

Walks Osmotherley and Cod Beck Reservoir

Walk information

Distance: 5.8 km / 3.6 miles

Time: 2 hours

Maps: OS Explorer Sheet OL26 – always take a map with you

Parking: On-street parking at Osmotherley; please park considerately.

Refreshments: Pubs, shop and a cafe at Osmotherley.

Terrain: Clear field paths, forest and lakeside tracks, country lanes.

How to get there: From the junction of the A684 and A19, follow the minor road eastwards into Osmotherley.

Caution: The path is slippery/muddy in places. Take care walking along the road from Cod Beck Reservoir back into Osmotherley – walk in single file and make yourself visible to traffic.

Our route leaves Osmotherley and passes the old Methodist Chapel, and then heads down into the wooded confines of Cod Beck, whose name is derived from the Celtic word 'coed' meaning woodland. This stream once powered a number of mills along its bank; the Youth Hostel used to be a flax mill in Victorian times and once produced cloth for the sails of ships. Beyond Cod Beck, our path rises up to join an ancient route known as Green Lane, from where there are wonderful views across the rooftops of Osmotherley to the flat Vale of Mowbray beyond. We then drop down through forest to reach Cod Beck Reservoir, Yorkshire Water's most northerly reservoir, which is noted for its birds, wild flowers and toads.

The walk

1 From the centre of Osmotherley (with your back to the Golden Lion pub), turn left across the road junction and village green then head through the passageway between the houses, marked 'Osmotherley Methodist Church 1754'. Follow this enclosed path between the houses, bearing right at the whitewashed cottage to quickly emerge onto a back lane. Head through the squeeze-stile opposite (signpost), then follow the enclosed path out of Osmotherley and across fields to reach the steep wooded banks above Cod Beck. Follow the path quite steeply down (steps) to reach a footbridge across the stream, then up to quickly emerge from the trees where you join a farm track across your path. Cross over the track and follow the clear path straight on climbing up alongside the fence/hedge on your left to reach a gate in a fence across your path (just beyond a bench), after which continue up across the field alongside the fence on your left and through another gate (Whitehouse Farm across to your right). After the gate, head up across the field then, as you reach the clump of trees and hedgerow, head to the right along the clear path across the field to

join the farm track leading from Whitehouse Farm (signpost). Turn left along the track (away from the house) for 150 metres then, just before the gateway, bear left off the track through a squeeze stile (signpost) that leads onto an enclosed track (Green Lane).

2 Turn left along the enclosed tree-shaded track (Green Lane) rising up through woodland for 200 metres to emerge from the trees (bench), with wonderful views to your left. Continue straight on along the broad grassy track for a further 700 metres (through two gates) to reach a house on your right (Rocky Plain). At the house, continue straight on along the track for a further 250 metres to reach a kissing-gate beside a gate that leads into forest. After the gate, walk straight on along the clear path, crossing over a small stream after 50 metres (stone-slab footbridge), then continue

straight on along the clear path for a further 200 metres to join a clear gravel track on a sharp bend (and path/track junction). Walk straight on along the gravel track (blue waymarker '65') for 150 metres to reach a track junction, where you carry straight on along the clear track ahead, with forest on your right and a clearing on your left. Follow this track straight on for 375 metres, before gently dropping down through forest to reach a path junction just before a ladder stile over a wall at the end of the forest.

