

### **Latest update on Derek's sponsored 'Walk Around the Coast of Britain'.**

We last left Derek spending the night in Southend, this was on 23rd June. Although we have had many short breaks in Southend when the children were young and my cousin lived there, I don't think we will be holidaying there again any time soon. He made his way out of Southend on the Friday morning, to Shoeburyness, crossing marshlands on foot then taking a bus around the creek to Burnham on Crouch, which he found altogether more pleasant.

He stayed in a local hostelry there. You will note there has been very little, or in fact no 'sleeping under the stars' to date! To be fair he has tried, but as I said in a previous update, little old men with bivvy bags are just not welcome at today's campsites; I think they 'lower the tone', and he has really not felt safe to just sleep in a ditch as he would have done 30 years ago. I did try to tell him that the world has changed since then .....

From Burnham the following day, the same, walking where possible then getting the bus to Clacton - on a Saturday night in June, a bit lively I imagine. The signal was poor, and he had had to go outside and sit on a cliff to get through at all, but after his efforts all I could hear was the wind! On Sunday morning he had the pleasure of attending a welcoming, though poorly attended, Methodist service in Clacton, then on to Walton on the Naze. We had lost contact altogether here - I think down to the signal, or maybe his old phone, or a combination of both. I did have a message on the landline from a lady called Jo telling me he was safe though.

There have been times when he has used buses, or thumbled lifts, and he has had difficulty in some areas finding accommodation at a reasonable price, as so many of the traditional Bed and Breakfasts have now given their rooms over to Social Services. I guess that way they get regular income all the year round; you cannot blame them, but it does mean a sad decline in the good old traditional family holidays with buckets and spades and "Kiss me Quick" hats.

He has been carrying his rucksack with him all the time on this section, so his pattern is to walk as far as he can, maybe stay overnight there, if somewhere suitable, or take a bus to the next likely place. From Walton to Harwich, where he visited another Lifeboat Station, and then, from the historic port, took a small ferry across to the Landguard Point just south of Felixstowe - bus passes not allowed - a £5 crossing fee! Having had to pay £140 for his accommodation at Clacton the night before, I was motivated to search online for somewhere cheaper to stay this night, so - on the bus to Ipswich.

The following day, another ferry, and he was away north again across marshland, seeing amazing birdlife along the way. A friendly local then gave him a lift around the head of the creek at Snape Maltings and deposited him in Aldeburgh. After a gruelling 4-mile trudge through shingle, a former Marine gave him a lift up to the A12 where Derek took a bus to Beccles, where he stayed with our elderly cousin. By now he knew that his trip was being curtailed. He used the following day to visit Lifeboat Stations at Lowestoft and Gt Yarmouth. With an early start on Thursday, he managed to visit Caister Lifeboat Station, before heading back to Aylesbury with his trusty bus pass in hand. He is now safely back home .... for the time being!

I am sorry that the first leg of his trek has had to finish a bit early - I asked him to please come back. I have not been well since he left, and we now have a buyer for our house, and need to find a bungalow! He will be off again as soon as circumstances allow. Many thanks to everyone who has supported him. His JustGiving page will remain open. Sue Adams.