

Golden Acre - Thursday 6th October 2022

As I turn my Yorkshire Post calendar from September to October, changing the picture from the summery scene of the River Ure, sided by lush green meadows, with an aqua blue sky, to a picture of Hardcastle Crag, bathed in the early autumn sunshine, on a late afternoon, with the glow of the light from the mill windows being reflected on the surface of the mill ponds. I ask the question is it time to put the shorts and sun cream away for another year and get out our beanie hats and gloves? We do though have striking autumn colours and pumpkin lattes to look forward to over the coming months.

A couple of absentees this week, Mike and Chris, I put it down to lack of commitment to the cause!!! But we welcomed Karen and Sara back, I would suggest this was a good swap!!! Christine also attended her first walk of this year's autumn series and was a welcome addition to the group. This meant we had a cohort of nine walkers out today on what turned out to be a dry and at times a warm and sunny day. We headed east this week, into the early morning sunshine, down to Apperley Bridge, passing the engineering works that are improving the flood defences along the river Aire. We picked up the river bank following it to Horsforth Vale, before turning north up Bar Lane and crossing the A65 on the way to Hunger Hill. Following the Leeds Country Way through the woods, we reached the summit, which offers spectacular views not only across the city of Leeds but further afield. Unlike last Thursday on Baildon Moor, when mist and dark cloud hampered our view, we could see both Drax and Ferrybridge today. Departing the summit we were quickly onto the Leeds Trinity University campus, which was busy with students, recently back from their long summer recess. I was expecting some to be out on the track doing 'rep' sessions to remind us of our own lost youth but the oval was empty. Not quite the Iffley Road track in Oxford and no four minute miler out there but to compensate for this lack of university athletic prowess, we did meet a secondary school cross country run, coming towards us through the fields. Maybe these included our future Olympians?

Leaving the university behind, we headed to the tiny hamlet of Scotland, crossing Scotland Lane we passed Owlet Farm and Moseley Farm on our way to Cookridge. Picking up the public footpath through the golf course, we reached Breary Marsh Nature reserve and followed the woodland path to Golden Acre Park, where we had our 'elevenses' sat on the benches in front of the Bakehouse Borders, which are full of autumn flowering plants and shrubs. Having taken advantage of the toilet facilities, we departed the park via the cherry orchard, on the Meanwood Valley Trail, which runs from here all the way to Woodhouse. Crossing Arthington Road, we followed King Lane to King Lane Farm before picking up the path through Adel Woods to the Seven Arches Aqueduct. We continued on the path beside Adel Beck to Baywater Farm, taking the tunnel under the Leeds Ring Road we picked up Meanwood Beck, following it to our lunch stop at The Three Cottages café in Meanwood Park.

Refreshed from our toasties and hot drinks, we headed through Far Headingley to Wood Lane, where we left the Meanwood Valley trail and struck out for the highlight of the walk, the headquarters of Yorkshire County Cricket Club. Trevor had been slightly late for the start due to a last minute decision to root through his loft. The reason why became apparent when, on reaching Headingley, he headed to the pitch to have a knock, with bat in hand and his box firmly in place!!! He told us the last time he had been on the hallowed turf, he had taken six

for 38, getting Don Bradman out first ball - for some reason no one believed him - nor did the security on the gate – who turned him away!!! Despite this setback he was still buoyed by his brief glimpse of the pitch and there was an extra spring in his stride.

From Headingley, we quickly reached Kirkstall, passing Kirkstall Abbey, which will be the feature of a future walk in November, to pick up the Leeds/Liverpool canal, following the towpath to Kirkstall Forge, where we had our afternoon stop in the late afternoon sunshine, sat on the picnic tables outside Butler's café. From here we headed through Hunters Greave, to Newlay Bridge, then following the river to Rodley. We were now on the final leg of the walk, again picking up the canal and following it back to Apperley Bridge, where we took the short cut through the marina back to Idle village, arriving at 4.40pm - the end of another cracking Thursday walk. GPS's checked and 23 miles agreed, except Roger, who had 24.38 miles on his - but as everyone knows carrying a contraband pork pie on a walk, always adds one mile to a GPS!!!

Next week sees us joined by our friends from South Pennie as we head out to Adwalton Moor, the scene of a 1643 battle in the English Civil War. There are four commemorative stones on the moor, two on the Parliamentarians side and two on the Royalist side of the battlefield, where we can stand amongst the ranks of the soldiers. Lunch will be at the Drighlington Community Hub, where full English breakfasts are on the menu!!!