

### **Walter Lloyd – by his grand-daughter, Eleanor**

Walter wasn't exactly a typical grandad. In fact, Marian and I never called him Grandad. Just Walter.

We don't remember a time when he lived in a house. The stories of him coming back from a car boot sale with a donkey in the back of the car, or accidentally helping a Yugoslavian woman smuggle bottles of hooch through Paris or earthing his crystal set radio mast to our dad's childhood bed - which was thankfully unoccupied when lightning struck - all these stories were from a time before we knew him, but all felt completely familiar.

A friend of ours who went to a different school, Ulverston High, told us a rumour that there was a man who lived in a field near Newby Bridge, but that he must also be a millionaire because he shopped at Booths and, remember this was 1994, bought taramasalata, posh olives, expensive cheese, smoked salmon and real coffee. No, no, - that's Walter, we said. He's not a millionaire but he does have a lot of books about Visigoths.

One of the things I love most about Walter is that it is impossible to define him. Trousers held up by bairn twine, but with a copy of the Telegraph...and the Times.....and the Guardian....and the Independent all tucked under his arm; a man who was most at home, sitting on his haunches in the leaves, coaxing life from a stick fire but who told stories with punchlines like "the next time I saw that horse, it was under Lord Mountbatten".

When I went to Marrakesh I suddenly realised that this was ultimate Walter. The smell of horses, leather and wood smoke, the music, the food cooked on charcoal, beautiful rugs, crockery, lamps and blankets and the most friendly and welcoming people. It turned out that Walter was basically part Moroccan. And part Celtic. And probably part Pagan. But he enjoyed a good hymn, had deep respect for tradition and this beautiful church was where he chose to be buried and feels entirely fitting.

When I told Walter that I, like him, was going to Cambridge, he was absolutely delighted but gave advice that only Walter could give "Now the most important thing Eleanor is that you do absolutely as little work as possible but make sure you meet lots and lots of interesting people."

My sister Marian said this week that although a willow coffin is incredibly appropriate for Walter, we maybe should have gone a step further and parcel-taped together 8 banana boxes, which were always Walter's filing system of choice, usually piled floor to ceiling or more accurately earth to canvas, bulging with newspaper clippings, receipts, paper napkins covered in illegible hand-writing and magazines about everything from dinghy sailing to Irish archaeology.

One amazing memory of Walter as a grandfather is Christmas Day 1994. We were living in Warton. Late morning mum and dad told us to come and look out on the

village street and there, coming down the road was Walter, wearing a Father Christmas hat, driving a horse, wearing reindeer antlers, pulling the most beautiful living wagon. He had spent months building it by hand, teaching himself all of the skills and delivered it to us as an extraordinary Christmas present.

Walter inspired us with his smile, his ability to make friends anywhere and everywhere and to find new passions in every decade of his life, he inspired us with his independence of thought and his insatiable appetite for knowledge.

And I hope those qualities will live on though all of us.

Certainly, none of us will ever forget him.

The road rose up to meet him  
The wind was always at his back.  
The sun shone warm upon his face;  
And the rains fell soft upon his fields.

Eleanor Lloyd  
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