

# The Tour de Yorkshire: A gift that keeps on giving?



Middleham, Grand Depart, 2014

Due to the recent spate of sunny weather the UK has been enjoying combined with being at home for an extended period of time, I have taken advantage of the situation and remounted my bike for the first time in a year. It's fair to say I was very out of practice on the first ride, and maybe a little too ambitious, with a 22 mile ride around my local area, the Howardian Hills (I can confirm there are many many hills). Nevertheless, after going on a few more rides, I am not only fitter but starting to understand why the roads are permanently filled with groups of lycra clad (mainly) middle aged men....maybe there is more to it than just to escape the wife and kids. Seeing this beautiful hilly countryside from the perspective of a cyclist, unearthed memories of the glorious shots from the Grand Depart of the professionals climbing the likes of Buttertubs Pass. As the Tour de Yorkshire continues as an annual independent event, which may I say hasn't yet graced the Howardian Hills with its presence, I question how else it has effected the county, other than providing a great day out?

The Spectators....

**"The passion of the crowds in Yorkshire has really made this a weekend to remember", Sir Rodney Walker, chairman of the tour organisers TdFHUB2014 Ltd**

The catalyst for Yorkshire's cycling mania was the Grand Depart in 2014, which attracted 2.3 million spectators both from within and outside of the county. I myself joined the crowd's in 2014 and can confirm that it was an amazing experience, filled with such energy and community spirit - made even better by the freebies thrown at the crowd from the supporting trucks (I seem to remember bagging some Yorkshire Tea and a badge). Surveys from the event showed that 52% of spectators were inspired to cycle more frequently, so the event really did engage with people. Many spectators (75%) that attended the event from outside of Yorkshire would recommend Yorkshire to family and friends, showing that the Grand Depart has left a legacy that could last for decades, and with it bringing economics benefits to the people and businesses of Yorkshire. Following that event there has been an annual independent event, the Tour de Yorkshire, which in 2019 attracted 1.96 million spectators to line the routes, showing that cycling is still a much loved event in the county and across the globe with record-breaking audience of 28 million tuning in to watch the race in 190 countries.

The Businesses....

**"There is no doubt the Grand Départ of the Tour de France was incredible for many businesses in Yorkshire and the benefits will be felt for many years to come."**

**Gary Verity, CEO of Welcome to Yorkshire**

The economic impact of the Grand Depart for Yorkshire was £102m over the 2 days. The sectors that benefitted the most are those most obviously associated with the event including: the hospitality industry, souvenir and clothing shops, as well as others in the visitor economy; cycling shops; transport providers; and suppliers to event organisers. However some businesses based away from the route actually saw losses over the 2 days, due to road closures and their usual business being diverted to a different location, resulting in the event actually having a negative impact on some businesses in Yorkshire at the time. Having said this the

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increase in positive publicity for Yorkshire as a whole may benefit these businesses in the future, in the three month period after the event, 44% of non-residents who visited to watch Stages 1 or 2 have visited Yorkshire again. The inaugural Tour de Yorkshire also took place in areas which missed out on the Grand Depart, enabling different areas of the county to reap the rewards that cycling has brought. Stuart Price and his wife Brenda, have certainly seen the benefits of running a cycling business (Dales Bike Centre near Reeth, in Swaledale) on the doorstep of the Tour de Yorkshire. "I wouldn't be expanding without the Tour de Yorkshire," he said. "There's no way a little business like ours would be looking at a £1.3m expansion without the confidence in this market and seeing a huge increase in business over the last five years."

The Residents....

**"As a city and county we are already seeing the legacy of the Tour, with more people cycling than ever. We are firmly committed to maximising that enthusiasm and the unique range of benefits the event has brought and will continue to bring in the months and years to come." Councillor Keith Wakefield, Leader of Leeds City Council**

It was not only a great honour for the county's residents to host this international event, but with it came vibrant new initiatives, programmes and opportunities, enriching the lives of many in the local communities, before, during and after the race. In the 100 days before the race the first Yorkshire Festival ran and was designed to showcase the region's finest creative talents on a national and international stage, such as Tour de Brass which offered free open-air brass-band performances. As a result of the race, Doncaster Wheelers Cycling Club launched its junior Go-Ride section in 2014, where membership for under 16s rocketed from a handful of children with parents in the club to more than 30. Adult membership also rose from about 100 to 150. "Memberships have grown year on year since 2014," said Mr Maltby. "As a result of the Go-Ride programme we've got six qualified Level 2 coaches, before the Grand Depart (the Tour de France opening) we did not have one. One of the main things that's come from the Grand Depart is the Doncaster Cycle Festival. We started that in 2014 and last year we had 450 entrants." As the Tour de Yorkshire continues initiatives such as this only gain in momentum. Residents have clearly gained from this event not only economically, but culturally.

The Grand Depart and Tour de Yorkshire really are the gifts that keep on giving. They have provided Yorkshire with a legacy, which benefits businesses, residents and spectators, not only whilst the events takes place, but year round. People across the country and the world have been encouraged to visit the county, due to the way in which it has been showcased through these events. They have inspired people throughout Yorkshire and the country to take up cycling, creating business opportunities that plucky entrepreneurs have taken full advantage of, which in turn have brought tourists and recreational activities to both rural and city centre communities. This has been a unique opportunity for the county - one which we have truly taken advantage of.