



"We dream of making a difference to lots of lives with this ride"

which doctors couldn't explain, a grapefruit-sized tumour was found in Golding's abdomen which required several tricky operations to remove and repair the damage it did. These led to complications including septicaemia, peritonitis and even a coma. Golding's a big guy, but his weight plummeted to six stones. He had to teach himself to walk, and he had to endure chemotherapy before he was finally well again. To celebrate his complete recovery, Golding decided to ride across America in 2010.

Truck crash

"Then the accident happened," he explains. "It was towards the end of a day. We'd just seen a sign telling us New Orleans wasn't far away when suddenly, from 20mph I was doing 70mph as my riding partner and myself were hit from behind by a truck." It was back to intensive care and building from nothing, but in January this year Golding returned to America and biked all the way from Los Angeles to Miami.

He lives for doing physical challenges, and for raising money for Macmillan.

"Some people say I'm unlucky, but how can I be? In the last few years I've ridden my bike all over the world, with some amazing people. They also ask me why I pick such hard challenges, but they aren't challenges at all. Being six stone and walking to the end of your bed, that's a challenge." (Visit his site: www.cycleacrossamerica2010.com.)

Makarem has done loads of cycling in the past, but it's mostly off-road. "I used to do mountain biking. I love maps and finding great off-road routes, but road cycling is new to me," he tells me before giving Swift a quick bike tour of *Emmerdale*.

It's a real film set — a specially constructed Yorkshire Dales



INFOTAINMENT

Ben Swift

Age: 23
Born: Rotherham
Team: Team Sky
Graduated: British Cycling Under-23 Academy
Palmarès: Stage win 2007 Tour of Britain; 1st Overall 2010 Tour of Picardie; stage wins 2011 Vuelta Castilla y Leon, Tour of Romandy, Tour of California

Rik Makarem

Age: 29
Born: Chesterfield
Team: Emmerdale
Graduated: Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama
TV appearances: *C-Jaq* (2006); *Torchwood* (2009); *Emmerdale* (2009-present); *Foyle's War* (2010); *Anton Chekhov's The Duel* (film, 2010)

"IT'S FUN HELPING RIK AND THE OTHERS BECAUSE THIS IS A GREAT CAUSE"

North Leeds

With Ben Swift & Rik Makarem



51km
Ride distance

FRESH FROM THE Tour de France, Ben Swift takes a group preparing for an epic charity ride for some training in Yorkshire

WHERE TO?
A two-hour training bash on undulating roads between famous Yorkshire landmarks

At six o'clock tomorrow evening, August 19, four soap stars and their executive producer will start cycling into the unknown. The riders are the actors Rik Makarem, Kelvin Fletcher, Tom Lister, James Thornton and Steve November — the producer from *Emmerdale*. They'll start at the Woolpack Inn and their destination is the Queen

Vic on the set of *EastEnders*, 224 miles away — and they've set themselves 24 hours to do it. "It's a bit daunting," Rik Makarem, who plays Nikhil Sharma, says when we meet in the purpose-built village that's *Emmerdale's* outdoor location. "The most I've ever ridden is 86 miles, and it really hurt. But we've been driven to make this work. We dream of making a difference to lots of lives and this

cycling challenge is the first of many more, each getting tougher and riskier as we go," he adds. Ben Swift is here too, with his mum, girlfriend and sister because they're all fans. "It's something we watch together when I'm home, so it's nice to be asked to help," he explains. "It's a great cause too. I'm going to ride part of the way with them to London, but I have to leave for a race the next day, so I won't be able to do the whole distance." The ride will be in memory of *Emmerdale* producer Gavin Blyth, who died from cancer in 2010.

"He was very special to everyone involved with the show," Makarem explains.

"Gavin made many of the changes that made *Emmerdale* what it is today. He changed storylines and moved the indoor scenes to Yorkshire Television's Leeds studios. We owe him a lot and wanted to do something in his name. The work of Macmillan Cancer Support is so valuable, so we decided to try and raise £100,000 for them."

The cancer community is full of amazing people with incredible stories, like the man the cast met working as a Macmillan ambassador, James Golding, who's with them today. Golding has battled back from both double life-threatening odds of cancer and a horrific road accident.

