

Race Report for Reservoir Dogs 2020

What a great way to spend a birthday! 97 socially distance runners set off over a three hour period and 96 finished, just one retirement and that was after 40km. I've been through all the gpx files and there were a few interesting route choices made!

In a way hardly surprising, Yorkshire Water withdrew their consent for ALL events on their land, so I had to quickly draw up a revised route. Also original Start and Finish locations were no longer possible as the buildings are not currently let out due to Coronavirus. The only sensible solution was to have the start and finish in the car park, not least because I could also not hire the minibus due to CoVid.

When I looked to tweak the route it became clear that the long course could no longer go around Haverah (Yorkshire Water) and Eccup (too far) reservoirs. However I could fit the course in around Thruscross. When I first designed Reservoir Dogs in 2017 I had wanted to use Thruscross, but decided against it as it would involve crossing the A59 twice. This time I had little choice.

Avoiding the reservoir paths was challenging and involved far more road than I would like, including a stretch along the A59 and also a long boring bit to Stainburn Forest. But at least for both the sightlines were good. The trade off though was that some of the paths I found are rarely used, in fact three of them no longer exist! (So I had to make another last minute adjustment whilst reccyng). The result was some of the course was much faster, but there were some slow and technical sections. Overall the feedback I got was that it was on balance a better course!

With two days to go, we had a freak storm. 3-6 inches of hail, that was not forecast and didn't seem to even make the local news. A supercell had attacked the Wharfe Valley causing mayhem, traffic accident, abandoned cars and localised flooding. I was in ASDA when it started buying the checkpoint supplies and the temperature dropped from 9C to 4C in minutes. Whilst we had a whiteover at home for 24 hours it did clear in time for the race.

The next near disaster was that on Friday afternoon it was announced that Leeds was going into local lockdown at midnight, some runners were already en-route or even staying locally. Fortunately which socialising in parks is now banned for Leeds residents, outdoor sports are still acceptable, so we were ok to continue. I had cleared the event with the local police.

So onto race day. I arrived to unlock the car park at 5.30am, only to be told by a film crew's security that I could not use the car park as they had booked it all, and they had valuable equipment parked up. I politely explained that I had booked the car park a year ago and knew the owner, who had given me the key the day before and asked that we just used the front section. After promising him that we would be going nowhere near their vehicle and would retain a 'DMZ' between the two sections, and assuring him we would have someone on our site at all times to ensure no one came near their vehicles, he calmed down. Besides I explained that for the most part all the runners would be far more interested in the 37 mile race they were here for and would not be around for most of the day.

Given all the challenges leading up to the event the day itself went relatively smoothly. Although one runner managed to re-download the provisional GPX file, which I spotted and was able to email

him the correct one so he could update it. Three runners tried to do the course in reverse, but I managed to stop them after 4.5 miles and put them to the back of the field.

I discovered one runner attempted the Thruscross Loop, but managed to avoid Thruscross, so I had to retrospectively downgrade him to the Short course.

I also received several reports of runners doing the top loop of the Thruscross in reverse. I realise how this happened, if you were not closely following the gpx file you could miss a left turn shortly before the dam and carry on doing a figure of 8. As there was nothing to be gained or lost I did not intervene as everyone did the same climb and descent.

So to the performances. There were some of you doing your first Ultra and I was very impressed that you all finished well within the time limits. That's one benefit of the staggered starts, the later marshals and finish do not have to be open as long. The downside is we don't always know who has won until after they have gone home, so I have several trophies next to me!

Some of you were fresh (er probably not the right word) from completing the Hardmoors 60 last week, Stephen Kirk repeated his 3rd place from last week with 3rd place yesterday, Andy Pickering did the double and I am sure there were more.

Congratulations to Mark Kearney on winning, with Ian Cocks close on his heels, just 8 minutes behind. Ian Moran won the battle of the Ians by beating Ian Winstanley by just one minute in the MV50 class, and Graham Molyneux continued his fine form with another 3rd place, just two minutes ahead of Stephen Dillon, who might have stood a better chance if he had not taken the



scenic route

In a day of close finishes Jessica Jones won the Female category by two minutes from Hannah Carter, with Jeanette Whitham only three minutes behind her. Linda Webb completed the winners list by taking the FV50 race from Pam Baird who I hope won't be too upset by revealing that had there have been an FV70 category, she would have won, I know she was overjoyed to win her first trophy since entering that category. She is one awesome competitor.

No trophies for the short course but quickest round was Benjamin Cousen in just under 5 hours, with Sam Tansley 3 minutes behind.

I was amazed at how many finishers took the cake and ate it immediately. It was that good, a great sugar rush at the end! Certainly one of the tastiest cakes I've had. Thanks Jools, it was a big hit!

Throughout the day many members of the public came up to us at the finish to ask what was going on and I was blown away by the support and positive feedback that they ALL gave. It all made for a great day.

A final thanks to all the Marshals, Mark and Hadrian on CP1, Helena and Woody on CP2, Nicky and Caroline (and family) on CP3, Alex and Stuart on CP4. Some of those checkpoints were a tad on the cold side. Also to Bev, AJ, Jonathan and Darren for help at the start and finish. These events

would not be possible without the help of the marshals, some of whom also helped out after their duties.

Thank you all for taking part, and adhering to the extra rules that were necessary for this event to go ahead.

See you all next time

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