

England September— October 2013

Molly and Bob Hillery

This was to have been a vacation to Israel for ten days and then on to the flat in Ilkley for another five weeks. However, events in Syria just before we were about to leave caused us to cancel the first portion and go straight to England. The threats and counter-threats suggested that, at the very least, there may be some interruptions to normal travel and sightseeing in Israel, and quite possibly something even more disruptive or violent. We hope to pick up that trip in the spring of 2014.

The vacation in England also included a few days in Devon, which we had planned in advance, and a weekend in London which presented itself as an opportunity to see Mark and Melissa's daughter who had been born in Italy in July. Mark and Melissa and Isabella were to spend a couple of weeks in London so that UK family members could see the new addition and we were invited to go with Joanne and her family.

Unfortunately, the visit was saddened just a week after we arrived by the sudden death of Bob's brother Geoff. He had followed a routine morning (an early doctor appointment—at which he was pronounced fit, a visit with some friends in Harrogate and lunch at home) and then started his routine afternoon walk around the village. As a result of an arterial blockage he suffered a heart attack only a short while after starting his walk and collapsed in the street no more than a quarter mile from home. A nurse friend, who was called to the scene by a passing motorist, said that he was dead when she arrived, which was only twenty minutes after she herself had walked by that same spot.



May 5 1936—September 16 2013

So, although it is always a shock when someone dies, we feel that his passing was quick and presumably relatively painless, and were thankful that he had lived a full and enjoyable life since his massive heart attack eighteen years ago. We were pleased also that he had made a visit to Italy shortly after his trip with us in the US (which was almost the whole of August) and had been introduced to his only granddaughter. In addition, since we were in Ilkley and not in Israel as had been planned, we were able to help Joanne with the shock and the necessary steps that accompany such a sad event.

Our stay in Ilkley was otherwise much as our previous visits (walking, cycling, visiting friends and family, dining, shopping) and consequently we took no photographs during the entire stay.

We are dedicating this journal to Geoff.

England, September-October 2013

Sunday September 8

Elizabeth picked us up at 1:30 and drove us to Cincinnati Airport for a 4pm flight to Atlanta. As we were arriving at the airport (about 2:15) we figured that we should have been landing in Tel Aviv had our original plans for a trip to Israel materialized at this time. However, uncertainties in the Middle East in general and Syria in particular had caused us to change our plans and fly direct to England – leaving Israel for a later date, probably next spring.

Our flight to Atlanta was on time, leaving us over three hours in Atlanta. We decided on a meal at one of the restaurants in the new International Terminal (not bad) and then Molly realized that she had left her Kindle on the first plane. A quick check at the information desk revealed that it had been found and was being held at our incoming gate. We had plenty of time to go back and retrieve it and still spend an hour in the Sky Club before our 9:10 departure for Manchester.

This flight also left on time and, since we had already eaten, we opted to miss the meal on the plane and get a little extra sleep instead.

Monday September 9

We both managed a few hours' sleep despite a somewhat bumpy ride across the Atlantic and arrived in Manchester at 10am to a bright and sunny morning. The temperature was close to 60F so it was pleasant for getting to the rental car and starting our trip to Ilkley. It did cloud over some during the journey and we saw a few drops of rain but it was still mild enough to walk through Ilkley (in short sleeves) and do a little shopping after we had unpacked.

We both had a nap before waking up soon after 7pm, in time to get ready for a meal at Piccolino, which made a good start to our holiday. We were in bed by 10pm.

Tuesday September 10

We were very late up (after nine) and both felt quite lethargic – presumably jet-lag. It was easiest to simply go to Caffè Nero for a late breakfast and then return to the flat for some further rest!

We both managed short walks – and another coffee – later in the afternoon, but otherwise spent a rather lazy day and evening at home.

Wednesday September 11

We had breakfast at home after another late awakening and then around noon I decided to walk over the top to Keighley. It was overcast but mild and there were a few drops of rain as I walked up to Keighley Gate. I was pleased to find out that I could still walk up hills that steep and actually did the first two miles at a 22 minute mile pace. The walk down the other side via Riddlesden was much easier (although a couple of very steep downward streets were a little hard on the knees) and I made the six miles to Keighley in just about two hours. By this time it was raining quite heavily so I was glad of the covered sidewalk up the main street and sheltering on the bus ride back to Ilkley.

I met Molly for coffee in town and it had just about stopped raining by the time I walked the final half mile home and she came by bus.

