

DERWENT – 40 FACTS FOR 40 YEARS

Derwent Reservoir was formed by an earth dam across the River Derwent, a tributary of the River Tyne and forms the county boundary between Northumberland and County Durham.

Water from the reservoir flows through 2.2 miles of twin 41 inch diameter pipeline to the treatment works near the hamlet of Mosswood. The treatment works includes sedimentation tanks, filters and a laboratory.

The water then gravitates from the treatment works 27 miles to Washington to be distributed to customers in Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside.

Water

The reservoir collects the water running off 27,200 acres (110km²) of catchment. The average rainfall of the catchment is 37.5 inches (953mm). The reservoir provides a reliable daily yield of 30.5 million gallons (112,320 cubic meters per day). Compensation water is discharged to the river below the dam at an average rate of 5.75 million gallons a day, leaving a balance for each undertaking of 12.5 million gallons a day.

The Reservoir

The reservoir is one of the largest inland waters in England. It is 3.5 miles (5.6 km) long and covers an area of 1,000 acres (4 km²). The maximum depth of the water is 100 ft (30m) at the dam, and when full the reservoir will hold 11,000 million gallons (50,000,000 m³).

Three farmsteads, two cottages and a charming old house, known as Millshield Mill were demolished before the reservoir was filled. Two miles of public road were submerged but were replaced by 4 miles of new road.

Construction of the reservoir, which cost £5.5 million, started in 1960 and water was first taken into supply in September 1966.

The Dam

The earth dam is 3,000 ft (914m) long and 119ft (36m) high above old river bed level. The volume of the dam is 2,600,000 cubic yards (2,000,000 m³). All the earth for making it was dug from the area, now under water, together with sand and gravel for most of the concrete. There are around 750,000 bricks in the dam wall.

Tunnel

Before dam could be built, the River Derwent had to be diverted through a tunnel 17ft in diameter and 646 yds long. When the dam was built, the tunnel was plugged with concrete 25ft thick. Upstream of the plug the tunnel is now full of water, while downstream it is dry and contains the pipes through which the water is taken from the reservoir.

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- 1 Planning for Derwent Reservoir began in 1950
- 2 It cost £5.5 million to build
- 3 Work started on building Derwent Reservoir in 1960
- 4 It took six years to build
- 5 HRH Princess Alexandra, the Queens cousin, officially opened the reservoir on 18 July 1967
- 6 Three farms and two cottages were demolished to make way for the reservoir
- 7 Derwent Reservoir is the second largest reservoir in the north east
- 8 It holds 11,000 million gallons of water or 625 million bath fulls
- 9 Two miles of roads were submerged and replaced with nearly four miles of new road
- 10 At its deepest the reservoir is 30 meters deep
- 11 There are seven miles of shoreline
- 12 The dam wall contains three quarters of a million bricks
- 13 The surface of water is four km²
- 14 The water from Derwent supplies customers in parts of Sunderland and Durham
- 15 Mark Hayes caught a 19lb 6oz trout in 2000 and still holds the record for the largest trout caught at Derwent
- 16 Eleven record breaking 20lb plus trout have been introduced into Derwent as part of the 40th Anniversary celebrations
- 17 100,000 people visit Derwent every year
- 18 More than 15,000 anglers visited Derwent last year – making it the best attended still water fishery in Northern Europe
- 19 40,000 trout have been released in 2007 – the biggest stocking in Derwent’s history
- 20 The Water Industry Game Championships (WIGFIG) were held at Derwent and it was voted their best ever event
- 21 100 acres of trees were planted when the reservoir was built
- 22 The name Derwent comes from the Brythonic/Old Welsh word for oak ‘derw’
- 23 The reservoir compensates the River Derwent with 25 million litres of water every day
- 24 Derwent is one of Northumbrian Waters 22 reservoirs
- 25 Chris Packham from BBC’s Really Wild Show helped install an otter holt in 1999
- 26 There is a bird hide located on the north shore of the Derwent
- 27 Birds at Derwent include mallard, teal, coot, moorhen, tufted duck, pochard, goosander and greylag geese
- 28 Rare animals such as red squirrels and adders can be spotted around Derwent
- 29 The Derwent is located on the border between Northumberland and County Durham
- 30 Durham City Mayor, George Wharton hosted a charity fishing competition at Derwent with his entire entourage
- 31 On site shop stocks fishing tackle, snacks and drinks
- 32 Tyne Valley Cycling Club hold their annual cycling road race around Derwent
- 33 In 2006 an osprey nesting platform was erected
- 34 There are three picnic sites each with toilets, car parking and walks
- 35 The River Derwent is a tributary of the River Tyne
- 36 Derwent is home to one of the country’s nine Royal Yachting Association Sailing Academies
- 37 George Morpeth worked on the construction of the reservoir before working for Northumbrian Water until he retired in 1995
- 38 Michael Everitt still works for Northumbrian Water after working on the construction of the reservoir
- 39 Part of Ivor Ward’s land made way for the reservoir, he also worked on the construction, was at the opening and is here today
- 40 Remember to drink eight glasses of Derwent’s finest tap water every day!