

The first two weeks



The day had arrived Wed 24th Oct in Skegness 2018. I looked out of my Bed and Breakfast window and the sun was shining down on me and I thought what a great way to start the day of my biggest challenge so far. I arrived at the clock tower in Skegness at 0945, a little breeze but comfortable. After sorting myself out ready for the walk to start at 10.30 the deputy mayor arrived, her name was Maggie and I thanked her for her time. Not many people turned up and the town crier failed to show which did disappoint the Mayor but it was not going to dampen my spirits. It was only 10:10 after all but I was happy to see Janice, a trainer for the Guide Dog for the Blind, the press and a number of people with their guide dogs. I thanked them once again for being present.

The time arrived 10.25 I donned my bag and all my equipment including all my walking aids. I also had Bb in my possession who will be with me for the duration of my walk. I will introduce Bb (Banjo bear), he belonged to a young lad whose parents and his brother stayed in one of the apartments I look after. He left it behind so I asked his mums permission to take it on the trip. She was happy for me to do that, so I said I will keep them informed on a monthly basis.

Photos were taken and with a smile the mayor said best of luck and off I went with the sun in its full glory, which is very unusual for Skegness in late Oct, it's normally very windy and raining. So my first step taken I turned around and said "thank you" to everyone and that hopefully I will see you all next Aug 2019 and off I strode past the famous clock tower of Skegness. With a smile I pleasantly thought see you next year, I slowly disappeared down the beach road.

Having left Skegness I encountered a lot of water inlets of sea water down various channels, so I had to be careful not to go the wrong way. Oh dear I did end up going the wrong way but it wasn't too bad. With the aid of the walking Garmin from Brian (thank you) I managed to negotiate the channels of water. The sun was blazing down on me so I was taking in lots of water. As you would imagine Lincolnshire is renowned for fields and fields of vegetables mainly potatoes, broccoli, Brussel sprouts and spring cabbage as far as the eye could see. I was enjoying the walk very much. A lot of the fields had signs stating that it was private land and to get permission to cross, well I didn't see anyone so I just carried on. In one of the fields I stopped and watched a bird of prey swoop down collect his lunch and take it to a tree just in front of me. I was very quick to photograph it, I think I managed to get a video of it. So the first day was only 14 miles and I stayed at the Bricklayer's arms in Wrangle.



Making my way to Boston I crossed similar landscape but whilst walking the roads I noticed a lot of road kill (especially pheasants.) Going along the road there was a lot of vegetables on the side that had fallen off the tractors that I had mentioned earlier. If I had been hungry I could have collected the road kill and cooked it with the vegetables. I could have had a fabulous Sunday lunch LOL. Further on I came to a dead end in a yard and there was no one around to ask for permission to carry on. I saw a path so I thought I'd follow it, making my way through 4ft nettles, brambles and everything else. Only to come across a 6ft fence nettles everywhere and scratched to death, I wasn't going to be defeated. I saw a big tree which had one of its branches leaning against a fence. Great idea of mine to climb the tree with my 15kg bag on my back. As I started to climb I could hear noises behind me but I thought it was wildlife. I had just managed to get a great foot hold when a voice said "what the he'll are you doing?" "Hi" I replied. Now I'm in the poo I thought. I climbed down and explained to them what I was doing and showing them my paperwork so they let me off. They opened a side gate to let me on the top bank to Boston. What a relief, I had to laugh with stings and scratches that's all I could do was laugh, as I always do. The two weeks were of similar days beautiful scenery and wonderful weather and workers picking vegetables and other things it was sheer pleasure. The accommodation was of a very good standard mainly 8 out of 10. Banjo bear got into some scrapes but I sorted him out LOL. So up to the 2nd week I had managed to cover a distance of around 200 miles thereabouts and doing 7k steps work out. Not far from Kings Lynn, about 2 miles, the heavens opened then one minute later the sun was shining then heavy rain followed by a hail storm then snow and to top that off just as I was getting to my accommodation there was a thunder and lightning storm and that was all in nearly two hours. I was wet but it didn't dampen my spirits. It didn't take me long to get dry and get my clothes washed and dried.

On my way to Hunstanton I went via Sandringham estate, the queen's residence as everyone knows but alas she wasn't in. I thought she was friend, well at least her mum was LOL, well I got that wrong didn't I. The country side all around that area was superb, flat and green, but nothing particularly stood out. Along the top to Cromer was very nice and as you know Cromer was famous for crab. So I had to have crab with fish. Very nice but a little expensive, but I didn't mind for one night I spoiled myself.

I had a cracking walk to Great Yarmouth and again beautiful and colourful area as before, not particularly of great interest but very nice views along the coast line. I stayed at Lowestoft for an extra day because I went to a place called Corton. Back in 1965 I stayed with my family and friends, totalling 27 of us. I wanted to see if it was

still there, well having looked and walked for 3 hours I didn't find the holiday camp where we stayed. Never mind it was worth a try.

On the long stretch of beach from Lowestoft to Southwold it was beautiful, but they are having problems with the eroding cliffs. There was a bunker from the 2nd world war which had fallen away from the cliff and was on its side. The trees were still standing but the soil around the roots was being eroded away. A local had told me that all the cliffs are disappearing and it's all been in the last 3 years. How frightening, you can imagine what it will be like in 10 years time.

The accommodation that I have used has been of a very good standard apart from one, which is not bad out of 20. The prices range from £36 to £49, but now I look around. I have used 4 YHA and they cost me £17, which is great for me because it's self funding. I wash my clothes in the B-n-B and then I put them on the radiator, I carry a little tube of liquid soap. If I stop at a YHA I will save my washing till I get to a B-n-B. I have stayed with bowlers friends twice, which was very kind of them. One night I arrived at a truck stop, it was about 4.15 and getting rather dark. I asked the security guard if they had accommodation, he politely replied "no". He then turned to me and said "no problem, wait till it quietens down and you can get your head down on there". I thought that was kind of him. He then said go and get tea and enjoy it, that's on me, again very kind. After talking to him between the truckers coming in, I told him I was x service and he was so we exchanged great stories.

I am eating very well and when I am in the B-n-B's with breakfast I pig out and that lasts me the day. My bag weighs 15kg and now I have it just right, no aches or pains. What I do ask when I book the B-n-B's is if there is a bath available, because I need to soak my aching bones. Again they have been brilliant, only one hadn't got a bath.

I am loving everything about the trip and looking forward to the rest of the challenge. The weather that we are supposed to be getting doesn't worry or phase me out, I will just take it in my stride.