Tonight we had a very good meal at Martha and Vincent where, once again, the waiter remembered us and greeted us warmly.

Thursday September 12

It was well after nine once again before we woke up and then drove down into town for breakfast. It was cloudy but still mild (about 60F) and the forecast was for it to remain dry – with even a little sun – until well into the evening. Consequently I decided on a bike ride so I got the bike ready and gathered my cycling togs in preparation for the ride. Again it was almost noon before I left but – as yesterday – I was pleased to find out that my legs were still capable of covering the English terrain and I went completely round Ilkley Moor (via Guiseley, Shipley, Keighley and Silsden) in less than 2 ½ hours.

I again arranged to meet Molly for coffee before she returned on the bus and I completed the final half mile up the hill to the flat.

We stayed home for the rest of the afternoon and evening.

Friday September 13

We had breakfast at home and then I went for a four mile walk around Ilkley in cloudy but warm and humid conditions.

Soon after 12:30 we set off for Harrogate, stopping first at Caffè Nero for a coffee, where we were to meet Dorothy and David at Harlow Carr Gardens for afternoon tea at 3pm. We did a little shopping in Harrogate before we met them and then spent two hours chatting in Bettys café. It was raining quite heavily at times and it continued with drizzle all the way back to Ilkley.

Tonight we ate at Emporio Italia for the first time on this trip and, as usual, enjoyed a good authentic Italian meal.

Saturday September 14

We drove into Ilkley for breakfast and then I went for another bike ride on a cool but very sunny morning. I went via the Addingham Bypass to Silsden and then took the Skipton Road via Farnhill and Kildwick to meet the main road from Keighley near Skipton. From Skipton I took the Otley Road to the main A65 and back to Ilkley. It was a very pleasant ride with several good grades (up and down) to give my legs a workout – and a rest.

In the late afternoon Molly and I went to Tesco and then for coffee before returning to the flat until dinner time.

We ate at the Wheatley Arms (as our third choice!) but the meal was good and the service leisurely. It was about ten when we returned home, watched the news for a while and then retired.

Sunday September 15

We were up before 9:30, had breakfast at home and then drove to church for the 10:45 service. This included a Christening so it was interesting to see one in a Church of England after so many years. The major difference, at least from St Anne, seemed to be that only the water “immersion” took place at the font, the remainder of the ceremony (candles and oil) being done at the front of the church.

We had coffee in town before returning to the flat for the afternoon, during which there were some heavy downpours and very strong winds.

This evening we drove to Eldwick to meet with Keith and Zena for dinner at their house and to discuss our proposed joint vacation to Russia for next summer. We had a lovely meal and a good long chat and agreed on an itinerary for next June that I would pursue in the morning. It was almost 11pm before we arrived home.

Monday September 16

It was a much cooler morning (43F when we got up) and there was a strong wind blowing so it felt very cold as we walked from the car to breakfast. There was some bright sunshine at times but this was broken by heavy downpours.

I spent about 30 minutes on the phone with Viking River Cruises and got a tentative booking which I talked to Zena about and will firm up with Keith on Tuesday morning. Hopefully then we can get the dates set.

I decided on a walk in the early afternoon and went via the Dales Way as far as Addingham and then returned to Ilkley by much the same route. There were some showers but I was dressed for the cold and the rain as well as the wind so I felt comfortable for the whole seven miles. I met Molly for coffee when she came to town to do a little shopping and then we spent the rest of the afternoon and evening at home.

About 5:30 I got a call from a very tearful Joanne saying that her dad (my brother Geoff) had died suddenly earlier in the afternoon. Apparently he had been on his walk and (we assume) had had another heart attack and died almost immediately outside the chapel in the village. Obviously Joanne was in no state to chat further but was able to say that a coroner's examination would be necessary and that it may be some days before any further arrangements can be made.

I talked to Mark and to Christine later and also informed our cousins Keith and Roy as well as our children in the US. After a

three week holiday during which Geoff claimed to feel as well as he ever had and a quick visit to Italy to see his new granddaughter, to succumb at this time came as a shock to everyone and all we could do was be thankful that he presumably had no prolonged period of suffering.

Tuesday September 17

I talked to Keith Hebden and got all the necessary information to confirm our Russian river cruise for next June and later called the agent and paid the deposit.

In the meantime I received a call from Robert (Joanne's husband) with a little more information on the circumstances and timing of Geoff's death and I was able to help him identify a few of Geoff's contacts so that he could call them and inform them of the situation.

