

In memory of our son Aaron Britt

On 3rd October 2011, our lives changed forever. We suffered the worst fate possible and time has stood still ever since. I sat in a traffic jam as emergency vehicles rushed past me to a college 400 yards away. Our only son Aaron lay on the road outside that college, struck by a car, fighting for his life. His head injuries were very serious...they told us to hope for the best but prepare for the worst.

7 hours later on the 4th October 2011, after the determined efforts of the neurosurgeons at QMC in Nottingham, we were told that there was no hope left. Our only son had lost his fight and Dave took the decision to switch off his life support and let him die.

Aaron was barely 16. He was the kind of boy that you would want for a son: he was bright and funny, had a massive heart and an opinion on everything. He was everybody's friend and he kept out of trouble by making everyone laugh. I miss him not because he was my only son, but because he was just great to have around. He would have been a committed citizen of this earth and the world is a much poorer place for losing him.

Aaron was crossing the road outside his college at 5.15pm. He crossed at a pedestrian crossing point that was – we are told – “coming to the end of its useful life”. He didn't press the button. Teenagers often don't. He wasn't using a phone, listening to music or chatting to his mates. He misread the signs and the traffic and made a mistake. That's what children do. Younger children have their mums and dads to hold their hands when they cross the road. Teenagers don't...when they make a mistake, they don't deserve to die.

The young man driving the car was travelling at 35.9mph. I cannot tell you how many people say to me “so...just above the speed limit then?” He wasn't prosecuted because his actions were judged by the law to be “within the realms of a reasonable and competent driver”. How can it be reasonable to have a speed limit outside a college where a pedestrian dies when struck by a car travelling just above that speed limit? If a pedestrian suffers fatal or life-altering injuries when struck at 30mph, then 30mph is too fast. Had the speed limit been 20mph that evening, I would still have my son and we would never have met.

Every minute of every day I think of my son, every night I am there at that roadside and every time my mind wanders, I imagine Dave holding him in his arms after making the fateful decision to switch off his life support. My life has become an act of remembrance in itself and I will be honest with you that I feel envious of the attention that the tragic deaths of our young soldiers receive, when many if not all of the victims of road crashes – like Aaron – are not even acknowledged as victims, frequently blamed for their own deaths.

But here we are, telling our storyYou have no idea how hard it is for us to do this time after time, to tell the story of Aaron's death rather than his life. We do not do it for our future because we lost our future that dreadful night. We do it so that other people's children, friends, nieces, nephews, partners and parents can have a future.

Those in power may think of a thousand reasons why speed is not an important enough issue..... I can only think of one reason why it has to be.

Sue Britt