

COMMEMORATIVE ACCOUNT OF WENDY PORTER
REGARDING DARREN PORTER (DOD 15.09.20)

Darren and I met in 2016-2017. We first met at Oakley Manner Hospital. We both worked as carers. We just kept texting each other. Darren was a very kind hearted and helpful person.

We decided to secretly get married on 2 May 2019 in Greta Green. Only Darren and I were present.

Darren was 40 when he married me. He was a young man recently married, he had everything to look forward to. He was looking forward to a life with me, watching his children (from a previous marriage) grow up, with another two children he took on the responsibility of looking after, when we met. We were so excited about living a full life together.

Although there were plenty of challenges ahead, Darren always tried his best to make sure he made time for the children. He was always thinking of activities for the children to do together with him, making sure that the younger children did not get bored or feel left out. We all went to the zoo, parks. He always made sure that he bought plenty of art stuff for children. We would go out for long walks with the children. He tried to keep everyone happy.

Darren loved his cars. He would spend hours tinkering, mending or helping others out with their cars. He would get so much joy from spending time in this way. He loved his old vintage mini (and he even invested in one for himself so he could tinker with it at the weekends.) Darren loved his campervan, so we could escape in it as a family, enjoying the time with the children camping.

Darren used to work as a carer but wanted to get into something else so he trained as a bus driver which he enjoyed, allowing him to try something different as a job. He was working with a company called Panther Travel as a bus driver. A local school hired him as a bus driver to take children to the Harry Potter world which meant that he got a free ticket to the Harry Potter world through his job!

When we first met I could see that Darren was a kind and considerate person. However, I could also see how many challenges he faced due to his own mental health concerns. He struggled through as best as he could. The Covid pandemic hit Darren hard due to the travelling restrictions; it prevented him from spending time with his children in the way he liked to.

Darren's mental health deteriorated to the point that he took his own life. His mood was low. He tried to keep this from me. He would not talk to me about what the problem was. He would often be out in the back garden on a chair crying. His mental health struggles were such a problem for him that he simply could not deal with it. He could not focus on work, home or family life. Due to his mental health condition he became more and more paranoid which put an enormous strain on my family.

We tried to get the help from the mental health professionals. We put our trust in these professional's. As we did not know how the system worked, we put our trust in them. However we were gravely let down, as these professionals did not appreciate the urgency of the situation.

So Darren was left with demons to take over his thoughts and we as a family were left to deal with the consequences of this, which at times was extremely scary.

Sadly on the day Darren died, Darren saw an opportunity whilst I was at work to take his own life [personal/sensitive] He saw no other way out of constant and immense suffering caused by the deterioration in his mental health. My daughter was the one who found him [personal/sensitive]

It is not difficult to understand the impact this has had on my daughter. [personal/sensitive]

When Darren passed away, I was lost. I no longer had someone by my side. It was hard to carry on. I took time off work and tried to keep myself busy at home. I did not want contact with anyone. I had to keep my emotions in check and not let the children see I was crying. My priority was them.

I found a quiet space on the pier and brought a padlock and put the relevant information on it. I sat on the pier with the flowers I had brought him and just talked to him. People passing me, must have wondered why I was talking to a padlock. For me it was a type of release.

I did not want my children to see me not being in control.

Darren was the first person who I had met who actually made time for me, making me feel special. I was no longer just a mum and that's why I adored and loved him so much. When I lost him I didn't just lose my husband, I lost my friend.

We still struggle to understand why this has happened, struggle with the fact that we put our trust in professionals who knew more than us and struggle knowing that Darren was greatly let down. He passed away at the age of 41, a loss of a young life, a loss of the life we were meant to have together.