



Chris' cycle route 2

22 miles with hamlets, pubs, tea rooms and places to visit

Introduction

This circular route starts in Thirsk Market Place, YO7 1EY. OS explorer map 299 covers the route, but a map is included in this leaflet. The route is undulating, but not difficult, with many refreshment stops. It travels around the villages of Coxwold, Byland Abbey, Oldstead, Kilburn, Balk, Bagby and returns to Thirsk.

The route

Leave Thirsk Market Place heading west out of town, past the Ritz Cinema. At the mini roundabout take sharp left to Sowerby Road, leading to Front Street.

Continue for 2.4 miles, under the A168 road, until you take the left turn, signposted to Bagby. After half a mile you reach the main A19 road.



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Turn right towards York (this takes us half a mile on the A19 road – our only short section of major road).

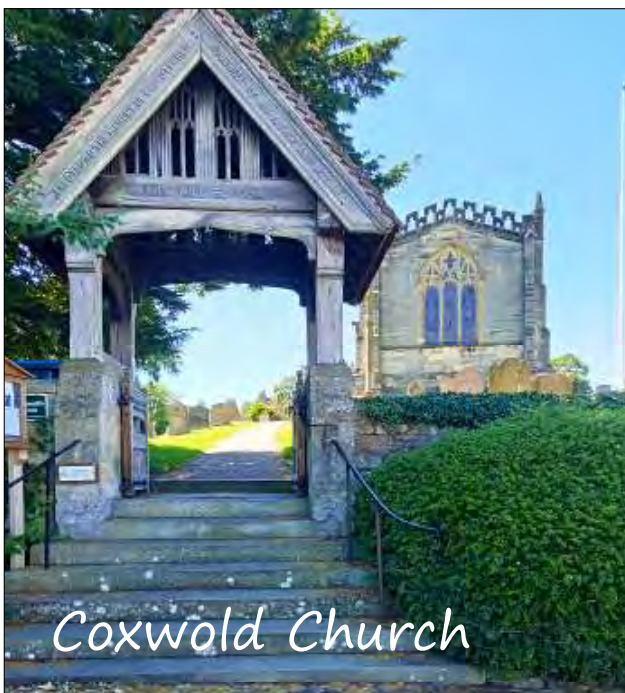
Turn left signed Coxwold, Helmsley, Caravan route. Ride to the lovely village of Coxwold – a chance now for our first refreshment stop.

It has a pub and tearoom and there is also the opportunity to visit the church and Shandy Hall.



