

# Phenomenal adventure captured in prose

HARRIET Sandys has led a pretty astonishing life, achieving so much for so many people and travelling miles to war-torn countries.

Originally from Graythwaite near Newby Bridge, Harriet's *Beyond That Last Blue Mountain* mentions her early life growing up in the Lake District, the late, great former Abbot Hall Art Gallery director, Mary Burkett - who was a huge influence in her life - but mainly tells of her life as a young woman living and travelling alone without financial or practical support in the north west frontier of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Bosnia and Syria during the years of conflict between 1982-1995.

Harriet will give a talk and power point presentation at the Wells Festival of Literature this month and will be signing copies of her highly regarded book at Waterstones book shop at Kendal at 2pm on Friday, November 16.

The book has been



Harriet Sandys will be at Waterstones on November 16

incredibly well received: BBC chief international correspondent, Lyse Doucet, describes it as "an extraordinary journey by an extraordinary woman,

beautifully told and bravely lived. Storytelling at its best."

Until she was 18, Harriet lived a sheltered and rural life in the Lake District.

Her parents hoped that, after leaving boarding school and "doing the Season", she would meet and marry a suitable young man. Instead, after learning how to restore oriental carpets, she travelled alone to Pakistan and see for herself the plight of thousands of displaced Afghan refugees.

Determined to do something about their dire situation, Harriet set up a small silk weaving project for illiterate Turkmen refugees and was sent by UNESCO to Mazar-i-sharif to work with Afghanistan's last remaining silk ikat weavers.

During those years she was arrested by the KHAD, narrowly missed being blown up, survived acute bacterial meningitis in a Kabul hospital under bombardment, and rescued an abandoned pi-dog puppy who became

her devoted companion.

At the end of the first Gulf War she travelled with the Peshmerga in the newly-liberated Iraqi Kurdistan, then in 1994 she joined a group of unemployed builders and decorators driving convoys of food and aid from Croydon to the Muslim enclaves in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Harriet's story is a phenomenal adventure which she captures in compelling and well crafted prose.

*Beyond That Last Blue Mountain* is published by Medina Publishing, Surbiton, Surrey.

