

A walk for Linda

In Memory of Linda Strathern

We gathered at our base camp the slate mine, to me and to some other family member it really was base camp. We were not walkers but doing the walk for Linda in celebration of her life and her sense of adventure. Why else would a group of young in heart only, mostly non walkers, walk up Haystacks fell.

The weather was less than ideal when we arrived, you couldn't get out of the car for torrential rain lashing across the car park. The rain gave the slate mine a dark shiny look and the scene was set. I felt Linda would be smiling at our undertaking as the weather fate had provided was just wonderful, the elements were giving us a little test and some drama.



And so it was after much swapping of jackets and various footwear we set off in twos with the front walkers setting a cracking pace. (Show offs!) I decided to keep just behind the leaders and thought if I could keep that position Linda would say well done to me from her new place of residence.

Anton Muller, the Spiritual Care Co-ordinator at the hospice had agreed to do the walk with us and say a few words at the top, an undertaking beyond the call of duty, but this charismatic lovely bloke was there for us and Linda, and gave Linda's Walk a special element of occasion and celebration.

We made reasonable progress the rain eased but the wind continued to gust and swirl with fine raindrops sweeping across the fell. The first part of the climb we had been told was possibly arduous but after that it would be less so (a piece of cake!!!) I really had no idea where I was going but contented myself with absorbing everything around me, I didn't want to forget any of this special time and as I had Linda's ashes in my back pack there was nowhere I was going except to the top of the fell! Sometime elapsed and we came to our first obstacle, the rain had swollen the stream, which had now become a small torrent, the grass around was sodden and boggy and we couldn't find a crossing point. Hero Chris, one of our younger members became impatient and decided to go for it getting across with a hop, skip and two boots full of water. As it transpired this wasn't a bad tradeoff in order to get to the bank opposite. We continued on our way, everywhere I looked was stunningly beautiful, white water running fast in heavily laden streams, green everywhere, water, sky and fell were magnificent and I knew if we were to leave Linda anywhere this was a wonderful place.

Linda was a talented artist and the intense feelings this landscape evoked would have been to her maybe not heaven but close... she would have wanted to paint every scene every vista and the smallest plant wedged deep in the hillside.

Suddenly almost without warning we arrived at the summit, the wind made it difficult to stand so we sat on the hillside. Anton took up his position clad in red jacket and gaters looking much the new age sage overseeing his flock. We listened, Anton's well chosen words carried by the wind seemed evocative and powerful in this wonderful place where one felt an air of magic. The canister holding Linda's ashes was raised in the air and shaken into the cosmos and into God's keeping. We had made our small journey and achieved what we wanted, to celebrate the life of Linda Strathern and mark a symbolic acceptance of her passing on life's journey.

Linda Strathern always remembered. 24th August 1949 – 12th July 2008

Over £1,000 has been raised since Linda's funeral which will go to continuing work of the Eden Valley Hospice.