

Dear All

Virtual Walk Wednesday 8th April – Ledston to Ledsham the long way

We must kindly thank Jean and Austin for this, what promises to be an unforgettable stroll around the scenic waterways and pastoral elegance of the once thriving industrial heartlands of Castleford. Home to such sporting heroes as Eddy Warring (up n under, and his mother loves him, fame), Sir Geoffrey (that won't out) Boycott and of course Harold (Oh yes it twas) (Dickie) Bird (OBE), twice removed. But first cast your mind back to the navel engagement off Copenhagen some time ago, Nelson of the one eye at that time, had had a special single hole balaclava made to order, in the previous summer. His assistant and soon to become part owner to the shoe shop chain Freeman Hardly and Willis was the custodian of said hat. During the course of the battle, the top honcho Sir Wilfred Hyde (Nosey) Parker Wyatt ordered the British fleet to disengage just as Willis was handing the inside out balaclava to Nelson, who after putting it on turned out to be blind in both eyes. As a consequence, he missed the signal to withdraw, and continued to carry the fight to Stern Billy and Oi fart the Fisher the Danish Commanders, with some resounding success. The event was to become what was know then and to this day (as turning a blind eye) or ignoring the boss.

On with the walk, we leave Ledston and the 15th Century old White Horse Inn and its Opera being sung this week by Maria Callous and Robinson Crusoe (booking the 3 tenners had been looked at) but were thought to be a bit pricey and the (3 tanners although affordable were unavailable). We swing south west to Allerton Surrounded by Water to link up with the River Hair (posh hereabouts) walkway and its downhill (here we again) romp towards the picturesque environs of Castleford. Just prior to reaching this quietly spoken and quaint Market Town we swing left along the Aire Colder Navigation where there is a Blue Plaque (something to do with teeth) to celebrate its opening around 1700. Time for a sweetie, this week the lovely Jean, Austin has told me to say, will dole out some local delicacies and what could be more local to Pontefract! why of course some Kendal Mint cake, and left over from Christmas, a few Furious Rothay's (thank heavens. the last of that foreign muck, as mother used to say). You might note that Jean is using one of Austin's ingenious devices for healthily doling out the spice, these come in a variety of sizes, the one in use today is the 1oz or 25gramm model, which he has called a teaspoon. Carrying on our merry way towards lunch opposite the Castleford Water treatment works and pungent aromas fercolating from the thick gorse, out of season bonny purple heather and the heavily polluted water course, we have time to meditate on this once rural landscape. Prior to 1700 we assume. After lunch, which for the lovely Carol and I, was a cold concoction of baked beans in aspic jelly, raspberry flavour with some green olives and a portion of David and Linda left over tomatoes, (available by request until the end of August – You ask him?). The walk continues along the Colder Hair Navigation, until swinging left again, (a right turn would cause wet feet at least and a possible a drowning in the canal) towards the Fairburn Ings RSPB centre, well known for Twitcher's and Dogger's all creeping about with binoculars and night glasses, carrying on with their charming and innocent pass times. The walk now continues inland towards Ledsham, which according to my walking notes, ‘ ‘ has kept itself aloof ‘ ‘ from the near bye industrialisation. That's posh again then, but being aloof might ward off the smell from the before mention Castleford treatment works, unless they have their noses stuck in the air, in which case it would only make matters worse. Just time for another generous sweetie stop, really its so Austin can again demonstrate (show off) his middle range sweet dispenser, which this time has provisionally been called the Dessert spoon. There are plans afoot to extend the set, to include the X4 model (ladle) but the development is on hold, until he finishes wiping the dishes at home. The sweets this time include the much-publicised Chilli and Bailey's soft chews popular in some quarters and the much-maligned Hard Rock Coffee dips, hated by most. But not as badly the fluff coated Mint Imperials Paul Mc keeps pushing on us, every time he leads a walk. The final stage of the walk takes in Ledston Hall, once home to Lazy Liz Hastings, sister to Max and owner of a sea side resort on the south coast (Eastbourne). The Hall and chapel are thought to have been built by the monks of Pontefract Priory, for the storage of a liquorice medicinal sweetmeat better know today as Wine Gums. So, on that note we leave Mama Cass and head off toward Brimham rocks, with Sue and Steve, that's a weak today. No walk Sunday, so maybe a quiz,

short walk, and general interest or lack of, page. Take care, and wear the Bally, you know it makes sense !!! Bill (no not in bath Alan)

The walk this week has been extended to include 2 pages, a rear treat for you all.

The pictures below were kindly supplied by Austin and Jean, using one of his ingenious devices based on the Brownie 127 as opposed to a chocolate one, or one we might be meeting later on Sue Mathews walk next week. I have supplied what I believe to be a suitable caption, others may disagree, SO WAT PAL

Ledston Telephone Box and within it a scene from the White Horse Opera



Ledsham Hall a rather squat building for Period extensively refurbished in late 2019 using geraniums and plant pots, one of which wrote the captions .

From the aroma, you can tell that we are fast approaching the Water Treatment works at Castleford, just in time for lunch. Linda, Joyce and Keith are in front again on the boat

These pages have been extensively checked for spelling and Grammar errors together with up to date defunct virus checks