We were able to confirm the booking for our June 2014 cruise and then spent much of the rest of the day relaxing at home. It was cold and windy as well as wet at times so we ventured out only for coffee and, later, for a very nice meal at Monkman's.

Wednesday September 18

It was a much brighter morning so I decided on a walk over Baildon Moor after we had eaten breakfast at home. Molly and I walked down into Ilkley together and I caught the 9:50 train to Baildon while she continued on to do her shopping at Tesco.

I had a very pleasant walk from Baildon station into the village and then up onto the moor. I went essentially straight over the top, passing the 282 meter cairn before descending to the Glen Road. I then walked down from Shipley Glen to Robert's Park and on to the canal bank for the final mile to Shipley. I got the train from there back to Ilkley and Molly and I later went for coffee and some Edinburgh Woolen Mill shopping before staying home for the rest of the day and evening.

Thursday September 19

It was another cool, showery and windy morning as we drove down to Caffe Nero for breakfast. We followed this with a little essential shopping and then returned home. I took a short walk during a dry spell in the early afternoon and at 6:30 we left to visit Joanne and Robert. This had been a planned evening out for some time but the events of the week prompted Joanne to prepare a meal at home rather than go out. This made it easier for the four of us to chat and I think it provided Joanne with a welcome break.

Friday September 20

This was another day in which I had a short walk around Ilkley, Molly did some shopping, we had coffee and went out for a late dinner at Martha and Vincent. The weather was still cool and changeable but dry for the most part.

Saturday September 21

This was by far the warmest day we had seen (high near 70F) and so we had a very pleasant drive to Sheffield to see Molly's two brothers, Richard and Robert. Elizabeth had taken a four day break to Scotland while Robert came up from London to spend time with his brother. We arrived before 11:30, had a light lunch that Molly had brought and had about 3 hours of chatting time. The two seemed to be coping well and enjoying each other's company and we certainly had a very enjoyable time.

In the evening we went to a concert at All Saints Church given by a group from Leeds, the St Peter's Singers. Their repertoire covered 500 years of sacred music and they did a very good job for a group of only about 30. Afterwards we ate at The Farsyde, just across the street before getting home around 11pm.

Sunday September 22

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and then went to the 10:45 church service at St Margaret's. I then went for a bike ride to Skipton and back. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon and again the temperature approached 70F. There was a fairly stiff

breeze out of the west but that was behind me for most of my return journey.

Molly and I had another visit to the coffee shop and then stayed home for dinner and the rest of the evening.

Monday September 23

Molly wanted another visit to Skipton market so we drove there (in relatively thick fog) and had breakfast before doing the shopping. We spent just less than two hours in town and then drove back to Ilkley. The promised brightening had not yet arrived but the temperature had risen to the mid-sixties so it was now a question as to whether I wanted another bike ride or should I go for a walk. In the end – and it was after another visit to town for coffee – I settled for a four mile walk around Ilkley.

Tonight we ate at Panache and had a very good Indian meal.

Tuesday September 24

After breakfast at home and a while spent for the clouds to clear (which they didn't) I decided on a bike ride. I left at 10:30 and did the complete circuit of Ilkley Moor via the main roads through Guiseley, Shipley, Keighley and Skipton. It stayed dry but the sun never really came through so I felt comfortable but not too hot – until the final climb back to the flat. I covered 39 miles and have now almost completed my cycling goal for the year.

Molly and I went to do a little shopping in Ilkley, had our afternoon coffee and then spent the late afternoon and evening at home.

Wednesday September 25

We had arranged to meet Joanne at her home at 10:45 to accompany her to the Registrar's Office in Harrogate to register her father's death. This was a little tearful for Joanne but the staff were very helpful and comforting. We then went to arrange for the floral tribute to be sent to the funeral home on Monday before meeting Robert at the Square and Compass for lunch. Here Joanne also talked with the proprietor about the lunch arrangements for Monday after the ceremony at the crematorium. Once again, he was very helpful and came up with some good suggestions.

Molly and I returned home and spent a lazy afternoon in the flat before driving to Silsden for a late dinner at Stefano's. It is only a small restaurant (I estimate that they could just about squeeze in 30) but it does a booming business. It was essentially full when we arrived at 8:30, after which a few tables were vacated, only to be filled again within minutes. At 10pm the place was still humming!

