

Blue Lagoon - Thursday 17th November 2022

A walk to the Blue Lagoon seemed a good idea, when I put it in the programme, back in July, when the temperature was 40 degrees Celsius. Fast forward to mid-November and we were departing Idle Village on a cold and damp morning. My negotiations with Brook Shields agent drew a blank, she was willing to join us on the walk but it appears Trevor's restraining order was still in place. I could have asked Trevor not to attend but my loyalty must lay with LDWA members and unfortunately Brook is not a member!!!

Seven strong this week, including Walks Secretary, Julia, who I assume was keeping an eye on husband Ralph, who along with Trevor and Mike, each week after the walk, had regularly been seen in the White Bear, with three Saltaire Blonds!!! We headed east this week, following the Leeds/Liverpool canal down to Owl Bridge at Rodley. We didn't see any owls but we were lucky enough to see some Parakeets in the trees on the Calverley section of the canal. With it being the first walk after remembrance Sunday, we had five cenotaphs on our agenda. Taking the bridge over the canal, we headed up through the fields crossing Rodley Lane to Brookfield Park. Passing the allotments and cenotaphs for both Calverley and Farsley, we followed the Calverley Millennium Way via Hazelbrae to Wadlands Hall Farm, before taking Priesthorpe Lane and cutting up over Woodhall Hills, which provides panoramic views of Leeds and also a tucked away picturesque hamlet, with history dating back to Roman times. We were though now in sight of our main feature of the day, we quickly negotiated the golf course and dropped down to the eagerly anticipated Blue Lagoon. The bull rushes were still prominent, but starting to die back for the winter and it was a stretch calling the water blue but we had arrived at Thornbury's Blue Lagoon, also known as Woodhall Lakes. It is though, an ideal place for walking and we had our midmorning stop by the lakeside. After last week's shenanigans when one member of the group ended up in the water at Northcliffe Dike, the walk leader took no chances and provided life jackets to all walkers as we ventured around the lagoon side path!!! Well if we couldn't get Brook Shields, we may as well have Mae Wests!!!

From the Lagoon we crossed Bradford Road in Thornbury, passing Lalas, which will be a staging post tomorrow, for Kevin Sinfield's, seven Ultra marathons in seven days, running from Murryfield in Scotland to Old Trafford in Manchester. He is completing 40 miles each day and is running from York to Bradford tomorrow, (Friday) - the sixth leg out of seven. He is raising money for motor neurone disease, (MND).

From Lalas we dropped down Daleside Road to cross the Leeds to Harrogate railway line. Trevor asked 'why are we crossing the railway'? I said 'we are on the wrong side of the tracks' – he replied 'I've lived my whole life on the wrong side of the tracks - I'm not crossing over now'!!! - James Dean was his hero growing up, or Jimmy D as he called him. We eventually coaxed him over and were soon heading past Wild Grove farm on the way to Gibraltar Road and Owlcoats Hill. We '**eventually**' crossed the Stanningley Bypass on the way to West Royd Park, where the old Aston Martin Factory used to be, there is an impressive commemorative stone celebrating the manufacture of the Aston Martin DB4, where a housing estate has replaced the old factory.

There was then a short descent into Farsley, passing our third cenotaph of the day, before reaching our lunch stop at the Loft Coffee Shop, part of the Springfield Mills complex, which also has a cenotaph dedicated to the mill workers, who had served and died during the second

world war. Jacket potatoes being a popular choice in the café today, it also gave us an opportunity to dry out a little, after the morning rain. Teas and coffees drunk, food consumed and we were on our way heading down through Bagley to the canal at Rodley Barge Bridge. Following the towpath to Horsforth Vale, we crossed the river via Calverley's old pack horse bridge - built in 1775. This was just the precursor to the long steady climb all the way to Rawdon, passing Brodie & Flynn's on route to Knotts Lane and Red Beck, which we followed, (clambering over and under trees), to Billings Hill. After taking in the panoramic views, we headed over the fields towards Leeds/Bradford Airport and having reached the boundary fence we dropped down over Plane Tree Hill and Rawdon Common towards Yeadon Tarn for our mid-afternoon stop sat on the seats at the water's edge. Due to all the recent rain, the tarn was full to bursting. All the reservoirs are now refilling after the summer drought. Trevor said if this continues he will start washing and bathing again – his last bath was back in March!!!

We then headed down Yeadon Banks on the way to Nunroyd Park in Airborough, passing our fifth cenotaph of the day. Following part of the disused railway track between Guiseley and Yeadon, we cut through Belmont Wood and over the railway bridge into Spring Wood, following the path beside Guiseley Beck we passed the disused Yorkshire Water, settlement tanks, which are the subject of a planning application for a new housing development. Eventually reaching Esholt village and the famous Woolpack public house. Departing Esholt, now heading west, but no setting sun, it had been obscured by cloud and rain all day!!! We picked up the River Aire, following the river bank back to Thackley and our final climb of the day to Idle village. This week taking the path through the upper section of Buck Wood, which is classed as an Ancient Monument, the wood consists of native Oak, Ash, Sycamore and Silver Birch. Other non-native trees such as Scots Pine, were introduced later in a managed operation. There is evidence of a settlement in the area from 5000 years ago, which gives it the ancient monument status. It was also the site of an open air school, which operated from 1908 to 1939 and was a school for delicate children!!! These were pupils from the slums of central Bradford, who suffered from TB, rickets and general chest complaints. It was thought the fresh air and rural setting would help cure these complaints. The children were bussed to the school each day and the number grew to 300+ pupils at its height. We left the woods just before nightfall and were able to complete the walk, without the need for head torches - the last mile being lit by street lamps. We arrived back at the village car park at 4.50 pm, feeling better for having another 23 miles in our legs. Trevor, Pete, Ralph and Julia, headed to the White Bear. The only photograph, I received this week, was of a beaming, Trevor and Pete, each holding a Saltaire Blond - I'll let the reader draw their own conclusions!!!

Next week sees us on our penultimate walk of this year's autumn series, heading to Tong Village. Lunch will be at Blooms in Tong Garden Centre. With only 30 shopping days left until Christmas, it will be a chance to get those presents, to avoid that last minute panic on Christmas Eve. All the Christmas displays are in full swing - this is a walk not to be missed unless you are Scrooge, from Charles Dickens - A Christmas Carol.