

## Day 11: Sheffield to Chesterfield

And guess what? Sadly, Nick Clegg was not able to join us when we visited his constituency this morning in Sheffield, and there was no statement either. But the people of Sheffield turned out in force and brought their brass band to set us off on our next leg to Chesterfield. I got the feeling that Nick Clegg may have a serious challenge on his hands come May 2015.

The day started with some excellent speeches; Jillian Creasy, a GP, and Green Party Councillor reminded us of the famous Nye Bevan quote: "The NHS will last as long as there are folk left with the faith to fight for it", and how the fight for the NHS was essential to ensure not just health services but all public services, since health cuts were impacting on social services and which in turn were affecting education and environment etc and was creating a vicious downward spiral.

The theme recurred on the walk as I talked to others including Tony Plumridge, who should know about such things as he was a chief executive of Maldon local authority in Essex, and then chaired a PCT. We feel sad at how things have turned out, and fear for the next generation. We talk about community and social development and area based initiatives, and wonder why the system continues to do things to people rather than with people. The way the NHS has been gradually privatised is a classic change management case study of destabilising the status quo, creating confusion, bullying, and by managing the message and putting a spin on things. And this is repeated across all public services.

Tony also told me the story of his great, great aunt- Josephine Butler- who tackled prostitution and was one of the greatest social reformer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and I started feeling better about the march. There have always been and will always be good folk with the faith to fight for what is right. And suddenly the day seems to get better.

Although well-rested after a good night's sleep in very comfortable bed at Leni and Jack's place in Sheffield and a wonderful breakfast, the 11<sup>th</sup> day had caught up with me, and I was getting tired by the early afternoon, and the blisters on the feet were not helping. But then I got the second wind, the mood lifted and the sun also came out.

And we arrived in Dronfield on a site where the 1986 Jarrow marchers had stopped- there is very little known about this particular march and so it was good to meet Harry Barnes, the local MP until recently who had received them in 1986 and find out a bit more.

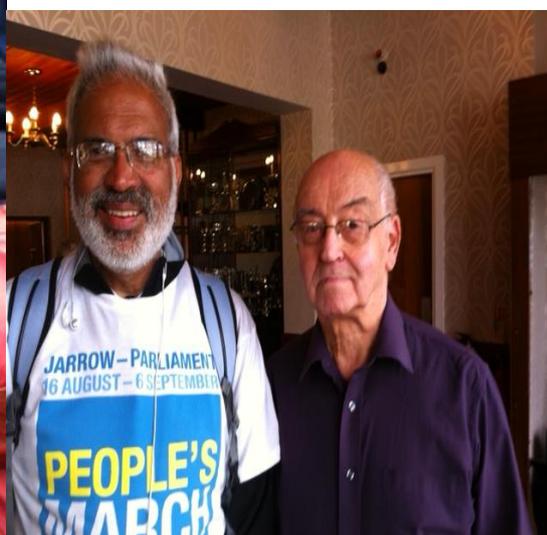
Talking to my fellow marchers I learn more about activism, compared to many of them I am a novice- Joanne Sanderson is the original Greenham Commons woman, for example, and they tell stories of previous protests, and how things do change, albeit not without struggle! It was fascinating to see that David Littlewood, who now lives in Algarve, had come specifically to march, as even though he has left UK, he felt it was his duty to come and march and support in any way that he can.

Harry also introduced me to the famous The Socialist ABC song by Alex Glasgow- and which he sang for us as we were entertained in the Chesterfield Market Stall after our reception in the market. The folk of Chesterfield had really turned out to welcome us, and not only did we have a good tea in the market stall, we were also given an Indian curry dinner at the Labour Party Club later on! It was great to visit the Club which was frequented by Tony Benn, who was the local MP from 1984-2001- they do not make them like Tony Benn anymore was a view expressed by many marchers. Where are the conviction politicians and how do we firm up the resolve of some of existing ones is the challenge facing us. We are supposed to go through Dennis Skinner's constituency also on our march – another political great.

This is turning out to be quite an educational and enjoyable march. I was advised to refrain from describing this as a great free holiday, as I have spent hardly any money thanks to the generosity of the people on the way, but although it has been hard in parts I cannot help but feel happy about supporting the Peoples' march. It is not too late to come and join us – do good and have fun, what more could one ask for! Hope to see you soon.



*Dr Jillian Creasy addressing us*



*Harry Barnes*



*In Sheffield*



*In Tony Benn's club- Chesterfield*

**Rajan Madhok**

**26 August 2014**

**DECLARATION:** I am walking in personal capacity and the views expressed are mine alone, and are meant to inform not criticise or insult. If you like them, tell others and if you do not, tell me- just kidding, but do help me with my prejudices/arrogance. I may be old but can still learn. Blogs available at [www.leadershipforhealth.com](http://www.leadershipforhealth.com)