

A century and moor

The Ron Kitching Challenge Ride and Sportive has 100 and 150km routes – and an option to ride the steepest road in Britain. **John Storms** outlines what to expect

You can see for miles on top of the North York Moors. And if you've ridden there during The Ron Kitching Challenge Ride and Sportive on 25 June, you'll have earned the view. This year's event is a fully supported ride with course signage, nutrition stations provided by High 5 Sports, mechanical back-up and chip timing.

There's also a special L'Eroica-style vintage category for riders with pre-1990 bikes and components. There will be prizes for the best turned out bike and the best tribute bike. There are no specific rules about clothing, but vintage jerseys, shoes and caps will add to the spirit of the event and will look good in the Classic Bike group photo of all vintage entrants. Each participant will be expected to ride (and finish!) either the 100 or 150km route. Bikes will be checked by a CTC expert to make sure they comply with pre-1990 standards.

Whatever kind of bike you ride, the rewards in terms of scenery and achievement are the same. It's not just about pedal revolutions and the road ahead. Look up from the tarmac and there's plenty to see. I pre-rode the course in April and have picked out my highlights.

The Ron Kit connection

The ride is named for Ron Kitching and includes some of his favourite roads over the North York Moors.

To many members, Ron will need no introduction. But if you've joined CTC more recently, Ron was a star racing man who founded and ran one of the largest and most successful bicycle and parts importers in the UK. He also played a major part in the formation of the York Rally – now York Cycle Show – whose racecourse venue is the start and finish for this ride.

Nearby Harrogate was where CTC was founded in 1878. It was also once the centre of the Kitching business and much of the UK cycle trade. In the 1930s, Ron joined CTC and raced for the Yorkshire Century Racing Club. A top-level road racer himself, Ron Kitching ran his business for over 30 years and was the original importer of Milremo, Zeus, Suntour, TA, Cinelli, Super Champion, Ishiwata, and many more brands.

Ron promoted his own bicycle frames too, built by some of the top British craftsmen, including Arthur Metcalf and Wes Mason who operated Metcalf & Mason and 'MKM' – Kitching's initial in the middle revealing his role as silent partner. Even the great Beryl Burton rode a 'RON KIT' frame.

Castles, halls & history

At 19km into the ride, you may still be getting warmed up. But look out for the remains of the castle at the village of Sheriff Hutton. It sits



on a low ridge between the Vale of York and the Howardian Hills. This motte-and-bailey castle was completed in 1398 by Bertram de Bulmer, Sheriff of York during the reign of King Stephen. During the 16th century, Henry VIII's illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy lived at Sheriff Hutton under the care of Cardinal Wolsey. Today the remains of the castle can be seen south of the churchyard.

Further on, at 33km, you'll pass Nunnington Hall after a nice descent. It's a National Trust property with impressive walled gardens and a supposedly haunted bedroom. More practically, there's a recently renovated tearoom inside the house that's well worth a visit – particularly if you're doing the ride at a more leisurely pace.

Hutton-le-Hole, at 50km, is another good place for a cup of tea or picnic stop. It's one of North Yorkshire's most popular villages. Look out for the Ryedale folk museum and the Crown Inn pub. There are also ice cream and sweet shops. If you're doing the longer route you'll miss Hutton-le-Hole, but it's not a long detour if you need to refuel or take a breather. Soon you'll be out on top of the moors, with stiff climbs to come.

Up the chimney

The 150km route goes through the villages of Castleton, Danby and Rosedale Abbey (86km) and then follows the River Seven valley towards Cropton and Appleton-le-Moors. But there's another option: over the top of Spaunton Moor, up the steepest road in Britain.

Rosedale Chimney is 1-in-3 at one point. It's one of handful of climbs rated 10/10 in the book '100 greatest cycling climbs' by Simon Warren. The National Hill Climb Championship was held here back in 1987 and Chris Boardman could only manage second place. It's less than a mile long, with an average

gradient of 12%. But the short sharp 30% bit hits you hard and is followed by 20%-25% parts that come so early that getting to the top can seem impossible.

