


Locked and Loaded

 ♂ Weekend Cycling Trip: Harrogate ↔ Helmsley

 Day 1 – Harrogate to Helmsley

Distance: 62.2 km

Elevation Gain: 564 m

Max Gradient: 14.1%

Difficulty Rating: 7/10

(Climbing effort in final section, plus panniers add challenge)


 Route Summary:

- Begins with rolling countryside and gentle inclines
- Builds gradually with some undulating terrain mid-route
- Ends with a steep final climb into the Howardian Hills (up to 14.1%)

 Lunch Stop:


Horsebreakers Arms, Hutton Sessay (~35 km in)

- Ideal midway break just before the tougher hills begin
- Relaxed village pub with simple, hearty food
- Good spot to refuel without overloading before the climb

 Dinner & Stay:

Black Swan, Helmsley

- Classic North Yorkshire coaching inn with a cosy but polished atmosphere
- Perfect recovery spot: good food, beds, and beer
- Right in the market square for an easy stroll and leg stretch

 Overnight in Helmsley:

- Enjoy a slower pace, maybe a short walk to the castle or a sunset pint

 Day 2 – Helmsley to Harrogate

Distance: 54.3 km

Elevation Gain: 583 m

Max Gradient: 7.7%

Difficulty Rating: 6/10

(Steady climb out of Helmsley, but less steep overall and shorter distance)

Route Summary:

- Starts with a long but steady climb out of Helmsley (not as sharp as Day 1)
- Flattens out and undulates through farmland and small villages
- Easier final stretch back into Harrogate via quiet lanes

Lunch Stop:

The Punch Bowl, Marton-cum-Grafton (~38 km in)

- Charming pub in a scenic village setting
- Ideal place to relax on the home stretch before a gentle final leg
- Lighter menu options available if you want to avoid the post-lunch slump

Final Stretch:

- Mostly downhill or flat from Marton-cum-Grafton
 - Easy pace for the last 15 km, legs likely to feel better than expected
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Summary Table

Day 1	62.2 km	564 m	14.1%	Horsebreakers Arms, Black Swan Helmsley	Diff 7/10
Day 2	54.3 km	583 m	7.7%	Punch Bowl Marton-cum-Grafton	Diff 6/10

Final Thoughts:

- Well-balanced trip: Challenge, good food, and great scenery
- Smart pacing: Lunches break the climbs nicely; pub dinners round off each day
- Enjoyment Factor: 9/10 — ideal for seasoned riders who like hills, views, and a pint