Thursday September 26

After breakfast in town I called Dorothy who had cut short her vacation in Cyprus to be home well in advance of Geoff's funeral on Monday but she had had a very long journey home, having spent seven hours waiting in an airport. We chatted for a while and she is planning to meet with Joanne tomorrow so we are to arrange a get-together perhaps sometime over the weekend.

At 12:30 I walked down into town with Molly and caught the 12:50 train to Shipley while she did her shopping. I walked on the canal bank from Shipley to Bingley where I stopped for a coffee break (sitting outside in the warm sunshine – this was by far the brightest day of the week) and then continued on the canal to Keighley. I took a footpath from Stockbridge alongside the River Aire but it was very much overgrown and had lots of litter so wasn't all that pleasant. I did, however, emerge from the thick weeds near Cliffe Castle and was able to get a bus almost immediately back to Ilkley. I had covered 10 miles by the time I got home.

We spent the evening at home and ate dinner as we watched a little TV.

Friday September 27

It was another mild and sunny day and we once again had breakfast at Caffe Nero. We then spent some time cleaning the flat and preparing for Mark and Melissa's visit tomorrow.

We had coffee in the early afternoon and I did a few miles walk around Ilkley and we finished the day with a very nice meal at Monkman's.

Saturday September 28

When we returned to the flat after breakfast we had an e-mail from Mark asking if we could go to the airport to meet them from Italy as they had rather more stuff than they thought would fit in their rental car. We naturally obliged, and after a morning getting the flat ready, we drove to Yeadon and met their flight which arrived at 1:30. We met Isabella and loaded some of their baggage into our car before returning to Ilkley slightly ahead of them. We got them settled in and then we left to check in at the Hollins hall Marriott for the next four nights.

We returned to Ilkley in the evening for another good meal at Saigon Bistro and then had a nightcap in the bar before retiring around 10pm.

Sunday September 29

We had breakfast in the hotel and then drove via the crematorium to Ripon where we spent the afternoon with David and Dorothy. We had afternoon tea at Studley Park (it was just warm enough to sit outside) but we spent most of the time in their living room chatting.

Molly and I had a fish and chip dinner at the Wetherby Whaler (used to be Harry Ramsden's) on the way back to the hotel.

Monday September 30

This was the day of Geoff's funeral. The service at Harrogate Crematorium was simple, non-religious but what everyone seemed to think was about right for Geoff's wishes. His grandson Toby spoke very eloquently and lovingly about his Grandpa and his words – content and substance – were far beyond his years.

Mark and I also said a few words and then everyone (between 50 and 60 family and friends) went to the Square and Compass in North Ripton for a very nice lunch and about two hours of pleasant talk.

Having had a late and sizeable lunch, Molly and I didn't feel like another big meal so we went to the Tram Shed restaurant in Saltaire and enjoyed two sharing plates and a bottle of wine between us.

Tuesday October 1

Molly and I decided on a trip to Leeds via train today. We couldn't find anywhere to park in the Shipley station car park so paid at a park in town and walked about ½ mile to the train.

Once in Leeds we spent most of our time in the new Trinity Mall shopping centre, a partially covered three storey group of chain stores. We also walked through a couple of the exquisite Victorian Arcades which contain much more upscale shops but are worth a visit just to see the beautiful architecture. After about 3 hours in town we returned to the hotel and spent the rest of the afternoon there until we met up with Mark, Joanne, Robert and Melissa for a very pleasant meal at the White Hart pub in Pool.

Wednesday October 2

It was a miserable morning with heavy fog and lots of rain. We had wanted to visit Skipton market but decided somewhere under cover would be a better bet so went to the Arndale Centre in Keighley. We did a little shopping, had a coffee and then returned to the flat in Ilkley. Mark and Melissa had left everything in perfect shape, although the slowness of the tumble dryer meant that there were sheets galore to be dried. They had also left two vases with red roses, a 29 year vintage Scotch and a lovely note of thanks before vacating the flat around noon and heading back to London.

We got re-settled and spent the rest of the afternoon in the flat before Dorothy and David joined us around 6:30. We all had dinner together at Martha and Vincent and it was after ten before they left for the return trip to Ripon.

Thursday October 3

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then drove to Huby to spend some time there with Joanne going through items in her

father's house. Mark had spent time there over the weekend and had done an amazing job of going through all rooms and sorting out important papers and some items of sentimental value that he had left with Joanne. She, however, wanted another look through and did indeed find a few things that she would want to keep as well as identifying a number of items that she felt should best be given to a charity shop.

