

Footnotes

We went for a short walk the other Saturday. We went over the fields towards Nether Alderley. It was a fine day after one of those really damp starts, a day that Kath's Scottish aunt would call 'dreich'. The leaves were now dropping away as is usual for this time of year and to the east was the same ring of hills. But there was no Tomson, trotting on ahead. He'd been a bit lame in the hind legs over the previous three weeks and things had worsened rapidly. Nothing the vet came up with could help and earlier in the day, things had reached an horrendous crisis, with the inevitable, sad result. In the course of less than a month, a healthy, bouncing, ten years old hound had gone.

In the eight years we'd been together, we'd run the equivalent of the distance from Chelford to Tokyo and half way back. There was so much of him woven into the routes we took around the village and over the hills. Every path throws up a happy memory and these reflections made me realise that I'd described all of our tracks from the village and many of our favourites up in the hills. The previous 'Track' around Winkle was the last big outing we had together before he started to be unwell and it occurred to me that this would be a good point to leave it there, with the memory of Tomsy swooping through the woods above the river Dane and posing on the tip of one of those gritstone outcrops, the sun glinting on his glossy black and gold coat.

We hope you've enjoyed the Tracks, I intend to put them into a small book, the proceeds of which will go to Tomsy's first home, the RSPCA. We hope this will allow others to continue to enjoy walking or running the 'Tracks'. Of course, there will be a Spring Shamble and we shall carry on running too. As Tomsy would have known, runs come to an end but running doesn't stop. See you on the finish line, old mate.

Shak