

VALE BOYD MILLEN (C 41), 1936 - 2006

Lilian Millen made the following brief announcement to notify fellow walkers that her husband Boyd Millen had finally lost his battle against cancer. The brief details were as follows

I am sorry to tell you that Boyd died peacefully on the 26th January. He celebrated his 70th birthday in the Hospice surrounded by many friends and family on the 25th. His condition deteriorated very quickly, we feel he was waiting for his birthday. He fought so hard all the time and we did everything we could in the last year. He walked 20 miles cross country using his crutches and even went climbing on the high fells. He also did a 68 mile cycle ride over the fell roads. He will be missed by many. There is a tribute on www.ldwa.org.uk



Boyd climbing Walla Crag on the weekend of the 2005 LDWA 100, as big a feat as his Centurion walks

It was a sad announcement but not unexpected by those of us who knew of Boyd's battle. Lilian and Boyd had made the decision to share their remaining time to the full and not to publicly announce the details of Boyd's condition. During the year since the initial diagnosis, Boyd deteriorated gradually but relentlessly but he continued to lead a full life and do what he loved most – enjoy the wild country he had so often walked in healthier times.

The LDWA obituary summarises Boyd's great contribution to the sport of Long Distance walking in England.

We are very sad to have to report the death, after a year's illness, of Boyd Millen of Morecambe Bay & Bowland LDWA. Boyd, an instantly recognisable figure on events with his slight frame and his trainers without socks, was a very early member of the LDWA (membership number 485), joining in 1973. In the same year he joined the Bob Graham Club (membership number 14) and became the first man to complete a double Bob Graham Round. He also enjoyed a distinguished career as a race-walker. As well as completing almost all the LDWA Hundreds, he helped to organise, with his wife Lilian Millen, the 2002 Lakeland Hundred, with all the problems of its having to be postponed from 2001 owing to the national Foot-and-Mouth outbreak.

During Boyd's illness, he managed more than one Lakeland summit on crutches before turning to his bike, on which he took part in at least one large event. He celebrated his 70th birthday in the hospice on the day before he died.

Sandra Brown wrote her own moving obituary about Boyd

I've just heard from Ann Sayer the very sad news that Boyd Millen died on Thursday. He had been unwell for some months, but showed characteristic spiritedness, courage and humour throughout. He continued to walk his beloved Lakeland fells on crutches, determined to fight the good fight. I shall cherish very fond and happy memories of the many walks we enjoyed together, including Centurion events in the UK and abroad, LDWA walks, and Paris - Colmar walks on which Boyd was a great team member. Boyd always kept everyone smiling, through highs and lows.

Before becoming a Centurion, Boyd was for many years an outstanding fell runner, and was the first to accomplish a double Bob Graham round - the circuit of all the Lakeland tops over 3000 feet, over 70 miles, twice, back to back. Life shouldn't be measured in years but in what you do with it. It would be hard to live a fuller life than Boyd did.

Here is Jill Green's tribute to Boyd

As these tributes reflect Boyd meant so much to many different people. I went up to stay with Lilian and Boyd so Boyd could give me some lessons in race walking. He famously said "you walk like a bloody navy luv". At 50 I was a very very late starter. This remark led to a team of ladies called "Boyd's Navvies" winning the MEN'S CUP in the Manx Parish race.

On another occasion I went to walk the route of the first L.D.W.A. Cumbrian 100 with Lilian. Boyd asked if I had been to the

top of all the Lakeland mountains. "All except Helvelyn" I said. It was either too windy or too icy. "We can go now" he said. "But it's dark, it's February" I said. No matter, up we went in cloudy murk. We came out above the cloud with the tops of the mountains popping up through as we stood beneath a black sky, studded with stars. Oh what joy; money can never give us moments like this.

Boyd walked for hours holding a green umbrella to shade me from the sun on one of the long race walks across France, he may have been small but he was one of the biggest people I've known.

So many of us owe a lot to Boyd and all our memories will be different.

I well remember Boyd's trip to Australia in 2000 when he became Australian Centurion number 41 with a fine walk under adversity. He was unable to really eat or drink anything during the whole 24 hours and had to dig deep into his own reserves to somehow keep the pace going and keep on schedule. With this walk, Boyd became a triple centurion, adding to his 1995 British and 1999 Continental Centurions finish.

1995	British Centurion 930	Battersea Park, London	22:28:25
1999	Continental Centurion 289	Weert, Netherlands	23:13:25
2000	Australian Centurion 41	Melbourne	23:25:43



Boyd gratefully accepts a can of Aussie beer after finishing the Australian Centurion walk in 2000

At 64 years of age, he was second oldest person to have achieved the feat in Australia. (the honour of the oldest Centurion finish belonged to Merv Lockyer (C30) who achieved his membership at 65 years of age).

Boyd came to Australia specifically for this event and his single minded determination paid off. He confided to me after the event that this might be his last Centurion race due to his feeding problems. He planned to restrict himself to the various Fells events and Long Distance Walking Association events and this proved to be the case.

To say the Boyd was as tough as nails was an understatement. He had worked as a stone mason, a specialist field that meant days on end spent in inhospitable conditions refurbishing old stonework - he worked for 19 years on Liverpool cathedral and the memorial service was held for him there. He loved stone work and did stone carvings as a hobby. When I noticed that he did not wear socks in our event and commented that he should perhaps rug up a little for the cold night conditions, he confided to me that this would not be necessary – it was not really cold and he never wore socks. He was as good as his word, walking consistently through a cold Melbourne night with seeming nonchalance.

We pass our deepest condolences onto Lilian. Boyd will be sadly missed by us all - walking has indeed lost a wonderful ambassador.