In which section is the following mentioned?

1 a reason for the writer not going on a country walk

2 the need to achieve something on one particular walk

3 one reason why walkers spend a lot of time looking at paths

4 not enjoying a meal whilst out on a walk

5 walking routes that become hard to follow in places

6 how interesting it might be getting to know strangers on a walk

7 the fact that group walking activities are growing in popularity

8 the amount of work needed to maintain paths for walkers

9 walkers feeling a need to compete with each other

10 paths maybe having been originally made by animals

A good walk

When songwriter and singer Roddy Woomble isn't playing with his band, he loves nothing more than going on long country walks. He tells us about his hobby.

A

I'm sure I'm not the only one who occasionally stops to think about the footpaths that carry us over the hills. Who made them? Who was the first to walk that way – the sheep or the shepherd? The dictionary definition of a path is 'a track laid down for walking or made by continual treading' and also 'the direction in which a person or thing moves'. Somewhere in between I think you'll find the mountain path. I am particularly fond of watercolours or photos with paths in them. I also like it when old paths suddenly vanish only to reappear a bit further on, to the frustration of many other walkers. I appreciate also all the effort that has gone into the upkeep of mountain paths, so that they are still available for recreational use.

B

Walking in upland areas, you get to know the paths pretty well since a good proportion of your time is likely to be spent head down, gazing at them as you walk. This is never truer than when you're walking into wind and driving rain. That's when your boots have to pick your way over the slippery rocks and muddy puddles that constitute many mountain paths and trails in the winter. But I'm no great fan of walking on my own.

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Occasionally I'll do it – I'll read a few lines of Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* to get myself mentally prepared, then head out for a day of solitude. The problem is, halfway through I usually get the urge to share my thoughts about things I've noticed along the way. Even if you do bump into other walkers, this is not always something you want to do with strangers. Time on your own is worthwhile, of course, but I think it's better to mix it up with some company.

C

On previous solitary rambles I've often reached the summit only to enviously watch a group having a mid-walk picnic, happily chattering away, snapping pictures of the view, while I sat, just out of sight, alone, brooding over a sandwich. I've forgone many days out on the hills in order to avoid this feeling. Sometimes I wonder what it's like to join a group and take to the hills with people you've only just met. It's fascinating to imagine the group dynamics on such initial outings. For example, would there be long awkward pauses in the conversation? Would you feel the need to keep a conversation going from leaving the car to returning to it, or would it become an ego thing about how many hills you've each climbed and how steep the path was?

D

On the other hand, is an established walking group a collective of like-minded, interesting, articulate individuals, all enthusiastic for the outdoors? A place where conversation is free-flowing, with long gaps left for each other's thoughts, followed by a shared meal afterwards? I'm assuming it's both since walking clubs seem to be attracting more members than ever. I must think about joining one. Another ambition of mine is to climb the hill in front of me as I write this. I'm sitting at a picnic table outside the club where my band is giving a concert later and, as I eat my lunch, I have an uninterrupted view of the highest mountain in the British Isles, Ben Nevis in Scotland. As I say, I've never been up it, but I have a brilliant photo which a friend took from the summit. It's said to be a vantage point like no other. There may be technically harder mountains in the country, but there are none higher; which means lots of people feel an urge to go to the top of it.

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