

## Day 8: Leeds to Wakefield

Yippee – I have broken my personal record and walked every day for a week, and it is a great feeling. I am on a roll now. Look out London I am coming. And it is not just me, there will be loads more, everyday there are more marchers- around 250-300 started from Leeds today. It was fascinating to look back on the long tail of marchers down the street, as we made our way to Wakefield, hooting and tooting and being serenaded by own band on this beautiful day; even the Gods are smiling on us. We were joined by ‘feeder’ marches, where people had marched from other places to join us on our route. If you have not already made the arrangements to join us in Trafalgar Square on 6 Sep, do so now; it will be the biggest event in recent years.

It is becoming repetitive, but I make no apology for sharing it, but they are coming simply because the NHS has touched their lives: I would not be here but for the NHS, it saved my life scenario is repeated time and again, and you realise that we tend to take things for granted and are in serious danger of doing the NHS down. I do not have to tell these marching folk anything because they are the converts but we do wonder why others are not equally concerned and indeed outraged and I feel like shouting: TAKE (SOME) PART IN THIS MARCH AS OTHERWISE THE NHS WON'T BE THERE.

We wonder about the complacency amongst our own colleagues, worry about the complicity of the establishment – why did the Colleges/BMA/Academy back down, and struggle to see how to create the medical leadership to stop this destruction given that the profession is now further divided. But then are uplifted when we see that we are not alone anymore, there is a groundswell of support from all sectors of the society, and it truly is a people’s march.

And this last issue came out loud and clear at the rally in Wakefield when some speakers tried to make party political points- both, the Darlomums and the marchers soon put them right. Giving point scoring, opportunistic politicians the marching order, so to speak, and making it clear that it is the peoples march.

It is the ‘regular’ people of this country who are marching, like Dave, who know what life is like. Dave had a difficult upbringing, one of 8 children, who has ended up needing health services, and hates not being able to work. Despite all the challenges that his family faced, 7 out of 8 children work, pay taxes and contribute to the society. From taking – as they had to rely on the welfare state when young – to giving back, is a fantastic story and a powerful reason why we need to look after those less fortunate in our society; that way the circle of life continues.

As with previous days, meet new people and some colleagues from the past. I suspect many are surprised to see me amongst this ‘lot’ – after all I was the establishment, and they wonder what has happened to me. I am not sure whether I will be dining on the story of the Jarrow march for the rest of my life or be shunned! It was great to meet Jacky Davis today – who ‘leafletted’ all along the way and John Puntis from Leeds who has been the drummer, along with young trainee doctors, Chiropodist, GP and public health specialist, and people from many other walks of life.

And the generosity carries on; poor Bidy stayed up late last night to ensure that my washing was dry by the morning, lunch at Halfway House pub, tea at the Red Shed in Wakefield, and just when I thought I was going to be back in some hall for the night I was offered a bed at their home by Cath Emery and David Phillips. I am beginning to feel guilty (not really, but am very grateful).

I also had the best compliment today from Dave- Doc, for someone middleclass, you are OK! THANK YOU DAVE



*Biddy and Digger - Respect*



*Dave – heart of gold*



*Jacky Davis – rally in Wakefield*



*Patients waving from the wards!*

**Rajan Madhok**

**23 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)