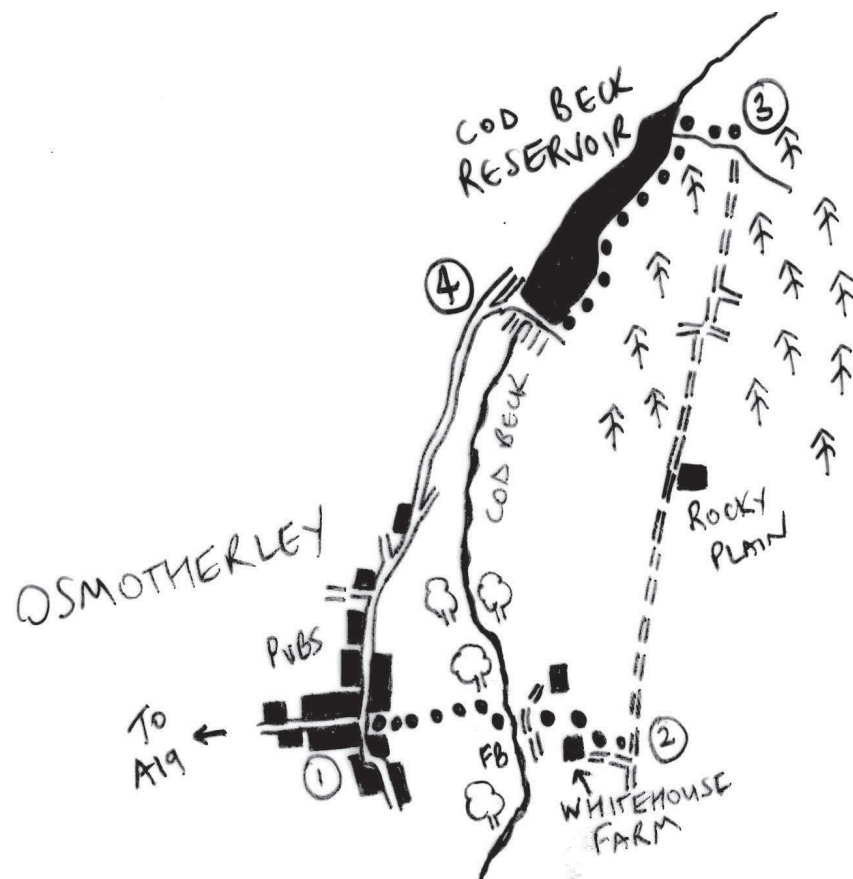
3 At this path junction, turn sharp left heading downhill through the forest, with a small stream on your left and the wall/edge of the forest on your right, and follow this down for 200 metres to reach a clear wide path just before Cod Beck Reservoir. Turn left and follow this very clear path along

the shores of the reservoir all the way to reach the dam wall. Turn right along the track over the dam wall, at the end of which head to the left up along the track to join a road.

4 Turn left along the road and follow this for 1 km (take care – walk in single file and make yourself visible to traffic) to reach the outskirts of Osmotherley (pavement), where you continue down along the road for a further 500 metres back into the centre of the village.

Points of interest

OSMOTHERLEY lies sheltered beneath the Cleveland Hills, a beautiful village of old stone cottages and pubs with a stepped Market Cross at its heart. The unusual name of the village dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, and means 'Asmund's clearing'. The village was once a busy market town, however the market is now only a distant memory. The squat stone table next to the Market Cross was once used as a market stall; it was upon this stone table that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, gave a sermon to the people of Osmotherley. Non-Conformist religions gained a strong foothold in the North York Moors in the decades that followed the Reformation as local people looked to the Non-Conformists rather than the Established Church. Osmotherley's Methodist Chapel, hidden away down a passageway, was built in 1754 and stands as one of the earliest of its type in the country.



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Birdwatch By Ian Kerr

ONE of our most charismatic birds, the barn owl, pictured, appeared to be enjoying a very good breeding season. Their fortunes are inextricably linked to the population cycle of voles, their top prey item, which tends to rise over a period of three or four years before then crashing.

Barn owls had a record breeding season both nationally and locally in 2014 when the vole population last peaked. An appalling year followed in 2015 after that population collapsed. Things improved last year as the population began to rise again and with voles heading for a new peak,

2017 looks very promising. Many pairs have now fledged their first broods and everyone is waiting to see if, like 2014, they lay again and raise second broods.

Barn owls take readily to nest boxes which allow ringers to check and handle large numbers of youngsters, making them among the best monitored of our breeding birds. Barn owls are officially classified as a Schedule 1 species, the most heavily protected, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and a licence is required to visit their nests. I spoke this week with one ringer with an extensive nest box scheme who has already ringed over 140

young and is anticipated a season on a par with 2014 if they go on to lay again. Other ringers are also reporting a very busy season.

I have two owl boxes just 250 yards apart in my own village which are used regularly even though that is very close for breeding pairs. These boxes produce on average around six or seven young. In 2014 the two pairs involved produced 14 young. This year so far they have hatched seven young of which four survived and have successfully fledged. Under the terms of my own licence, I'll be checking again soon and hoping for second clutches.

There has been an influx of quail into the region over the past weeks. These small gamebirds, much smaller than our familiar partridges, occur in varying numbers annually from breeding areas in southern Europe. They prefer deep grasses and vegetation and are normally heard rather than seen. Calling birds have been reported from areas including Bowburn, Pitlington, Hetton Lyons, Penshaw and South Shields and from localities elsewhere in the region.

When good rarities turn up in July they are often waders. So it proved this week with an American wader, a long-

billed dowitcher in russet breeding plumage. It was found on the beach at Boulmer in Northumberland and was still present at the time of writing on Tuesday night.