I agreed to write to Mark and tell him what she wanted to do and make sure there were no legal or other issues (he is executor) and we said we'd meet again on Friday morning to go through other rooms.

Molly and I returned to Ilkley where she had a hairdresser appointment. I went for a two mile walk while she was at her appointment; we met for coffee and then returned to the flat for the rest of the day and evening.

Friday October 4

We were up about eight and ate in the flat. I was hoping for a call from Mark who had acknowledged my e-mail last night but had said he didn't have time to answer it at that time. With the obvious rift between Mark and Joanne, I was a little concerned about his reaction to our visit to Huby yesterday and what he might insist that we do and I hoped that he would call before we had to leave once again for Huby to meet Joanne.

It turned out it was much later in the afternoon before Mark and I spoke – well after Dorothy, Molly and I had spent another couple of hours at Huby. He was, however, very comfortable with what we had done and indeed had arranged with the house clearers to have much of the stuff go to charity shops anyway; he was also happy to have anyone take what they wanted.

I managed a five mile walk around Ilkley in the afternoon and Molly and I had a good meal at the Farsyde in the evening.

Saturday October 5

We drove to Manchester after breakfast at Caffè Nero to change cars. This was another switch to get around the six week insurance limit on rentals that I have from American Express. Unfortunately they found a (300GBP) scratch on the car which we think must have happened while we were taking a restroom break at a motorway service area. Certainly it wasn't there when we left Ilkley. So, another extended stay at Hertz at Manchester airport while forms were filled out. We ended up with the same car as they didn't have anything but an automatic for my new rental. This happens almost every time we rent at this location.

The drive down to Devon for our five day stay at the Rock Inn was uneventful, otherwise, and we had good weather all the way. We arrived about 5:30 and had a very good meal in the hotel, which seemed to be full for the night.

Sunday October 6

It was a beautiful morning so, after breakfast, we drove to Widecombe and then Tavistock for two short strolls around town and a coffee. On our return Molly decided to stay home and take some pills for a nagging back ache while I went for a walk towards Haytor. I walked for about 1 ½ miles along the disused tramway which was built in 1820 to take rocks from the granite quarries to a canal and then to the coast. It consists of two parallel stone tracks, with the stone chiseled to form a ledge that would support and guide the car wheels just like a modern railway track, except that the wheels themselves had no flanges so were riding on the lower portion of the granite.

The weather was absolutely gorgeous; clear blue skies (a few high clouds later on) and a temperature about 70F – perfect for walking as I and hundreds of other visitors found out. I covered just short of five miles and thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

We once again had dinner in the hotel.

Monday October 7

There was considerable mist on the moors and it almost reached down to Haytor Vale as we ate breakfast. After eating we drove to the Exeter Park and Ride and then spent about two hours in the city. We noted that there seemed to be quite a few more large department stores in the city and that everywhere looked quite prosperous. We walked around some areas new to us and ended up in the fine cathedral square before returning home.

It stayed dry (although it looked as though there had been a shower while we were gone) so I decided on another walk. This time I went in a clockwise route around Yarnier Woods which brought me on to the Tramway that I had walked yesterday – only about two miles further down the hill. It was a little longer than I had anticipated (6 ½ miles) and somewhat harder than yesterday's but once again I enjoyed the scenery and the weather cooperated – warm, dry but overcast.

We once again had a very good meal in the hotel.

Tuesday October 8

It was a bright and sunny morning so, after breakfast in the hotel, we drove to Totnes for a couple of hours. It is a very pleasant town to stroll around with lots of history, boutique shops and quite a lot of "leftovers" from the sixties hippie movement! The temperature was about 70F so it was very pleasant walking down the steep main street; perhaps a little less pleasant walking back up but we found a very nice coffee shop to finish the visit.

We then drove back to Haytor and parked on the moors overlooking the valley – and promptly fell asleep. When we woke there was a little drizzle and the sky was much more overcast.

We returned to the hotel about 2:30 and I decided on a walk despite the threat of rain. I walked down a footpath at the back of the hotel which took me through some very nice woodland, then across several fields before getting back to a road that led up (very steeply) to the main road to Bovey. At this road, I crossed and walked on a bridle path up on the moor and eventually came across the tramway again. I followed this in a westerly direction as I had on Sunday but this time took the spur that led to the original quarry. Here there is a small lake and some abandoned machinery from the quarrying days.