After he began suffering with mysterious back pain in 2008,



Four go wild in the country (pub)



On set with the dream team

"The inside of the Woolpack you see on TV is in Leeds"

the riders and planned the route, climb out of *Emmerdale* and onto the open road. They pick up Steve 'The Guv'nor' November on the way. The plan is to do a loop in the lanes north of Leeds and, having seen Makarem's work place, end up at one of Swift's: the Otley town-centre race circuit.

Swift held the lap record here until recently, so gently lifts the pace on the tough climb to the back of the circuit, which feels like nothing the first time round, but grows into the Eiger as the race progresses.

Still, Swiftly out of the saddle draws a gasp of admiration from Makarem, who's sprinting to hang on. "Whoa, look at that!" he shouts as the group thunders by.

Peace resumes around the corner, and the guys do a few more laps before heading out of Otley into the hills towards Harrogate, before returning to Harewood. All the *Emmerdale* cast are 100 per cent behind what Rik and the others are doing, and it's surprising how many of them — hello Chris Chittell (Eric Pollard) — are bike riders too. You can donate and follow their progress at www.teamemmerdale.com.

"It's not shot in order, so I might have a suit on in a scene here (the pub) then go inside one of these houses, but the indoors bit could be shot a couple of weeks later in Leeds," Makarem explains. "I still have to wear the same suit, shirt, watch, and have my hair the same. In-between, all that stuff has to be transported, cleaned and pressed so it looks exactly the same as it was before."

Guv'nor arrives
Once everyone's ready, the group, which as well as Golding includes Ed Gratton, who has helped train

550m
Total climbing

NEXT WEEK
Geraint Thomas previews the Etape Cymru

Cycling around North Leeds

THERE have always been a lot of bike racers on the roads north of Leeds. Cycling has tradition here, and the Leeds chaingang is one of the oldest in the country, plus it includes Tour de France stage winners and several Olympic medallists in its past regulars. It's nice to see that tradition continuing, as there must have been 50 to 100 other cyclists either in groups or ones and twos on this late afternoon weekday ride.

The roads here are quite busy, although as this ride proves, there are plenty of lanes away from the main traffic arteries. They require a little bit of local knowledge, but there's a huge cycling resource on www.leeds.gov.uk. Access it by clicking on 'transport' then 'cycling and walking'. The area is blessed with lots of brilliant cycle-ways, suitable for short family rides or long-distance treks into the Yorkshire Dales or over the Pennines and into Lancashire.



"I can't see Alfie Moon doing this"

