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## Thruscross Reservoir

<b>Starting point and OS Grid reference</b>	Free Yorkshire Water car park on Reservoir Road (SE 154574).
<b>Ordnance Survey map</b>	OS Explorer 297 – Lower Wharfedale and Washburn Valley
<b>Distance</b>	4.8 miles
<b>Traffic light rating</b>	

**Introduction:** Thruscross Reservoir is the last of four reservoirs, as you head north up the Washburn Valley, in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The others are Fewston, Swinsty and Lindley Wood. Whereas the latter stem from Victorian times, Thruscross was constructed in the 1960s and was completed in 1966. Flooding of the valley meant the loss of West End village, which disappeared beneath the waters. Sometimes, when there is a very severe drought, the water level drops sufficiently to expose the remains of the village and its stone bridge. Personally, I think it would have been more appropriate to name it West End Reservoir, to commemorate the village it destroyed.

The dam is an impressive structure, albeit concrete rather than the more attractive stone of other reservoirs.

The shape of Thruscross Reservoir makes it a bit more interesting than some reservoirs and it is quite a demanding walk in places, due to ups and downs in the trees. Wayfinding in the trees can also be tricky and also because when the bracken is at its most rampant in summer, sections of the path to the NE of the reservoir can be difficult to spot, to say the least. The steep parts tend to be short but numerous so I have erred on the side of an amber traffic light, rather than lull anyone into thinking this walk is a piece of cake!

Much of the route is a concessionary one made available by Yorkshire Water, so it does not all appear as a Right of Way on an OS map. Although black arrows mark some of the route, they are small and difficult to spot in places.

I have included GPS information but a GPS receiver is mostly useless because the paths are either amongst conifer trees, where there is no signal, or are so clear by the water's edge, as to render one unnecessary. One may help amongst the bracken.

Even after a dry spell, there are likely to be muddy sections so I recommend boots and gaiters.

The walk starts from the car park provided by Yorkshire Water (SE 154574). To get there, turn north off the A59 at Blubberhouses, between Harrogate and Skipton,

signposted to West End 2½ miles. After 1.8 miles, turn right on to Reservoir Road, which is signposted for Dacre 4 miles, Greenhow Hill 6 miles and Pateley Bridge 9 miles.

**Start:** Leave the car park (SE 154574) by the main entrance and across the lane. Go through the gateway at the other side and walk down the path through the trees. At the water's edge, the path bears left, going clockwise around the reservoir. You will pass the ruin of an old flax mill by the water's edge.

Follow the path to a narrow stile which exits into the lane. However, do not go through this but take the narrow path to the right which descends to a small footbridge over Capelshaw Beck (SE 140582). Cross this and turn right. There are a couple of paths here but take the one furthest right.

At a 'T' junction of paths, turn right again.

After passing a ruined farmhouse, Holme Field Head, on your left, come to a junction of footpaths. Keep right following the black arrow.

Through the trees, finding the correct path can be a bit tricky but eventually, you drop down to follow the river Washburn. Turn left to follow the path alongside it, to a bridge (SE 139593). This bridge is one of the ugliest I have ever seen. It looks to have started life as a couple of stone pillars with a surface supported by a couple of steel girders. However at some point the Health and Safety police must have decreed that handrails should be fitted, so these look to have been added as a separate structure, using a bracing principle. The net effect is a jumble of scaffolding. It is safe and serves the purpose but my goodness, it is ugly! I digress.

Cross the bridge, where you will find a stile "crossroads". Here you have the choice of taking the path up to the rocky outcrop ahead where you turn right to follow the path along the ridge (see alternative route on sketch map). However I turned right to follow the path through the trees. With hindsight, I wished I had taken the path to the rocks as this next section is very muddy in places and wayfinding is not so easy; but I like a challenge!

Eventually, the path climbs a steep section emerging above the trees (SE 145591). **Do not** make the mistake I initially made of turning immediately right to follow what seems to be a path along the fence line but go straight ahead to the top of the low ridge and pick up the path (SE 146592), which comes from the rocky outcrop mentioned above, and turn right (SE). Finding this path, as I found, can be tricky when the bracken is at its height.

Follow the path along the ridge. It turns right at a marker post (SE 147589) and drops down to a ladder stile. Cross this and follow the path along by the reservoir. At this point, the path is surfaced with large stones.

The path eventually starts to run parallel with the road before exiting into it (SE 157576). Turn right to cross the reservoir dam via the road and look out for the car park where you started, on the left.