It was a short but very steep climb out of the quarry to the base of Haytor itself and then an easy downhill walk back to the hotel. The walk covered just less than 5 miles and there were a few light showers but nevertheless was a good way to spend a couple of hours.

We ate in the hotel again tonight.

Wednesday October 9

It was a little overcast and cooler this morning but the forecast was for some sunshine starting about midday. We went to Plymouth, using the Park and Ride from Ivybridge, which was about a 30 minute ride from town.

Once in the city center we walked to The Hoe and sat for a while overlooking the water on a pleasantly warm morning which by now had some sun. We then walked into the main shopping area and gave Marks and Spencer quite a little business before having a coffee in Caffè Nero. We then got the bus back to the parking area and drove onto the moors above the hotel for a rest while enjoying the view.

I managed to get in a short walk (Haytor and back via The Tramway) and then we relaxed until our final dinner in the hotel for this trip.

Thursday October 10

It was much cooler but still bright and sunny as we packed and started the drive back to Ilkley. We made just one motorway stop for coffee and arrived in Ilkley just before 4pm after a six hour drive.

About 5:30, Fran and Alan arrived after traveling down from Glasgow where they had been visiting Duncan and family. We had a couple of hours chatting and then more talk time over dinner at Emporio Italia. We then returned to the flat for coffee (actually espresso in our new Nespresso machine) and a sample of Highland Park whisky before retiring about 1am.

Friday October 11

It was a dreary, rainy morning as we had a light breakfast at the flat and then said goodbye to Fran and Alan who had to be back in Pershore for a 2pm appointment.

I went for a walk to Addingham via the Dales Way and back via Nesfield and met Molly for coffee in Caffè Nero. We then stayed home until dinner at 8pm at Monkman's.

Saturday October 12

We were up at 7:30 and left the flat before 8 to have breakfast at Caffe Nero before catching the 9:10 train to Leeds. We then got the 10:05 train to King's Cross in London. There was about a 30 minute delay at Retford due to signaling problems nearer London but we were still checked in the St Pancras hotel before 1:30.

We had stroll through the shopping mall under the train station and then relaxed in the room until we met Molly's brother Robert in the hotel lobby at 6:30. Unfortunately we weren't able to get a table in the restaurant until 8:45 but that gave us a good long time for pre-dinner drinks and a chat. We had a very good meal and it was about 11 by the time Robert left for home.

Sunday October 13

We were up about nine and had breakfast in the hotel before checking out soon after eleven. It was raining quite heavily but there was only a 20 yard stretch across a street between St Pancras and King's Cross so we hardly got wet. The 11:56 train to Leeds left on time, had a slight delay near Doncaster but arrived in Leeds only a few minutes late. The Sunday service meant that we had a 40 minute wait before the train to Ilkley left but we were back in town by just after 3:30.

We had a coffee before returning to the flat and then spent the rest of the afternoon and evening at home as I was feeling a little feverish. A hot toddy to go to bed with was in order!

Monday October 14

I woke up feeling much better and we were able to have our regularly scheduled Monday breakfast at Caffe Nero. We spent the rest of the morning at home and then I went for a walk around Ilkley and met Molly for coffee around 2:30. She had walked down and done some shopping and returned home on the bus while I finished my walk.

We stayed home for the rest of the afternoon and evening.

Tuesday October 15

It was a misty but dry morning so I decided on a walk that I had been thinking about for some time. After breakfast at home, I walked to Ilkley station and caught the 9:20 train as far as Baildon. From there it was about a 15 minute walk to the Leeds-Liverpool canal and the towpath which I took towards Leeds. I knew that it was almost 12 miles to the city center so I had looked at "fallback" positions which would allow me to get from the canal to a bus route as I got nearer to Leeds if necessary.

However, the walk was very pleasant (there was even some sunshine) and quite interesting, particularly as I neared Leeds and saw Kirkstall Abbey, several large homes and finally the new city skyline. I did misjudge the train times for my return to Ilkley and so had an almost 30 minute wait – but that gave me a chance for a coffee and a snack. By the time I got back to the flat I had walked almost 13 ½ miles – and it felt like it!

At 6:30 we left for East Morton and dinner with Keith and Zena at the Busfield Arms. It was a very pleasant three hour time as usual and we were still home before 10:30.