Cycling WEEKLY

North Leeds

32 MILES (51KM)

OTLEY

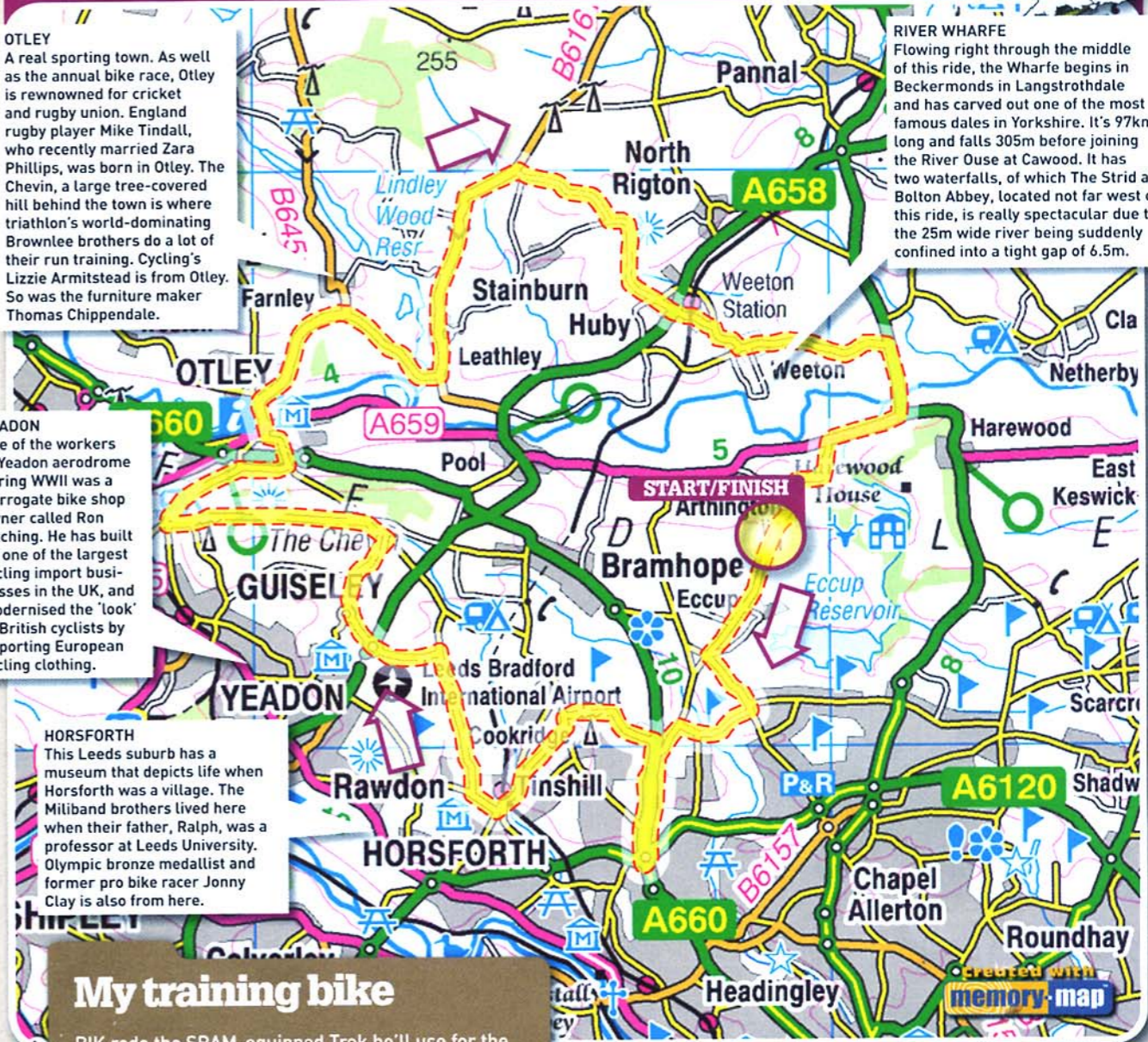
A real sporting town. As well as the annual bike race, Otley is renowned for cricket and rugby union. England rugby player Mike Tindall, who recently married Zara Phillips, was born in Otley. The Chevin, a large tree-covered hill behind the town is where triathlon's world-dominating Brownlee brothers do a lot of their run training. Cycling's Lizzie Armitstead is from Otley. So was the furniture maker Thomas Chippendale.

YEADON

One of the workers in Yeadon aerodrome during WWII was a Harrogate bike shop owner called Ron Kitching. He has built up one of the largest cycling import businesses in the UK, and modernised the 'look' of British cyclists by importing European cycling clothing.

HORSFORTH

This Leeds suburb has a museum that depicts life when Horsforth was a village. The Miliband brothers lived here when their father, Ralph, was a professor at Leeds University. Olympic bronze medallist and former pro bike racer Jonny Clay is also from here.



RIVER WHARFE
Flowing right through the middle of this ride, the Wharfe begins in Beckermunds in Langstrothdale and has carved out one of the most famous dales in Yorkshire. It's 97km long and falls 305m before joining the River Ouse at Cawood. It has two waterfalls, of which The Strid at Bolton Abbey, located not far west of this ride, is really spectacular due to the 25m wide river being suddenly confined into a tight gap of 6.5m.

My training bike

RIK rode the SRAM-equipped Trek he'll use for the big ride. It's equipped with Exposure lights, which they'll need during the night section. Other technical sponsors are CNP professional, SiS, Garmin and Bio Racer. "We also have a number of sponsors from outside cycling, and we wouldn't be able to do the ride without them," Rik explains. "They're all on the Team Emmerdale website, so it would be nice if they could get your support as well."



Training route

START on the Weardley to Eccup road, which is south of the A659 just west of Harewood House. Go left and right to loop around Adel golf course, then head south until the main A660 into Leeds. Continue south to the first roundabout and go right round until you head north again. Turn left into Horsforth then right towards Leeds Bradford airport. Go around the north of the airport, cross the A658 and turn right, following signs to Chevin Country Park. Go past the park and descend to a sharp right turn to Otley. Take the first right and you are on the Otley criterium circuit, keep turning left to do a lap then go north on the B6451. Turn right to Leathley, left towards Harrogate and right to Weeton by crossing the A658. Turn right onto the A61 and right onto the A659, then back to the start.



Mapping sourced from **Ordnance Survey**