

8.00 a.m. in a sunny car park, in Yorkshire's prettiest village, and the 2018 Festival funds are about to benefit from an energetic boost.

The wise early birds have gathered at Hutton-le-Hole for the 17th Peace Lodge Walk, in time to check-in, drink coffee, locate the secret bacon sandwich stash and catch up on the Province's news. Dogs are checking out the soft touches; the parking warden circles, looking diligently for parking transgressions; the disorganized are seeking replacement route maps, and neighbours are peering out of their windows, seeking the source of the rising noise levels.

Gradually the check-lists are completed, and most of the missing names accounted for. Photographers shoo the walkers into position for the starting photograph, and a general shushing provides the Assistant PGM, Malcolm Dabbs, with the opportunity to inspire and encourage all around before the 9.00 a.m. start restores the rural calm.

The horde has left, heading north in the warm dry morning for Chimney Bank, above Rosedale. The Tour de France avoided it, but Peace Lodge Walkers are made of sterner stuff! For the first four miles or so the two available routes follow the same path. Ryan Smith of Peace Lodge, a fell runner with talent and experience, leads the way to the first check-point, where a mini-carnival takes place, when Peace Lodge members and support workers ply the walkers – and the dogs - with bananas, sausage rolls, Kit-Kats, crisps and soft drinks. Injuries and ailments are assessed, and the walk continues, splitting now at Ana Cross, with Paul Scrimgour and his son, James, leading those opting for the shorter route, and Ryan continuing to lead the long walk.

The routes join again at the enchanting village of Lastingham (with three holy wells **and** a superb village pub, what other word can apply?) where the green now resembles a picnic rather than simply a refreshment point. Walkers sprawl in contentment on the grass in the sunshine, reluctant to tackle the last two miles and end the happy day.

Nevertheless, they gather themselves up and set out, well-sustained and cheerful. Back at the finishing point, walkers and dogs are welcomed

with refreshments, completion certificates and many, many thanks for their efforts. *There is no sign of the parking attendant.*