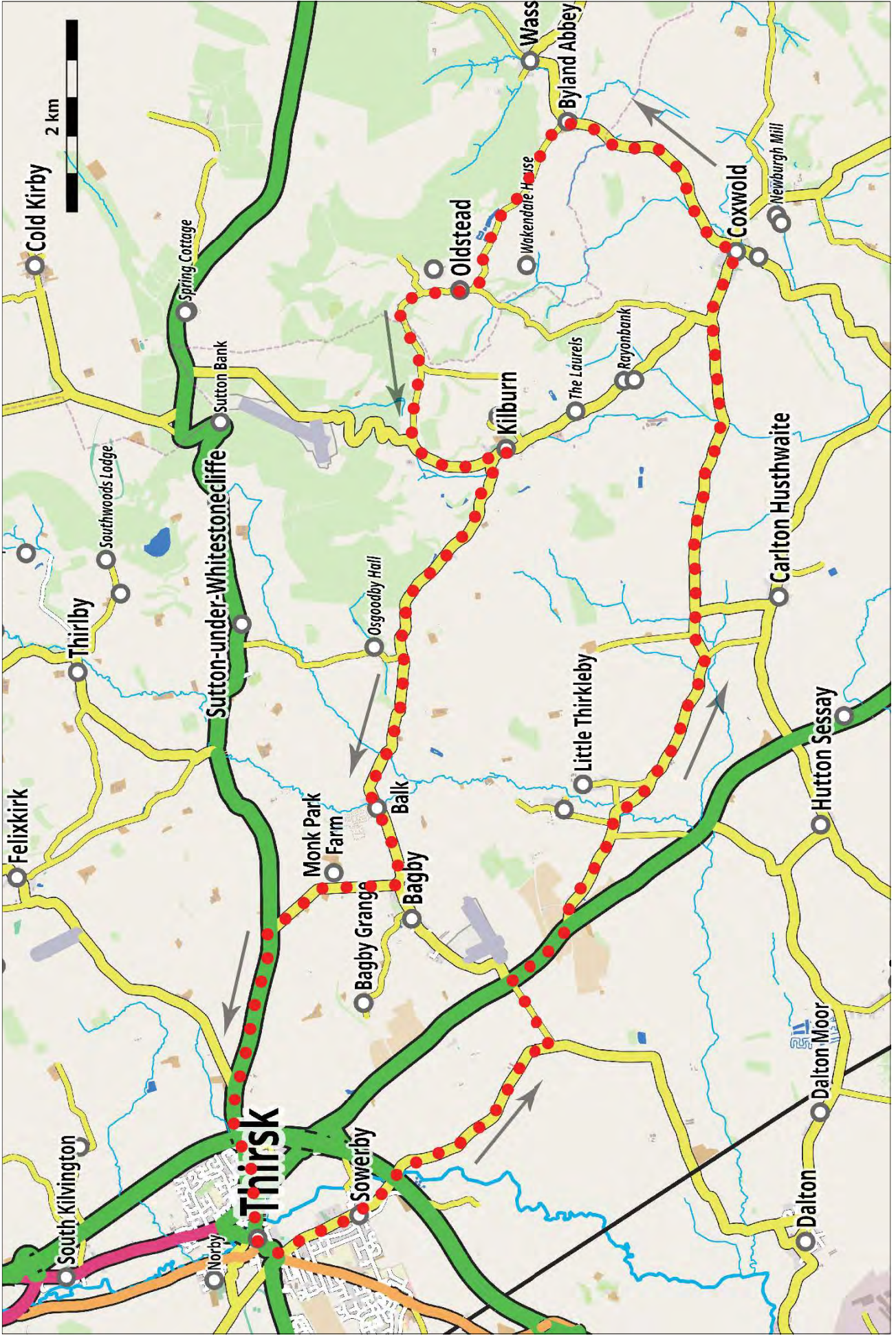
Continue down the village to the crossroads, turn left (sign Byland Abbey) and after about one mile the ruined Abbey will be in view. This is protected by English Heritage and is a really good sightseeing stop. In the summer an on-site museum is open to visitors.

Leaving Byland, take the road signed Oldstead & Kilburn and go under Gatehouse Arch, built about 800 years ago.



You pass Shandy Hall on the left just before Coxwold. This is the former home of Laurence Sterne, who in the 18th century wrote *Tristram Shandy* with its digressive and non-linear manner of story-telling.





This now takes us to the tiny, beautiful hamlet of Oldstead, a chance to call at the Michelin-starred restaurant, the Black Swan, which is owned and run by celebrity chef Tommy Banks.

We continue to Kilburn, famous home of woodcarver Robert Thompson and in the village is the Mouseman Visitor Centre, tearoom and the Forresters Arms pub. This is another great refreshment stop for a while.



Leave the village at the T-junction (sign Bagby, Balk & Thirsk) and as you climb the short hill, stop, and look to your right. Here you will see the famous Kilburn White Horse, the chalk horse cut into the hillside.

We now cycle on through the hamlet of Balk, the caravan site on the right providing a first rate tearoom stop.

Also in the village you will see the showroom of another woodcarver, Old Mill Furniture, making traditional hardwood furnishings with a knight's head as his logo. For others on the Thirsk Furniture Trail, see thirskfurnituretrail.co.uk.

Continue to the village of Bagby. At this point keep right, we do not enter the village, but continue around half a mile. On the right is the entrance to the Monk Park Farm visitor attraction – kids will love this one! This is yet another refreshment possibility.

To complete our journey, as you leave Monk Park Farm, turn right and after half a mile you will join road A170, signed Thirsk.