Wednesday October 16

We had breakfast at home and about 10:30 went for a drive to Skipton. We spent two hours in charity shops, the market and Caffe Nero before the rain started. It rained quite heavily all the way home – which, rather than the direct route, took in Steeton, Keighley Tarn, Riddlesden, Keighley Gate and Silsden. It was still raining when we got home about 2:15. The rain continued for the rest of the afternoon and evening so we stayed home, had dinner and watched a little TV.

Thursday October 17

It was a much brighter and dry morning as we drove into town for breakfast. About 10:30 I left for a walk which took me up to Keighley Gate, down to Morton and then along the canal bank as far as Shipley. The weather got better as the day progressed and there was quite a lot of sunshine, although the temperature barely reached the mid-fifties.

I met Molly for coffee after taking the train from Shipley and then completed my walk home – a grand total of 10.7 miles.

Tonight we met Joanne and Robert at the Devonshire Arms and had the tasting menu dinner in the Burlington Room. It was a

very pleasant evening and it was almost 11pm before we left for home.

Friday October 18

It was extremely foggy this morning and views of the moors were almost totally obscured. However, after breakfast and a nap (!) I decided I should take a walk and had set my mind on going via White Wells to the cairn at the top of the moor. I did this but went via the Cow and Calf Rocks rather than the very steep climb above White Wells. I thought I was following the correct path to get me back on the main paved path up the moor but I wandered around quite a bit in the fog, not knowing exactly where I was. I eventually recognized my position (at the top of the climb I had avoided!) and from there it was easy to follow my planned route. The detour not only added about two miles to the walk but also pointed out just how easy it is to become disoriented on those hills when you can't pick out distant landmarks.

Molly and I drove into Ilkley on my return and had our afternoon coffee before returning to the flat until it was time to leave for Harrogate where we were met Dorothy and David for dinner. The place they had chosen was called Quantro and it was an excellent meal at a very reasonable price; three courses for less than 18GBP. It was after 9:30 before we started our journey home.

Saturday October 19

It was much clearer this morning so I decided on another walk on the moors. This time via the Cow and Calf to Burley Woodhead and then down the hill to catch the train back to Ilkley from Burley. I met Molly for coffee on a pleasant and warm afternoon and later in the evening we had another good meal at The Farsyde, although the new staff seemed a little lost and were slow to respond.

Sunday October 20

We had breakfast in Ilkley, went to church and then drove directly to Harrogate where we met Christine for lunch. She had selected the "pub" but it was a rather upscale restaurant in the basement of a building and we had a very nice, two hour Sunday lunch. We chatted a lot about Geoff but she seemed to be in good spirits. We had an hour walk around town before driving back to Ilkley, arriving home about 5pm. We stayed home for the evening and had a cheese and biscuits dinner.

Monday October 21

It was fine and mild as we went to Caffè Nero for breakfast but it started to rain around mid-morning. Nevertheless I decided on one last walk for this trip and went over Keighley Gate (where they seemed to be in the final stages of dismantling the communications towers) to Keighley. It was raining all the way although it stayed mild and actually almost dried up by the time I reached Keighley station. I caught the 2pm train, changed at Shipley and was back home by 3pm. Molly and I went for afternoon coffee and it was now dry and almost sunny.

It rained again later in the afternoon and was still threatening as we went to Piccolino for dinner around 7:30.

Tuesday October 22

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then began a morning of final washing and cleaning the flat ready for us to leave by mid-afternoon. It was still very mild (near 60F) but there were several heavy showers throughout the morning. We were finished soon after 1pm and started our trip to Manchester (via Caffè Nero one last time). The journey took just a little over 1 ½ hours and we were checked in the airport Marriott before 4pm.

Tonight we made our usual pilgrimage to the Plough and Flail in Mobberley for our final dinner in England for this trip. We were back at the hotel before 10pm.

Wednesday October 23

It was raining quite heavily as we ate breakfast in the hotel and then finished our packing. We then drove to the airport and I left Molly with the cases while I turned in the rental car (which was surprisingly uneventful). We then checked in, walked through the duty-free area and had a final Caffè Nero visit before boarding the flight to Atlanta. This left on time but was one

of the longer westbound flight routes we have followed, taking the full 8 ¾ hours projected. This gave us a short layover in Atlanta and we were soon on our way to Cincinnati, where Elizabeth met us and took us home.

Despite the sad event of Geoff's passing, we had another good holiday in England and seemed to pack quite a lot into the stay. Six weeks went by very quickly.

