

# Val Crowley

by her friends in the CAT Midlands Psychotherapists Group Phil Clayton, Eva Burns-Lundgren, Sally-Anne Ennis, Tina Griffiths, Anna Jellema, Jan Mead and Graham Twist



Val Crowley: Clinical Psychologist, ACAT Psychotherapist, Supervisor, Trainer, Moderator, and Friend

In 1994, Val, Tina Griffiths, Anna Jellema, and Graham Twist met on the Midlands Practitioner Training, and then went on together to do the ACAT Advanced Psychotherapy Training in London – the precursor of the current IRRAPT training. On that course we met Eva Burns-Lundgren, Sally-Anne Ennis and Jan Mead. After we finished our psychotherapy training we continued to meet regularly as a group, for supervision, seminars, and friendship, which has continued to this day. We would usually meet at each others' houses and we have fond memories of being at Val's and meeting her husband Barry and their lovely sons, James and Tim. This is a joint tribute to Val from the CAT Midlands Psychotherapy Group, from our shared memories of such a lovely person.

Left to Right: Graham, Val, Tina, Anna – at the Angel of the North in Gateshead - 2001



When we think of Val, we often think of her as “Tigger” (from Winnie the Pooh), for her “bounce”, enthusiasm, positive energy, humour (often raucous!) and general vitality. She had such an enormous appetite for life that it seems hardly possible to think of her now in the past tense. However, as Eva said, she also had “a certain underlying insecurity or sensitivity that it might be easy to miss amidst all the activity and buzz. What I’ll never forget is her recipe for coping with a bad day; you go on a shopping trip to John Lewis ‘because nothing bad can happen at John Lewis!’” Sally-Anne remembered all the shopping bags she brought with her to her Advanced course interview, making the most of “a wonderful opportunity to come to London!” She was “clever, irreverent and also real”. Anna has memories of being escorted by Val round the whole of the Bullring in Birmingham in search of the perfect swimsuit – when you went shopping with Val, her “can-do” attitude always made for a successful trip! However, Val was far from frivolous; she embraced life in all its forms, and her enjoyment of all kinds of ordinary pleasures made for a great sense of balance throughout her life.

Tina reflected especially on Val’s thoughtful and softer side. “I

found her thoughts on situations to be very astute and perceptive and she had a very helpful way of speaking in a forthright manner when needed. Her views were always highly valued at the MCAT meetings. She had a wisdom and experience that others looked to. I learnt an enormous amount from her for which I am very grateful”. She used her “voice” to help others. Graham thought about how inclusive she was, both in her personal life and her work life; she became a great advocate for CAT with people with learning disabilities and their carers.

Anna came to know Val much better over the last ten years, as she and Barry frequently came to stay at Anna’s cottage in Northumberland. One of the first signs of her illness was anxiety; although Val was very sensitive, she wasn’t accustomed to feeling this way and it troubled her greatly, so they would often discuss it. Anna’s over-riding memory of Val during the last few years of her life was that she was “exceptionally brave, in confronting her new-found anxiety, and what it might mean. She pursued her diagnosis for a year, and then when she learnt the difficult truth – a rare early-onset form of Alzheimer’s disease - she was open in talking about it to me. I will never forget how she thought of her Alzheimer’s as an “acquired learning disability”, and of how this brought her even closer to the experience of her patients and clients”.

Rest in peace, dear Val.