

Enjoy a Coast to Coast tale

By Helen Mead

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'ANDY tries to lift both legs and his walking pole over and across a gnarled and twisted lump of a tree.'

Seconds later, his right foot, walking pole and fallen tree come together and he affects a rather dramatic and astonishingly balletic pirouette before he tumbles head over heels onto the grass.

The amusing spectacle is watched by friends Mick and James, and is one of many such incidents recorded in Peter Kay's book – *A Very Alternative Coast to Coast*, a gentle and humorous story of three men approaching retirement, who embark upon a walk of misadventure across the north of England.

'Mick and Andy watch as James stops, first considers and then keeps turning the map he has in his hands. He spins round, "sorry," he says, "must have gone past Finkle Street." "Finkle Street," says Mick, "I think that was the second turning we passed." "Why didn't you tell me?" fumes James. "I didn't know you were looking for it, did I," says Mick.

The friends follow a route that follows the bulk of the actual Coast to Coast, with some deviations. "My route starts at St Bees railway station and picks up the real Coast to Coast ends in Saltburn," says Peter. "It goes down into Wasdale and into Langdale, where one of the men falls.



A view taken by Peter on the Coast to Coast walk

"While writing the book I would hear the voices of the three characters in my head."

Peter, who has two children and three grandchildren, enjoys writing. "I started off writing children's books to read to my grandchildren," he says. He drew inspiration from the many long distance walks that he has enjoyed over the years.

He has completed the Dales Way,

the Wolds Way and the National Three Peaks Challenge - climbing the three highest peaks of Scotland, England and Wales, within 24 hours. And he has made his way up all the Wainwrights over 2,000ft.

Prior to retirement in 2009 he worked for Bradford Council in social care, latterly as head of service for adults. "Once I retired it allowed me to do more. It was my lifetime

ambition to walk the Pennine Way, which I did in 2012. It took two weeks in the wettest British summer on record," he says. Afterwards he self-published a book *The Pennine Way Odyssey*, about the experience.

In 2016 Peter completed a 1006km pilgrimage route of the Via de La Plata, from Seville to Santiago de Compostela, covering almost the whole of Spain from south to north. He walked with friends, firstly Maureen, who had done the walk before, and further along the trail, John.

The walk resulted in a book *Show me the way to Santiago*. "If you have a name like Peter Kay you need a book with a name like that," he says. "It was about the people I met, their

stories, adventures together and the most valuable of commodities which seem so undervalued these days, humanity and friendship." It was published in 2020 by Shipley-based Curious Cat Books.

Also in 2016 Peter embarked on the Coast to Coast walk, a feat that would take him, along with friends John and Simon, three years on and off. "We did it in stages, walking a section then getting the bus back.

"We had a few incidents on the way, and we really enjoyed it."

● *A Very Alternative Coast to Coast* by Peter Kay is published by Curious Cat Books. Royalties from book sales are going to the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.



Peter Kay out doing what he loves best



A river view taken on a walk



Peter walking in Spain - the subject of a previous book



Peter at work on his novel