

Well, I did it! The other Saturday I went to Cockerham to the Black Knights Parachute Centre and willingly jumped out of an aeroplane at 15 000 feet.

It was a fine morning and my brothers, wife and children came to support, along with a fellow clergyman. There was an impressive number of other people there. Many were doing similar jumps for Christie Hospital, others were learning how to do parachute jumps.

We watched then descend, the proficient making it look so simple, turning the parachute on a sixpence and gently landing on the grass next to the short runway. Then there were the tandem jumps – including mine.

I watched the first group ascend as their plane went above the clouds, becoming a small dot in the sky occasionally catching the sun.

It was then that I realised that 15000 feet is 2¾ miles and therefore quite a long way up! Again, down they came, smoothly landing and two things immediately happened.

My supporters became more relaxed; they realised how well run the whole operation was. I became more pensive, realising there was no choice but to go through with it all!

After due training and being kitted out, we boarded the plane. No luxury seats, but a school bench and thankfully I was at the front. The speed and smoothness of ascent was very welcome and Fleetwood and Over Wyre became a patchwork quilt beneath us and then the shutter door went up.

People ask me if jumping was scary. To be honest, once your legs are dangling outside of an aeroplane up in the sky, there is no option and away you go. It was amazing, the view, the speed and exhilaration was breath-taking. Then the parachute opened and with sharp turns to the left and the right the X target on the ground came into sight.

I think I had naively thought of the parachute gently floating down; instead the experience was more akin to the now defunct mouser on the pleasure beach. The skills of the tandem instructor were incredible, and the landing gentle and smooth.

It truly was a leap of faith, and a faith in many things. There was the faith in the equipment and the training. There was my faith in the stranger I was strapped onto, faith in his expertise and experience.

There was also faith in God, to look on Lancashire from a different perspective and to contemplate its beauty and the ability of humans to enable such an experience. This for me is no accident or brute fact, but the jumping off point for belief in God.

I was raising funds to help support the work of the Peru Mission in the city of Iquitos, located deep in the Amazon basin. So far the jump has raised more than £3k and if you want to add to that total just visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/michael-everitt1 Thankyou.