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Thrunton Wood and Long Crag

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Forestry Commission free car park (NU 085098)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 332 – Alnwick and Amble
Distance	7.5 miles
Date of Walk	22 April 2018
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: Thrunton Woods is obviously a popular walking area in its own right and in season, the wooded area will have a large display of rhododendrons and spectacular views between the trees from Thrunton and Callaly Crag. However, it is also a gateway to some even more spectacular views from High Crag and Coe Crag, where there are impressive rock formations.

The route crosses areas of moorland, so should provide attractive heather displays around August.

You also pass a round cairn by Hard Nab which was evidently a Bronze Age funerary monument covering one or more burials. It has been rearranged to form a crude shelter, which has some flat stones, which provide a reasonable picnic seats. The views from here are lovely.

It has to be pointed out that Thrunton Woods are actively managed by the Forestry Commission, for timber. My route was blocked by orange netting and warning signs reporting that the path was closed and promising all sorts of dangers. Unfortunately, the Forestry Commission had, annoyingly, not thought to include information about the closure of any particular path at the large information board in the parking area. By the time I encountered the blockage, I was well through the woods. As it was a Sunday and clearly all the machinery was idle, I ignored the warnings, as I only had to cross a couple of hundred yards of admittedly very muddy, churned up path. However you need to be aware that any planned route in these woods could be thwarted!

Being a managed forest, there are various tracks. Main tracks look permanent but forestry can create new ones which may not be mentioned on the map or be subsequent to those described here.

The walk starts from the large free car park at Thrunton Woods (NU 085098). The easiest direction I can give is to turn North West off the A 697, just over half a mile north of where it crosses the B6341, north of Longframlington. There is a large radio mast just beyond the turn, approaching from the south. The car park is about two and a half miles from the turn.

Start: From the car park, take the broad track into the forest.

At the junction with another broad track, turn right following two white arrows, one on a red and the other on a green background.

The track turns a corner where there are several routes off. Keep following the main track in the direction of the white on green arrow.

Pass a viewpoint, with a bench, at a crossroads of tracks and keep straight ahead (NU 077098).

At NU 072094 is a slightly better viewpoint, with another bench.

The main track bends left at yet another viewpoint (NU 070092) but here, continue straight ahead on the slightly narrower path, although when I did the walk, this quickly became a broad forestry track well churned by machinery. Views north start to improve.

Meet a stone wall (NU 063090) go through the wall then immediately right through a gate across the heather.

At having just left the heather, meet another path and turn left (NU 060092).

At NU 059091, pass another attractive viewpoint.

After going through some more natural woodland, exit again on to heather moorland and follow the obvious path, passing through a walkers' gate to what appears to be a large stone cairn. However, when you get to it, you will see it has been made into a circular shelter where there are some stones where you could perch for a picnic (NU 055085).

From the cairn, take the path to its left (as judged from your direction of approach).

Arrive at another walkers' gate (NU 057080), on the left. Go through this and turn right.

Follow the path to a kissing gate back on to the open moorland and follow the obvious path downhill to a stream. Cross and climb the hill at the other side to the top of the ridge where you turn left (NU 058068).

Arrive at a large stone cairn (NU 060068) from where there are good views over the whole of Thrunton Wood. The trig point can be seen ahead and from there, follow the obvious path along the ridge.

Pass a boundary stone bearing the initial 'S' at NU 069068.

At NU 072072 pass the dramatic rocky outcrops of Coe Crags.

At NU 074073 pass another stone cairn.

The path starts to descend gently, eventually entering trees. Continue to follow it down. Meet another path and turn left.

Arrive at a junction with several paths. Keep to the furthest left path (NU 082072).

Follow this down to a wooden footbridge. Cross to a main, broad forestry track and turn right along it. Stay on this, avoiding two turns off, as far as a 'T' junction (NU 083083). Turn right and at the road, turn left to return to the car park.

