

## Laurie the Tall Green Man



Laurie as the Green Man reaches Pilton with the Green Man Parade

Laurie Wedge, the Green Man on stilts who graced Pilton Festival for 15 years, died in February 2016, aged 63. Many thousands of people saw and enjoyed Laurie's deep commitment to the Festival.

No-one could miss his giraffe-like walk through the crowd, ten-feet tall dressed in a spectacular plant and flower costume, sprinkling everyone he could with rose petals and offering them a green blessing.

"Pilton Festival, and the Green Man, was the highlight of his year," said his partner, Teresa Price. "It represented what he believed in. He'd spend a lot of time preparing for it, arranging his costume and collecting the rose petals. He really loved what he did on the day. It was about fertility and abundance."



Laurie in Green Man costume

Laurie came from London where he learned stiltwalking and other circus skills alongside Abi Falkner of South Molton, with whom he had two children, Robin, 15 and Elsa, 9. Abi said: "He really was a very authentic and appropriate choice for the Green Man, as he loved nature, gardening and growing things. His long terraced house garden in Larkhall Lane (London) was absolutely bursting with plants, everything from a huge wild cherry tree to small bonsai trees in pots. Every window sill was chockablock with plants he had grown from seeds, lemon plants, passion flowers, pine cuttings and all sorts. The Green Man was the first costume he put together."

Laurie also leaves twin sons, Matt and Ashley.

Bev Neighbour, of the Pilton Festival, said: "Pilton Greenman Festival welcomed the new addition of Laurence in his fabulous Green Man guise around 2001. He took the Festival parade through Barnstaple to a new level of entertainment for the hundreds of people who witnessed the spectacle. "Laurence led the parade in magnificent style, all the way from the Square, up the High Street, along Pilton Causeway and right up Pilton Street.

"He would then spend the rest of the day on his stilts, sprinkling magic dust and flower petals and bestowing good spells and omens upon the heads of adults and tiny children who gazed up at this fascinating man in awe.

"Despite his own failing health Laurence turned out, in full costume and on his stilts, to show his respects by leading the procession when Hamish Patrick's hearse was seen out of Pilton by festival folk in January last year.

"He will be very sorely missed by everybody involved with Pilton Festival as well as many who attend the day."

*Richard Howe*