

Commemorative account, Life of Bruce Moorcroft. 02/08/1986 – 29/04/2012.

Bruce was born 02/08/1986 in Colchester and was the middle child of Michelle. Bruce had an older sister Jennifer and younger brother Ash.

Bruce's early life was spent in Colchester, attending St Andrews Primary School, before attending Sir Charles Lucas Arts College in Colchester and progressing to Colchester Institute to complete a Chefs course. Cookery and catering was Bruce's passion, he held many jobs in the catering industry before becoming too unwell to continue. Bruce was generally mischievous, amiable and loyal to his friends and family. Bruce enjoyed his paper-round, had a good friendship circle and always had work of some sort as soon as he was able, including Saturday jobs in his teens in café's etc. From the age of 13 he had a morning and evening paper round which he enjoyed as he earned money. Bruce would regularly attend Riley's, his favourite snooker/pool bar and would spend what he had earned. Bruce also enjoyed and was good at Darts.

Bruce had 3 children, the eldest was 6 years old when he died, the youngest had recently been born. Bruce's difficulties with mental health began in his teenage years. Bruce would often experience voices and depression. This affected his relationships and work. Bruce experienced voices which he described as commanding him to take actions including self-harm and engage in very dangerous behaviours. He unfortunately found himself detained under S.136 on numerous occasions but was never admitted for any period of time to enable a full assessment of his needs. Towards the end of his life he was imprisoned having set fire to himself/his home. Bruce began to self-medicate which worsened the situation further but seemed to give mental health professionals another reason to deny treatment 'it's all drugs', but this was a symptom not a cause. We were told countless times he could not be helped due to drugs but this was occasional use, in fact, his post mortem showed no illicit substances in his system. It seemed we got answers and questions from his inquest.

Family attempted on numerous occasions to get him admitted to psychiatric care but were denied repeatedly, including taking him to A&E, calling the police and taking him directly to the mental health unit at the Lakes. Unfortunately, the only time as family we were offered support was the day after he died 'let us know if there is anything we can do', they said.

Unfortunately, in writing this commemorative account the memories of childhood, adolescence and early adult life have been overshadowed by the repeated trauma of being denied help and knowing what would happen given the trajectory that was unfolding before all of our eyes. Bruce was only 25 when he died. The police were helpful and tried but were also denied by North Essex Partnership. The indicators in his life that death would follow were ignored, his self-medication, homelessness, family tensions, unemployment, deliberate self-harm, risk-taking behaviours. It seems the only time were offered support were after it was too late, and too many more young people in similar situations have followed afterwards.

From kind, caring and affectionate 'Bruce the moose' to a life over far too early, with those who were supposed to support but didn't. It's difficult to recall positives/fond memories because everything has been overshadowed by failure, should have's and could have's.

Kind regards

Ash Moorcroft
[personal/sensitive]