

What has helped me following the death of my child: Tim, 2020



Actually, my grief first hit me when I began to believe the diagnosis I was given that my daughter Naomi Grace would have a short and difficult life. I was lucky in that a friend, herself dying of cancer, referred us to Helen House Hospice, and where after a long journey from London, I could experience respite and an invitation to be away from her side (albeit temporarily). Her mum wasn't keen to leave the building but I found myself sitting/ pacing / restless and in due course realised that I could get out and away into the country and onto the Ridgeway, not so far from Oxford.

And so started a regular routine for my respite times and eventually following Naomi's death of taking my bike and cycling fast along the top of the Ridgeway, punctuated with stops in a completely different environment, alone and unable to ruminate on either my life or that of our family (else I'd fall off!) – looking down on the fields and humanity going about its business, gasping for breath up the slippery inclines, the welcome memories of momentary freedom and a place where no-one would see my pain or my tears. Cycling (generally alone) up and onto hill tops has helped me – close to nature, not having the energy to think about my emotional pain and in the case of the Ridgeway remembering that Naomi was safe and not so far away. And it was no surprise that I extended this to gathering some friends together to do the 100km Randonee round the Isle of Wight, raising money to plough back into the HDH family support team – monetary gain and body pain!



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