

### **Entry Five**

All the beach walking, perhaps with the help of Tarik's herbal medicines, has made me feel stronger. So, I feel it's time to attempt a cross country walk along the section of the new way-marked (I hope) long distance Lycian Way. During my first week I've seen about half a dozen fairly tired looking hikers – all German and Dutch I think – scramble into Patara from the direction of Kalkan. So, I'm aiming to walk this section in reverse, starting from the Caretta Caretta Pension, which is actually on the track that leads to the first way-mark. I'm already suspicious of how far this route is and how long it may take.

I pack fruit, nuts, plenty of water and some sweets and head off quite early in the morning after breakfast. Reaching the way-mark, I decide on the non-Lycian Way route since it's supposed to be shorter according to the sign: 10 kilometres rather than 12. However, I know from the map that this is almost all up and down paths crossing three or four mountains.



An hour later and I can't find any signs whatsoever. At first there were little white blobs of paint on the occasional rock, then nothing, so I'm left with no choice but to try following any path that looks as though it might be headed in the correct direction. Half an hour later and I've crossed over some rugged terrain with lots of scrambling in loose stones and I recognise Patara's long beach in the distance.

*...lost in Lycia...*

Yes folks, I've rejoined the main Lycian Way about two kilometres above my starting point! So I walk on and after one rather unpleasant encounter



with a loose guard dog, I reach the pine trees at the top of the track which then heads slowly downwards in amongst a long row of bee hives, positioned on the edge of the path. Then, on a steep descent I find the path has suffered a serious landslide. Near the edge of the path, which is probably about an 800 metres sheer drop, there

is 5-10 metre deep gully. I attempt scrambling down this for 20 metres, but it ends in a vertical wall of loose mud. I carefully, well very gingerly in fact,

clamber back and attempt a route across the top of the landslip. I'm not up to it. Even with assistance and ropes, I'm not sure I'd feel safe.

So, I can give up or try and find an alternative path. I have some nuts and a swig or two of water and trek back through the bee hives, heading back towards Patara and after ten minutes find an alternative track tucked away in the forest.

It seems to head up towards the mountain top. I start walking the path and after about 20 minutes I'm looking down on the cliff-fall on the main Lycian Way that I couldn't get through. Magnificent views and not a bad path.



It continues winding its way across the top of the mountain ridge, then I have choices. Do I head right down into the valley? Or keep to edge of the mountainside, thereby maintaining some of the altitude that I've gained. I choose the latter route, but there's still an hour of crazy chicanes and loose



sand and stones before I stop for some more nibbles and water. None of these paths goes in anything like a straight line, instead they zig-zag up and down to follow the contours of the mountains. I've nearly reached the very far end of the valley. I've been going for nearly four hours including my diversions and I've just taken a photo of a wonderful looking building with a grass roof that reminds me of some of the eco-homes I've seen around the world. In the distance I can see three walkers coming towards me.



We stop and chat. It's two men, and a woman who is called Doodles. She's using this walk as training for an ascent in the Nepalese mountains. They are much better equipped than me with full walking gear. I ask them how long it will take me to reach Kalkan.

*"We've been going for three and three-quarter hours,"* Doodles tells me.

That decides me. I more or less know my way back. Kalkan, which started out as supposedly being only 10 kilometres away, is just too far.

We don't join company. I return by the route up to the ridge of the mountains. Doodles and companions head down into the valley following the red and white striped markings for the Lycian Way trail. I have told them about the rock fall, but I suspect one of the men knows the route and another way round the landslip.

I still manage to get lost once and find myself at the back of some farms inland from Patara. I meet the mad guard dog (again). This time his owner holds him, barking and frothing at the mouth until I'm just past their small home. Then, there is the dog barking his large head off at my heels. A



little further on I pass by what appears to be a Roma encampment of shepherds. They have a truck and two tarpaulin covered benders for their nomadic shelter. And that's it – at just under six hours I'm back at the pension, not having been to Kalkan!