

This is Our Story

On 7th December 2003, my only son Corrie left the house on the Saturday night and never returned. He had suffered from undiagnosed anxiety and depression for many years and had sought to manage his feelings with street drugs. Initially he smoked cannabis to make his life bearable, although the attendant feelings of serious paranoia were very much, a mixed blessing.

He was a beautiful person, outgoing, happy, well liked with a huge friendship circle of young men and popular with the ladies. His optimism and warm personality entirely concealed what was going on inside his head, the weakness and despair that always bubbled just below the surface. None of his friends (nor his family with whom he was very close) could understand when he slipped quietly from smoking cannabis to smoking heroin.

This was a massive blow to all of us, 31 years old, he ran 5 miles a day, was strong and healthy and the pathologist commented he was the fittest and healthiest young person he could ever recall.

No one was more badly affected by this than his 'kid sister', Kelly.

She had always been close to Corrie growing up and boasted at Hreod Parkway School, if ever she was bullied one word from her 'bruv', was all that was needed! The seven years between them meant nothing. Kelly loved, looked up to, was protective of and felt protected by, her 'big brother' Corrie.

Since graduation as a journalist from Bournemouth University in 2001, Kelly had been a presenter on local BBC radio in the daytime and was a Samaritan for several evenings a week. Her bubbly outgoing personality shone through the radio and her afternoon show and outside broadcasts were an unremitting, daily highlight for her many listeners.

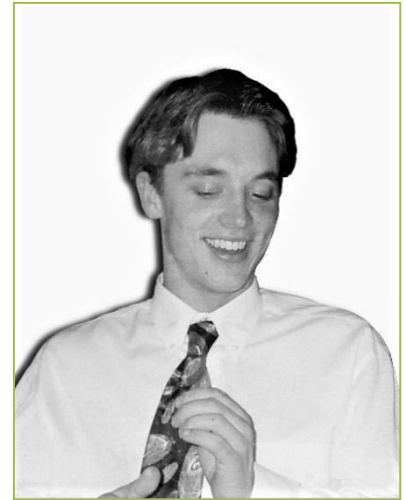
Keen to progress, 2007 Kelly left for the bright lights, and became a producer at BBC SIX RADIO in Great Portland Street working with George Lamb.

Though you would have never been aware of it from her warm and fun exterior but following her brother's death, periods of introspection and anxiety became slowly more frequent.

In 2011 Kelly gave birth to her first child, a daughter, having married 12 months or so previously. By this time she was employed as a fundraiser for 'Meningitis Now', managing the highly sensitive task of counselling couples who had lost young children to this vicious disease and at the same time encouraging them to support future research.

Periods of anxiety and depression became more frequent and she was hospitalised on at least three occasions, but still managed to present a positive, outgoing exterior whilst holding down, without break, difficult marketing jobs in the charity and private sectors.

She went through every antidepressant known to man, mirtazapine, sertraline, fluoxetine, citalopram, escitalopram and paroxetine but none of these could manage her anxiety and despair. She spent all of her life's savings, more than £25,000, on homeopathic, vitamin and mineral remedies, mostly to Harley Street charlatans, equally to no avail. This was how desperate she was to find a way through. Only her husband, extended family and very close friends new of her daily struggle, the pain of just trying to be normal, to put on a normal face to the world.



Corrie John Stooke 1972-1993



Kelly Anna Stooke 1979-2019

Eventually she found a private therapist who was so effective in helping her reorganise her tortured mind and redirecting her thought processes to a more positive place; so much so, that in 2018, she gave birth to her second child, a beloved son.

At the time of her death she was a mental-health champion at her employer, British Computer Society. However awful her own issues, she always believed she could help others with their black thoughts and moods. All throughout her determination to engage in work, to support her husband and young family, and to share and help others with their problems was quite remarkable.

In April 2019 she attended a funeral at South Marston, later visited to Asda to pick up some baby milk, and her last stop was to rearrange a mental-health appointment for the following Tuesday in Bath Road.

Twenty five minutes later, she had left this world.

How exactly she ended up back on the railway at South Marston that Friday will remain a mystery and only known to Kelly. What we can say for sure is that her family, her nine-year-old daughter and six-month-old son were her whole world and we will never ever accept the hopelessly simplistic, 'tick-box', Inquest verdict.

If we can help just one of the thousands of Kelly's out there, struggling to make sense of their thoughts, trying to function through a fog of despair, or perhaps just feeling totally inadequate with low self-worth, difficult and chaotic lives and feeling unable to cope, then our endeavours will be worthwhile.

Perhaps the Foundation can help them, in a way in which, in the end, I, John Stooke, was unable to help my children.

John Stooke

Chairman

