

Five have an Imperfect Adventure

On a damp misty autumn morning, Five are walking up an enclosed path to meet a cobbled lane which marks the beginning of today's Romp. They skirt Holcombe Manor House and Pinfold Cottage. A 'Pinfold' is an enclosure for stray animals. No strays here! They are all Bona-Fide members of the Lytham St Anne's u3a Walking Group, setting out on their latest adventure.

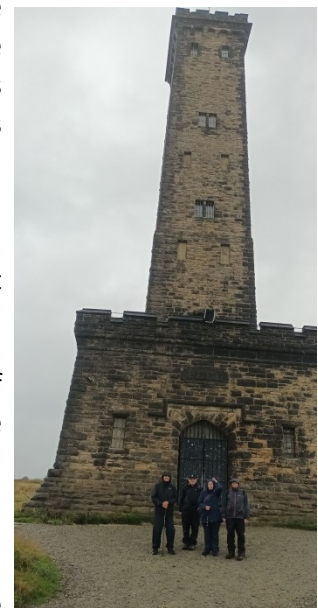


They negotiate a cattle grid and pass between old gate pillars marking the boundary of the National Trusts Holcombe Moor Estate. The path continues to climb, then levels out with fine views to the East. No doubt these Five are not perfect as they backtrack after missing the rising track which is part of the boundary of the well-marked army firing-range. Today the red flags

aren't flying as the Five tighten their hood-strings against the worsening weather and head towards the four-sided monument which marks the spot of an ancient Pilgrims Cross, known to have been here in the 12th century which may have been a wayside resting place for pilgrims bound for Whalley Abbey.

Following a footpath made up of a long line of large flat stones, some exhibiting three dimensional sculptured patterns on their surface, Five continue in the drizzle to Harcles Hill. There is an invigorating openness about Holcombe Moor from which the views are splendid. Pendle Hill lies to the North, Winter Hill to the West and the Southern skyline is crammed with undulations of the Peak District, just visible below the low rain clouds. From here, Peel Tower is clearly visible, and after a few more ups and downs, the imperfect Five close in and immediately take shelter behind it as the wind picks up.

The Peel Monument was built in 1851-2 to commemorate the initiative of Sir Robert Peel in repealing the Corn Laws of yesteryear. Peel, who came from nearby Bury, laid the foundations for the modern Police Force. Indeed the first policemen were called 'Peelers'. Later they became known as 'Roberts' then the more familiar 'Bobbies'.



The direct decent to the car park is a bit steep for these Five, so they take the longer but more gentle outer ring-road. They are not as robust as they once were. The Five pass the Shoulder of Mutton Pub on the way down, but today refreshments will be taken at the Grey Mare, a short drive on the way home and with superb views over the moors. Once ensconced into this now familiar watering hole, Five get comfortable in the Window Seat looking out over the moors and enjoy a leisurely lunch, and are in no particular rush to depart, bringing to an end another enjoyable if slightly imperfect adventure.

Mike Ripley