is predominantly downhill. Predominantly but not exclusively!

A beautiful gated tarmac road leads to where the Pennine BW turns off across the moor on a grassy track descending to the road head at Newby Head Pass and up to Arten Gill. A complicated BW junction takes you onto the level Monkey Beck BW along a level ledge that hits the road above Dent train station, England's highest mainline station. A steep tarmac downhill and along the Dentdale valley following the river so mainly downhill to the village of Dent. A shop 50m off the route, a café and pub before carrying on along the valley with a few lumps in the road, a short BW descent and road to the hamlet of Killington. Here a 1km BW leads to a junction and short but steep track up a single field to a farm and onto the ancient England-Scotland main road – now just a singletrack road. A BW into the windfarm is tough for 800m but then downhill to the tarmac and you're done with any off-road work. Quiet lanes crossing under the M6, through Gatebeck, Deepthwaite, Heversham lead to the estuary side road through Sandside and to Arnside. Ride onto the pier and touch the flag pole!

The York to Osmotherley shortcut.

If you ride the York to Osmotherley shortcut, it turns off late along the York Cycletrack (as described above) into an unlikely looking industrial area. The first couple of KM isn't pretty with scrap yards and the like but you soon get away from these and a series of field tracks and quiet roads keep you off the A64 trunk road. Once at Earswick you are on a fast flat road for a good while through small conurbations until 8km after Strensall you turn up a grassy track coming out at Marton Priory. A series of grassy roads and gravel tracks comes out at Crayke and a quiet road with a few climbs in though Oulston, Coxwold and to Kilburn home of the famous Yorkshire Mouseman Thomson, whose furniture none of us can afford any more! After Kilburn a very steep track (about 1km) through the woods comes out at the top of Sutton Bank with the gliding club a level 800m off the route. There are plenty of buildings here to sleep in. After crossing the main A170 the sustrans route of tarmac and gravel leads to Boltby forest and a shallow climb up on the Cleveland Way with stunning views across to Northallerton and Thirsk before the track eventually turns to tarmac and drops into Osmotherley.



Alex Pilkington & Chris Ellison – March 2022