

## **A Case for Walking**

Jon was the third child and only son of teachers. Always a withdrawn and strange boy, he developed schizophrenia in his teens and never related fully with people again. His Mother also became schizophrenic during her menopause and was hospitalised for 6 months. His Father left the family home after her discharge. She and Jon lived a 'folie a deux', playing off each others madness.

Jon could drive but gradually his illness and medication did not allow him to do so. He helped people in their gardens. He cycled everywhere until his concentration lapsed and his leg was broken in an accident. Then he could only walk and not quickly. The main event in his life each week was his walkers group with Mind. This took him to various parts of Shropshire and refreshed him both physically and spiritually.

Access to beautiful places and exercise should be available to all. Yes, encourage the healthy to keep fit and lessen obesity, but do not forget the disabled and old. We will all get there in the end, some sooner than others. Being transported to an open beautiful space for a few hours is worth more than most medicines.

What happened to Jon? He developed a malignant lymphoma and died at the age of 53. Walking with his group was his greatest pleasure in the last 10 years of his life.