

Tong Garden Centre – Thursday 28th October 2021

For the survivors of the previous eight weeks, this was the culmination of all their efforts, a ninth and final walk which, would bring the autumn series to a close for 2021 and give a total of just over 200 miles walked. This week, ten eager walkers, including newbies, Dave and Ian departed Idle village car park, heading east down to Apperley Bridge, using the Pegasus crossing to reach Parkin Lane, where we headed south along Carr Beck, which becomes Fagley beck once we have crossed New Line, proceeding through Ravenscliffe, we eventually reached Lower Fagley and the now derelict Blue Pig pub, with echoes of Thin Lizzy's Whisky in the Jar still in the ether, there was a tear in Trevor's eye!!!

Continuing to head south towards the old Calverley Hospital site, which is now an industrial estate, we took the more picturesque route to Stone Stile farm and headed down Sunnybank Lane. We could though still smell the freshly baked bread, from the Hovis bakery, which fortified us for the miles ahead. Crossing the Leeds/Bradford cycle superhighway, (it was like Amsterdam on a bank holiday weekend!!!), we reached the Odeon cinema complex at Thornbury, down to Ducketts Crossing, we soon reached Delph End and followed Tyersal Beck to the bottom of Tyersal Lane, which was the precursor to the long steady climb, passing Black Hey Farm, to reach Tyersal Hall, which afforded us access via a footpath to Black Carr Wood. Dropping down through the woods to Bella Vista, we headed up Scholebrook Lane, through Scholebrook Farm, which would be an excellent place for a farm shop or café. Continuing onto Raikes Lane, to Rycroft farm, we cut back through Kit Wood to Gib Stubbing Farm. Skirting Peter's Shrog, we reached our early lunch destination of Tong Garden Centre, just turned 11.30 am.

The group, like small children, were wide eyed with amazement, looking at the Christmas displays, the two reindeers called Merry & Bright, were particularly popular. It was though disappointingly too early for Santa to be in his grotto but we were able to leave our Christmas lists in his chimney - but just remember you must not be naughty before Christmas day or Santa will not bring you any presents!!! We then headed to Blooms Kitchen for our lunch, jacket potatoes being the popular choice today. Having had spirits raised by the Christmas atmosphere, we departed the garden centre with a little sadness in our hearts but joyed by the season to come. We headed through Tong Village, passing Tong Hall and St James church. Tong has evidence of Roman settlement and was also listed in the 1086 Domesday book as being in the possession of the De Lacy family, De Lacy being an ally of William the Conqueror during the Norman conquest of 1066. He owned 162 manors, which now forms the majority of the city of Bradford. At the time of the Domesday Book it was all listed as wasteland. – I was trying to think of a joke here but nothing came to mind!!!

Leaving Tong, we descended Springfield Lane to Cockersdale. Taking the higher route towards Upper Moor Side before dropping down through Nan Withins Wood to Roker Lane Bottom. Following Pudsey Beck north towards Troydale. It turned into Ralph's nostalgia

walk, having been born and raised in the area as well as attending Pudsey Crawshaw School. The only thing lacking was a blue plaque on his childhood home!!! Passing the Bowls club on Troydale Lane, we headed up towards Hough Side Road via Acres Hall. Crossing the main road, we took the quieter, Hough Side Lane, passing Pudsey Cong's cricket ground, we soon reached Pudsey Lowtown. Cutting onto the disused railway line passing Pauls Pond, (a different Pauls Pond to the one in Breary Marsh near Golden Acre Park – but that Paul certainly gets around doesn't he?), before going through the lanes and dropping down to cross the Stanningley bypass emerging onto the Grangefield Industrial Estate. Taking Grangefield Road over the Railway into Stanningley, a quick group photograph was taken at the Bridge, a piece of art produced by Pippa Hale in 2018, which represents the industrial past of the area. We crossed over the main road and cut through to the 'Nest' the home of Farsley Celtic AFC on the way to Sunnybank Mills and the art gallery café for our afternoon cuppa, kindly provided by the Walk Leader..

Suitably refreshed, we headed up through the impressive mill complex, passing the Old Woollen, before exiting onto Red Lane, just before Farsley cricket ground and heading through the community orchard before dropping down to cross the Leeds Ring Road to reach Priesthorpe Road, near Wadlands Hall Farm. Initially heading west we then turned East onto Shell Lane, down to Calverley. Passing St Wilfrid's church, we took the public footpath to the right of Thornhill Drive, at the side of Calverley Junior & Infant School, through Calverley Wood to the bottom of Calverley cutting. We then cut through one of the numerous new housing developments – 'this used to be fields, when I was a lad!' to reach Greengates, To avoid the major roadworks, which have been ongoing for over a year and are not due to be finished until next spring, we headed up through Thorpe Edge for our final climb back to Idle village, where we arrived at 4.40 pm, having beaten the imminent rain shower by a good ten minutes.

To celebrate the successful completion of this year's autumn series, we walked to the White Bear for a celebratory drink. I would like to thank my trusty backmarker, Trevor and everyone who has attended one of my walks. We had a total of 76 walkers throughout the series. The nine walks totalled 201 miles, we visited 24 cafes and drank numerous teas and coffees. We only had one showery day, when we walked to Otley Chevin, the other eight walks were dry and at times sunny except for one absolute deluge on the return from Keighley. Apart from two walkers who were bitten by a horse, (the same horse), and the walk leader, who was stung by a wasp, everyone else emerged unscathed and hopefully more fulfilled from their experiences.

There are plans for an extended autumn series in 2022. With walks being offered every Thursday throughout September, October and November. Keep the dates free in your diaries. Fuller details will be made available in the spring.