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Lofthouse to Scar House Reservoir.

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Village of Lofthouse. Parking available at the Memorial Institute (SE 102736)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer Map 298 - Nidderdale
Distance	9.6 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk takes you on a wonderful high level circuit around the upper Nidderdale valley with views over Scar House Reservoir and the valley itself. Nidderdale is just outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park but has the accolade of being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has moorland vistas and is a lush green valley. The walk starts in the village of Lofthouse. Parking is a bit limited but there is the Memorial Institute with a car park you can use if no events are being held. If all else fails, there is a car park on the edge of the village of Middlesmoor through which the walk passes so you could start from there as this is a circular walk.

If the weather turned unpleasant and you wanted a lower level walk back from Scar House reservoir, there is the access road to the reservoir indicated on the sketch map by green arrows.

To get to Lofthouse, heading west through Pateley Bridge on the B6265, turn right after crossing the river bridge, signposted for Ramsgill, Lofthouse and Middlesmoor. Continue along this road past the expanse of Gouthwaite Reservoir and Ramsgill until you reach a right turn signposted with a small road sign for Masham 10 miles. It is easy to miss this turn but some blue warning signs saying Unsuitable for Goods Vehicles and Buses indicate it.

Start: From the Lofthouse Memorial Institute car park (SE 102736), turn right and walk through the village. Just beyond the village look out for a public footpath fingerpost on the right. Take this faint path which just cuts off a loop in the road. Follow the right hand fence line.

On reaching the road, turn right and walk up the road. This is the hardest part of the walk which seems to go on for ever. Continue up the road for about half a mile and look out for a gate on the left hand side with a public bridleway sign (SE 110744). Take this track and follow it straight ahead through gaps in two walls and at a 'T' junction of tracks overlooking the valley, turn right (SE 106747). You soon pass turreted shooting lodge.

The track reaches a gateway through which is a broad track. Turn left and stay on this broad track round the valley. When it divides after going through a gate, keep to

the higher level track. When it divides again, take the left hand arm continuing along the side of the valley.

At the next junction take the left lesser distinct track (SE 085779). You will see a ladder stile over the wall although do not go over this. Stay on this track until you get to a somewhat dilapidated flat roofed shooting lodge (SE 085777). It is usually open with rough tables and chairs and although not luxurious, it makes a useful spot for lunch out of the wind/rain. Please leave it as you find it and ensure the door is closed.

As you approach this shooting lodge, the route of the walk turns right through the gate. Stay on the main track as it descends into a small valley then up the other side. On reaching the wall, follow its right hand side and turn right by a post in the direction of the blue arrow with the curlew bird motif.

Ignore the next right turn and continue straight ahead past the copse of trees.

As you reach the area above the reservoir dam, the track goes through a gate (SE 066772) then curves left and wends its way down to the dam. Cross the dam and turn right along the tarmac road. As you reach a gateway across the road, take the broad track climbing to the left (SE 064766).

Stay on this main track ignoring any turns off and it eventually leads you into the village of Middlesmoor. After passing the Crown Hotel, go round the corner and take the cobbled lane on the left (SE 092742). This takes you to the church. Turn right through the narrow stone stile and along the flagged path. Through the stile at the other end and the path drops down the field in front of the church, towards another narrow stone stile at the bottom of the field then follows the line of the wall towards Lofthouse.

At the farm, the route, marked with yellow arrows, goes through the farmyard and through a metal gate at the other side then follows the line of the stream downhill. Go through a stile at the bottom right hand corner of the field and follow the line of the wall ahead.

As you approach a stone barn, go through the small gated narrow stile in the wall on the right and follow the path down to the road. At the road, via one kissing gate, there is another immediately on the left which will take you to Lofthouse.

Cross the lane by the fire station, go straight ahead over the footbridge across the River Nidd. The path comes out next to Fountain Cottage and the War Memorial. Turn right and the car park is immediately on the left.

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