



LYKE WAKE WALK by Roger Brook

Apprehensive but hopeful,
starting under a moonlit night.
With forty or more miles to go,
leaving behind the village light.

Head constantly gazing down,
eyes adjusting to shades of grey.
Each person alone in thought,
a time with little to say.

Army track over Jugger Howe,
with slippery descent to the beck.
Legs accustomed to the ground,
minds visualising this lengthy trek.

Dropping down from Lilla Cross,
to warning signs and fences.
The radar station foreboding,
a future to shock the senses.

With support car left behind,
to tackle infamous Wheeldale.
Rough heather tiring muscles,

stirring doubts of if we fail.

Past lodge and over Roman road,
ascending to Blue Man Stone.
Clouds now darkening the sky,
making one feel all alone.

Approaching Shunner Howe road,
dreaming of a soup and rest.
Car found, but driver sleeping,
Our frustrations put to the test.

We rattle the silent car,
eager for that warm brew.
'Go-back, go-back' like started grouse,
are the words that greet us tired few.

He protests 'You are early',
should we just laugh or cry?
Blisters checked and plastered,
soggy socks changed for dry.

All now calm and refreshed,
striding out under little light.
A straight course over Rosedale Moor,
old boundary stones to keep us right.

Heavy going towards Loose Howe,
when an apparition stops us dead.
Ghostly shape moving back and forth,
only 'Fat Betty' should be ahead.

Laughs all round as our spirit shape,
is a dew soaked plastic sheet.
Then talk turns to walkers lost,
and deceased Dirgers we may meet.

Past Ralph Cross as dawn arrives,
whilst lonely Lion Inn comes and goes.
Swapping tarmac for cinder track,
we all notice sore heels or toes.

Morning light opens up the views,
and puts fresh spring in our strides.
At Bloworth another steady rise,
past shooting butts and hides.

Close by two old marker stones,
on Round Hill tired bodies rest.
One carved hands, the other a face,
while aching limbs still protest.

Quick descent to Hasty Bank,
with views of hills yet to climb.
Woodlands and farms are now seen,
heather and bogs left behind.

Sharp ascent now such a shock,
mutterings of wanting to stop.
Short rests are now more frequent,
even before reaching the top.

Cringle Moor offers good vistas,
but each new hill gets tougher.

All minds just seem focused,
on placing one foot after another.

Stumbling down from Knolls End,
to civilisation at Huthwaite Green.
Whether hedge, gate or shallow ford,
every obstacle now seems mean.

From Scarth Nick to Beacon Hill,
on all fours or delirious?
Someone jests 'just one last sprint',
to a chorus of 'Are you serious?'

Trig' point finish such a relief,
but not quite over yet.
One last downhill to complete,
for me with no regret.

Finally glad to be sat down,
all done in with stiffness or pain.
Weary bodies and tired minds,
with some vows of 'Never again'.

Another chance is offered,
to achieve a faster time.
Two new Dirgers are quite keen,
the rest happy to decline.