

Cabbage Hill - Thursday 15th September 2022

The promise of a fine days walk ahead in the picturesque albeit industrialised section of the Aire Valley made 'Cabbage Hill' sound a very attractive prospect for a mid-September jaunt. The intrepid group of six walkers, gathered in Idle village carpark for the 8.00am start on this autumnal morning and headed east down to Apperley Bridge and Calverley Woods. As the morning progressed there was a growing sense of trepidation and foreboding within the group due to both Post Hill and the Archway Steps being included in the route description!!! How steep can Post Hill be? Was the thought crossing the minds of the walkers. We were joined by a seventh walker as we descended Daleside Road to Ducketts crossing, a young and obviously lost French bulldog puppy latched onto the group. After knocking a few doors, we could not identify the owner but fortunately there is a vets practice at the top of the road, and dog loving Karen took him there. Luckily he was chipped and the receptionist said she would repatriate him with the owner. Despite losing 30 minutes our good deed for the day buoyed the spirits of the group.

On reaching Black Carr Wood, the sun started to poke out from behind the clouds and the prospect of the forecast pleasant day materialise and we quickly reached Roker Lane, where the beck side trail was closed due to the path in places having collapsed into the beck due to erosion. Taking a detour we soon reached **Post Hill**, which came by the name, when the Yorkshire Evening Post sponsored a motorcycle hill climb in the 1920's. It was reputed to be the steepest hill climb in the world and was still used as such into the 1970's. Today it is just the first of two challenges for the Thursday walkers, however Pudsey Pacers do hold a 5k race every autumn, which includes two climbs of the hill - so dust off your old running shoes!!! During the Second World War, Post Hill was the site of a POW camp for German and Italian soldiers, who were put to work on the local farmland. It was taken over by Leeds City Council in 2002 and is being returned to a natural state.

Undeterred, the group started their arduous ascent with steely determination and on reaching the top, they paused to gulp in lungful's of Yorkshire air, what could be more refreshing than that? Maybe I could bottle it and sell it around the world? My second Business idea of the autumn series, again I'm offering shares at £1000 each – this time next year we'll be millionaires!!!

The first to reach the summit was....., I shan't say but if you see someone wearing a polka dot jersey on the next few Saturday walks, you'll know who!!! We also took this opportunity to have our morning break as the summit offers excellent views towards Pudsey. It also spared the blushes of those who had wobbly legs from the climb!!! Departing Post Hill, we continued on the West Leeds Greengateway, down to Armley and Gotts Park. Dropping down through the park to the Canal we continued through the woods until our second challenge of the day appeared in front of us – **The Archway Steps**. John Buchan has nothing on this challenge - 160 steps, I've counted them all numerous times. There were no takers for the ten climbs challenge!!!

After taking a few photographs of the wild flower garden at the top, we departed the park and were soon onto Armley common, where the travelling funfair had assembled to entertain the locals over the coming weekend. Although Trevor mentioned it was visiting time and he

had not seen any of his relatives in the prison since before lockdown, we decided to continue on the walk to our designated lunch stop in Lower Wortley. Leaving Armley we soon reached the main feature of today's walk - **Cabbage Hill**.

Climbing up on Cabbage Hill, I could see the city lights. Wind was blowing, time stood still, eagle flew out of the night!!! Hmm..... I think I got carried away a little there? I'll also acknowledge Peter Gabriel for those lyrics. Although steep, Cabbage Hill is a short climb and does provide extensive views of Leeds City Centre. At night you would see the city lights but I doubt you would see an eagle and more important to us at this moment in time was reaching The Rumble House café for our lunch, which was still twenty minutes away.

We reached the café at 1.10pm and omelettes seemed to be a popular choice today. Suitably refreshed, we struck out for home, the pace had quickened and we were now moving more swiftly and we soon reached New Farnley and dropped down through Cockersdale woods before climbing to Tong village, (ignoring Goodall's ice cream parlour), although the option for a stop was discussed!!!. The long descent of Keeper Lane was only the precursor to the climb back up to Fulneck. Cutting through the outskirts of Pudsey, we reached Queens Park and made use of the picnic tables for our afternoon stop in the late afternoon sunshine.

We were now on the home leg and quickly reached Owlcotes Hill before dropping down and crossing the Stanningley bypass to reach New Pudsey Station. Passing Pudsey Civic Hall we crossed the Ring Road using the Priesthorpe school footbridge, taking Priesthorpe Lane and Shell Lane into Calverley. Now heading west, through Calverley Woods we soon reached Greengates, before our final ascent through Thorpe Edge, arriving back in Idle village at 5.35pm. GPS's checked and 27 miles agreed and the end of another cracking Thursday walk.

Next week, sees us on our fourth walk of this year's autumn series, this time heading out towards Otley and Bramhope. More upmarket I would suggest than today's venture, through Armley and Wortley. Dinner Jackets, bowties and cocktail dresses are recommended for the lunch stop!!!