About two thirds of the way up I felt as though I had conquered it when a motorist rolled down the window and shouted, 'There's a car park at the top!' Was she trying to tell me I needed a rest? You'll get that well deserved breather just after you pass the car park on the right. Take a quick look at the disused mines on the right, then enjoy the gentle descent for at least another two miles through the moors, with as great a view as you'll get anywhere.

Homeward bound

Whichever route you've ridden, the village of Lastingham is only a short detour. If you need refreshments, the Blacksmith's Arms is an old-fashioned beamed pub opposite a beautiful Saxon church. The food and drink is good and owners friendly.

The other choice is to wait a little longer. In another 10km you'll hit the tea and cake stop at Marton village hall. The Women's Institute has put this on for this event for years, so make sure you've got some extra change to treat yourself. You know the donations will go to a good cause, and if you've got this far you deserve some treats.

On the way back to York, the return leg across the Howardian Hills takes you right past Castle Howard, which was used as the setting for *Brideshead Revisited*. This 18th century country house is an imposing Baroque building in extensive grounds. There's also a café in the courtyard, if you can't wait until York.

Once you're out of the hills, it's an easy run back to York racecourse. There will still be a day and a half left to recover, refuel, and enjoy the rest of the show.



(Top to bottom) Hutton-le-Hole is on the 100km route. The Blacksmith's Arms in Lastingham – worth a visit. The descent past Nunnington Hall

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The route

DISTANCE: 100 or 150km.
MAPS: OS Landrangers 105, 100, 94. **START/FINISH:** York Racecourse. **WHEN:** Start from 08.00 on Saturday 25th June. **PRICE:** £17 for CTC members, £27 non-members. **INFORMATION & ENTRY:** ctcchallengerides.co.uk. **GPS FILES:** ctc-maps.org.uk, codes E95 and E96.

- 0km** Leave Knavesmire through gates
0.1 T Jct Left (Knavesmire Road)
0.3 Jct Right (Knavesmire Avenue)
0.6 X-rd Left (Albemarle Road)
1.4 Traffic Lts with A1036 Right A1036 (The Mount)
1.5 2 Sets Traffic Lts SO A1036
2.0 Traffic Lts SO (use middle lane - thro' Bar Walls - Micklegate)
2.3 Traffic Lts SO B1227 (Micklegate)
2.4 Traffic Lts SO B1227 (Bridge Street)
2.7 2nd Jct Left (Coppergate) restricted access, Buses/Cycles
2.9 Traffic Lts SO (Pavement)
3.1 Mini Rndbt SO
3.5 Traffic Lts Left A1036 (jewbury) SP Scarborough
3.7 Traffic Lts Right A1036 (use outside lane - Monkgate) SP Scarborough
4.1 Rndbt Left (1st Exit cycle lane - Huntington Road) SP Huntington
4.7 Traffic Lts SO
5.0 Mini Rndbt SO (1st Exit)
5.9 HUNTINGTON
6.3 Mini Rndbt SO (1st Exit)
6.8 Rndbt SO (2nd Exit - Huntington Road) SP Strensall
9.1 Rndbt with A1237 SO (2nd Exit - Strensall Road) EARSWICK SP Strensall
9.6 Rndbt SO (2nd Exit)
11.8 STRENSALL
11.9 Rndbt Left (1st Exit - York Road) SP Sheriff Hutton
12.8 Level X
13.4 4th Jct Left SP Sheriff Hutton
19.4 SHERIFF HUTTON
23.9 Climb Terrington Bank
24.7 T Jct Left SP Hovingham
29.6 HOVINGHAM T Jct Left (B1257) SP Helmsley
31.9 Jct Right to climb Caulkleys Bank SP Nunnington
33.7 NUNNINGTON
38.4 Jct Right SP Welburn
39.0 T Jct Right SP Welburn
39.8 T Jct Left SP Kirkbymoorside
40.5 X-rd with A170 SO SP Kirkdale
41.1 T Jct Right SP Kirkdale
41.4 Ford Crossing (footbridge available)
41.8 X-rd Left SP Fadmoor
45.6 T Jct Left SP Farnedale
45.7 FADMOOR Jct Right SP Gillamoore
46.6 GILLAMOOR Descend Bank
- Routes diverge: 100km route**
48.0 At Jct SO (150km route goes left here) SP Hutton le Hole
48.3 Cattle Grid
49.9 T Jct Right SP Hutton le Hole
50.0 Cattle Grid
50.3 HUTTON LE HOLE
51.2 Cattle Grid
55.1 T Jct with A170 Left and immediate Right SP Marton
58.5 CONTROL at MARTON VILLAGE HALL **Routes rejoin**
- 150km route**
48.0 At Jct Left (100km route goes SO here) SP Farnedale

