



Laurence Carter

# MAN ON A MISSION

BY CHLOE MCLAUGHLIN

Laurence Carter is a man on a mission. From June 2018 to June 2019, he is walking 3,500 miles around England and Wales to help raise money for Cancer Research UK in memory of his wife Melitta, who died in 2015 from cervical cancer. When I speak to him he's walking through Lancashire on his way up to Cumbria and has walked 2,500 of his 3,500 miles and raised a whopping £50,000 for charity. But Laurence, who although originally from Norwich, lives in Washington in the USA, isn't stopping there – he wants to raise £200,000 and raise awareness of the importance of cervical cancer screening and the HPV vaccine which can help to

prevent the disease.

"I'm doing the walk in honour of my wife, she died of cervical cancer and that's a disease that no woman really needs to die of now with the combination of the HPV vaccine for young women and the smear test. It's actually a preventable disease so I'm really walking to raise awareness of that, especially for guys." Laurence explains, "My wife was late with her smear and if I had reminded her to go a bit earlier, she would be alive today, but it just never crossed my mind. I'm just a normal guy, I didn't really think about it."

Laurence started his walk in Brighton last June and has made his way all around the coast and is

currently in Lancashire and heading up to Cumbria.

"It's great, I love it," he grins when I ask him how the walk is going.

Melitta was diagnosed with cancer after a routine smear, however she was six months late attending her appointment and Laurence admits that when she first came home stating it was 'bad news' they were both optimistic.

"We learnt nine months later that she had 12 to 15 months to live. She just carried on. I could not believe her courage. She was very sad to not be able to see our three children graduate and get married, things like that, that was her biggest regret, but she carried on right until the end."



Melitta Georgie Nic Laurence at Bryce Canyon April 2015



Near Barrow in Furness



Laurence's late wife Melitta



Laurence and his pal walking in Lancashire

Laurence smiles when discussing how he came up with the idea to walk, "I just knew I wanted to do something to honour her."

Laurence is now hoping to raise £200,000 for Cancer Research UK as well as raising awareness of cervical cancer.

"800 women die in this country from it and 3,000 - 4,000 are diagnosed and as I say it's entirely preventable so there's no need for 800 women to die. It's a tragedy for the whole family – every time the family is profoundly affected so I think it's really important for women go for their smear. There are about 28% of women who don't respond to the letter," Laurence sighs,

"in half of those cases it's not because they don't want to go, they're happy to go and know what it is and how important it is but they are just busy, life is busy and that's exactly what

## "LIFE IS BUSY IN THE END THAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH"

happened with my wife but in the end that was the difference between life and death."

The money Laurence raises will help fund research by Dr Jo Waller who is researching why women don't attend their smear tests and looking

in to ways to make it easier.

"They're experimenting with people instead of just getting a letter, getting a text message as well that says click here to make your appointment," Laurence explains. "You don't have to ring the doctor, find your letter, all those things that are complicated and that some people don't get around to doing."

Although Laurence originally planned to walk 3,500 miles, he believes his total mileage will end up being around 4,500 miles! If you'd like to support Laurence or learn more about his story head to [3500toendit.com](http://3500toendit.com)