

Soldiers who helped in Tadcaster floods return to celebrate Tour de Yorkshire

With exactly a month until the start of the 2017 Tour de Yorkshire and Asda Women's Tour de Yorkshire, it has been confirmed soldiers from the Yorkshire Regiment who helped Tadcaster in the floods will return to help the town celebrate as the race passes over the newly rebuilt bridge.

Tadcaster bridge was closed for more than a year after being severely damaged by flood water on Boxing Day 2015, splitting the town in two. On Saturday 29 March the bridge will see huge celebrations as the riders of both the men's and women's races will set off in a ceremonial start. Ahead of the riders will be the Yorkshire Regiment Drums Platoon many of whom were deployed to help with the state of emergency caused when the bridge started to collapse.

It's a hugely important year for the Yorkshire Regiment as in August 400 soldiers will head to Afghanistan for an eight-month tour where they will support NATO in training and protecting Afghan soldiers and police officers in Kabul.

Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire, Sir Gary Verity said: "We're incredibly proud to have the Yorkshire regiment out on Tadcaster bridge ahead of both the Tour de Yorkshire men's and Asda women's races. They bravely head out to Afghanistan later this year, but their deployment during the floods is a reminder of what they do at home as well. The tour is about so much more than the race; it's about bringing people and communities together and we'd encourage everyone heading out to watch the race to embrace all the other fantastic activities taking place over the weekend."

Lieutenant Colonel Sam Humphris, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment said: "It'll be a huge honour for our Drummers to march out ahead of both the men's and women's Tour De Yorkshire races. The last time we were in Tadcaster as a battalion, it was under very different, difficult, circumstances dealing with the floods and the collapsed bridge. The resilience of the town was incredible and we're delighted to be back to help Tadcaster celebrate its reunited community and the Tour."

Entertainment has also been confirmed for the other five host locations. Arts, sports, cultural and foodie events will take place before and after the races at all start and finishes.

Street performers, flash mobs, live music and giant Tour de Yorkshire land art are planned for Bridlington and Scarborough, the start and finish host towns for day one.

Alongside the drummers at Tadcaster, as part of a day long festival on the Saturday, there will be dance troops, a children's decorated bike parade and a climbing wall, as well as food stalls and a bar.

The Harrogate fan zone on the Stray will have live music and food and drink stalls and there will also be a mini food festival on Crescent Gardens.

The final day's race starts in Bradford City Park and ends at Fox Valley, Sheffield. Highlights in Bradford include a circus, theatre and music from an all-female performance troop, a magical penny farthing experience, Dhol drummers and a pop up cycling museum.

And the grand finale at Fox valley in Sheffield will see an RAF flypast, the world famous Grimethorpe Colliery Brass Band, stilt walkers, entertainers and 3000 metres of bunting. There'll also be children's races ending on the actual Tour de Yorkshire finish line.

Image: Yorkshire Regiment Drums Platoon at Y17 – please credit Welcome to Yorkshire

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Editors' Notes:

- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is the official destination management organisation for Yorkshire, working to grow the county's visitor economy.
- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is a not-for-profit membership organisation, funded in part by grants, sponsorship and Welcome to Yorkshire members. All money raised is reinvested directly back into promoting Yorkshire.
- Key facts include:
 - Tourism in Yorkshire is worth £7 billion annually
 - The county's tourism and hospitality industry employs almost a quarter of a million people

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