- 51.9** LOW MILL
52.9 Jct Right (as you drop to village)
53.2 T Jct Left SP Castleton
55.8 Jct Right (Narrow Road)
56.8 T Jct Right to climb Blakey Bank SP Castleton
58.1 T Jct Left SP Castleton
67.4 CASTLETON
70.2 DANBY Staggered X-rd SO (Briar Hill) SP Moors Centre
71.3 CONTROL at DANBY MOORS CENTRE (Right out of control)
72.1 50m after rail bridge Jct Right imm. after packhorse bridge/ford
72.2 T Jct Left
72.9 T Jct Left
74.8 Jct Right on singletrack road to climb Little Fryup SP Rosedale
79.6 T Jct Left SP Rosedale
85.9 ROSEDALE ABBEY
 You may take the alternative here of climbing Rosedale Chimney. Go right just after the Tea Rooms on the left and join the 100km route at Hutton le Hole
93.6 Just before humpback bridge Jct Right SP Lastingham
94.7 Jct Left (as main road swings sharp right) SP Appleton le Moor
96.9 T Jct Left SP Appleton le Moor APPLETON LE MOOR
99.9 T Jct Right SP A170 Thirsk
100.0 Jct Left SP Grt Edstone
101.0 T Jct Left SP Edstone
103.0 CONTROL at MARTON VILLAGE HALL. **Routes rejoin**

- Both routes**
103.0/58.5 Leave Left from Control
105.5/61.0 NORMANBY
109.0/64.5 GREAT BARUGH T Jct Right SP Malton
110.6/66.1 LITTLE HABTON
114.6/70.1 AMOTHERBY
114.9/70.4 X-rd with B1257 SO
116.9/72.4 T Jct Right
119.9/75.4 CONEYSTHORPE
120.3/75.8 X-rd Left SP Welburn
122.5/83.0 FOSTON
129.1/84.6 THORNTON LE CLAY
131.4/86.9 T Jct Left and over level X SP Flaxton
132.7/88.2 FLAXTON Jct Right SP Strensall
137.4/92.9 STRENSALL
138.9/94.4 Rndbt SO (1st Exit - Six Bells pub on right) SP York
141.2/96.7 Rndbt SO (1st Exit) EARSWICK
141.3/96.8 Mini Rndbt SO (1st Exit)
141.7/97.2 Rndbt with A1237 SO (2nd Exit) HUNTINGTON SP Huntington
144.0/99.5 Rndbt SO (1st Exit)
144.5/100.0 Mini Rndbt SO (2nd Exit)
145.8/101.3 Mini Rndbt SO (2nd Exit)
146.1/101.6 Traffic Lts SO
146.7/102.2 Rndbt Right A1036 (use outside lane - 3rd Exit - Monkgate)
147.1/102.6 Traffic Lts SO (through Bar Walls - Goodramgate)
147.3/102.8 SO (Deangate) - use cycle path past Minster
147.7/103.2 Traffic Lts SO A1036 (Museum St)
148.1/103.6 Traffic Lts Left and imm. Left on to Tanner Row
148.2/103.7 Follow Wellington Row round to right
148.7/104.2 Traffic Lts SO
149.0/104.5 Keep Left as road bears right to go under bridge SP T'ennine Trail
149.5/105.0 Continue alongside river and at ped. bridge go Right and through bollards onto Butcher Terrace
149.6/105.1 Left onto Bishopthorpe Road
149.7/105.2 Right onto Campleshon Road SP Racecourse
150.2/105.6 Left into York Cycle Show
150.8/106.3 FINISH at Information Tent