

Latest Update On Derek's Sponsored Walk Around The Coast Of Britain.

Derek arrived at my old school friend Jo's in Ramsgate just ahead of the heatwave. This was excellent timing as she looked after him very well; after 3 nights there I did begin to wonder if he would ever come back to Aylesbury! On the Friday they visited the Ramsgate Life Boat Station, and Jo, who is very proud of Ramsgate, showed him the 'Sights' and introduced him to many people, including Brenda Blythen who now lives there. When it had cooled off a bit he walked to just beyond Margate, then returned to Jo's for evening meal, and B&B! On Sunday, he attended a United Methodist service, where naturally he chatted with the congregation, and was pleased to increase his sponsorship with a few donations - this boy does not miss a trick! He caught a bus to Margate, then walked to Whitstable, and bussed back to Jo's for evening meal, B&B - see what I mean about maybe not seeing him again? Monday 20th June: He took his rucksack with him, bussed to Whitstable, spent some time in Faversham, then, after taking his life in his hands walking along the A2, someone stopped to offer him a lift, which he gratefully accepted. He tells me that on his walk from Margate all the way to Gravesend he could hear the loud bangs of the guns doing firing practice out to sea. from Shoeburyness.

I think it was the following day he arrived in Rochester and could find no availability for a room for the night, except in a Wetherspoons where the 3 young lady receptionists informed him that they could not check him in - he needed to book on-line! Having failed to find a bed in Rochester, he moved on to Gravesend for the night. In Gravesend he made a point of visiting the Church of St George where Pocahontas is buried. He met the Rev Jim Fletcher and enjoyed a lengthy chat with him. Jim has kindly e-mailed me today to say he met with Derek and that he is well.

This morning he took the ferry across the Thames at Tilbury, and was pleased to learn, when he offered his fare, that if he had a bus pass, he could use that. He has been very grateful for his bus pass lately but wasn't expecting to be able to use it on a ferry! On disembarking from Tilbury he went down the new walkway commemorating the Windrush Generation. There are celebrations ongoing this week to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the first group of people from the Caribbean arriving here to make a new life, at the request of the Government of the day, to help rebuild Britain following the 2nd world war. Derek met up with about 15 Jamaicans there for that reason.

From Tilbury he enjoyed the walk past Tilbury Fort and Coalhouse Fort, but not long after encountered marsh land and difficult terrain which meant he had to go inland a bit. He then found himself on the edge of a traveller encampment of about 50 vans. The whole site was ringed by ferocious dogs on long leashes, each carefully measured so they did not quite touch each other. The dogs went mad at Derek, of course. The difficult terrain continued until he came to a brand new, what he described as, "Spaghetti Junction" - his maps are a bit dated - and he had no idea where he was at that point. A van drew up beside him and asked him where he was going, and he said the Southend. The van driver said, "You don't want to be walking around here, it's not safe. I'm going to Basildon, I'll take you to the bus station there." This he kindly did, and, using his trusty bus pass, Derek arrived in a rather depressing Southend, where he is staying tonight.

Derek passes on his love and best regards to all his friends at AMC, and grateful thanks to those who have sponsored him. Sue Adams