

A brief account of a 69 year old, very special, Heacham man....

A account of things true, important, frivolous but above all very Michael... all as remembered by his family and many many, friends.

Michael Colin Rumens arrived to the unsuspecting village of Heacham on 20th June 1947, Born and bred in Meadow Road, he was the only son of Winifred and Joseph Rumens. Winnie had met Joseph when they were both in the army stationed at Reading, where Joseph happened to come from... it was that far off influence that caused Mike to support Reading Football Club all his life. Of great coincidence is that the day Mike was taken from us was exactly 19 years, to the day, on which his father Joseph had passed to the other side.

Growing up in Heacham, Michael had an active social life, playing football, tennis, table tennis and cricket. The local speedway team became a large and important part of his life too, he regularly contributed towards writing the programme for each meeting, and even ran the junior team, travelling many miles to support them wherever and whenever they were racing.

In 1965 he joined an accounting firm, where being the extremely fortunate man that Michael was, he met his future wife, Caroline Welham. In 1970 he left to join Associated British Ports in King's Lynn, where he remained until he semi-retired in 2005. Whilst there, he belonged to the British Docks Transport Quiz Team, (quizzes, yes another of Mike's passions)... and that British Docks Transport Quiz Team, took part in those famous 'Top of the Town' quizzes which on occasion featured on the majestic Radio Norfolk and made every penny of the licence fee worthwhile. In 2005 he became Heacham Club Charity Administrator, a post that Mike retained until June of this year.

He married Caroline in February 1971, 45 years ago... thus uniting the Rumens family with the much larger Welham family. Caroline and Michael's own family grew in March 1973, when Michelle was born, followed by Kevin in May 1975. Their house in School Road was always filled with laughter and children, particularly when Caroline became a professional child-minder and Playgroup leader. Mike endured of all that quite happily, although rumour has it that he loved to growl at the children to make them think otherwise!

Michelle married Jonathan in 1996 and now they have two beautiful daughters of their own, Georgia and Elena. Kevin married Lisa in 2000, and they have three lovely children, a son Joseph, and daughters Chloe and Alex.

Mike was most affectionately known as 'Grumpy Gramps' by all of his beloved grandchildren, a name which requires no explanation for all of us gathered here who knew him well! His new best friend in the family was Pablo the Spanish water dog, a fabulous big ball of brown fluff that he dog sat for when the family came home to Heacham for visits.

Throughout his married life Mike continued to be an integral part of the Heacham community.

During his late teens and early twenties Mike helped those two village stalwarts, Mary Harrod and Tom Hall, with the Heacham Youth Club, in those days held weekly in Heacham's Public Hall; such dedication saw Mike eventually train to be a youth leader.

He helped to raise funds to keep the Youth Club going even when funding was withdrawn from Heacham, by the wise county council (forgive my cynicism Michael), and instead the money was sadly channelled into a purpose built Youth Centre at Hunstanton. When the Youth Club finally closed the residue of the money that had been raised, was put into a trust for children of Heacham that were in need, so began the Heacham Youth Trust Fund. Appropriately, in his later years, Mike became a Trustee of that very same Charity, and eventually took on the onerous duties of chairman.

In 1991 Mike and myself stood beside the bowling green at the Social Club and later with the help of Aubrey Thomas, formulated the idea of the organisation that came to be known as the Mardlers (christened that wonderful name by another of our late and well remembered members, Graham 'Bro' Page) and so came into being that group of 'twelve men and true' who tirelessly began a monthly pursuit of Norfolk culture'.

Early on Mike and I stipulated that the members must have been born in the Smithdon and Brothercross Hundred, and home delivered by Heacham's wonderful and almost famous district nurse and mid-wife, Nurse Johnson. Realising that it might be a tad difficult to fill the ranks of passing members, we loosened the rules a little. The Mardlers exists simply by each member arranging a monthly meeting of interest, often helped along by a meal but always helped by a flagon of ale. Mike's meetings were always different, always interesting, always fun...

Twice a year the partners of the Mardlers are honoured by an invitation, one an evening where the Ladies would be looked after and cared for, and the other occasion, a summer barbeque. When Mike and I came up with the idea of the organisation, we thought that the Mardlers might only last a few years, a few years of providing some amusing and entertaining times for friends. Those few years were so successful and so much fun, that we celebrated our 25th Anniversary this year. Indeed so fond was Mike of Mardling that he requested he be buried in his Mardler's shirt... under his Reading Football shirt of course! And in tribute to Mike, the Mardlers are here today dressed just as he is... without the Reading Shirt of course

At home, and in his spare time, (what spare time you may ask?!) Michael was a man with many interests, particularly the history of all sorts of things.... Local Churches, Ordnance Survey Maps, the whole of Norfolk, the Doomsday book and Railways... just some of his many interests.

He loved tending his vegetable garden... from which produce would be safely gathered in, and which he and his beloved grandchildren would traditionally prepare together for Sunday lunch. And it was there in the vegetable garden that he would talk to the birds as he hand fed them, particularly the blackbirds namely, Myfanwy, Ethel, Stavelly and Basil... who trotted up to him to engage him in conversation!

Michael was a man of routine... this was particularly evident when he worked in King's Lynn and consequently did the weekly supermarket shop. Every Thursday Michael could be seen racing (well it was racing to Michael) a trolley around that supermarket known as Sainsbury's, with his list in his hand, and no time to stop. So single minded was he that if an item wasn't on his list, it simply did not get into the trolley.

On telling Caroline, one time, how lucky she was that Michael did her shopping, Caroline replied with gusto, 'well... it is **our** shopping and **he does** eat most of it!' The Thursday shopping tradition continued until the very end, the shops may have varied, but on a Thursday a shopping he would go, and, whether she liked it or not, in the latter years so did Caroline!

Michael held his friends very dear and they too were especially fond of him. He was a larger than life character and enormous fun to be with – well most of the time!! He particularly enjoyed holidaying with John & Maureen, particularly sightseeing and walking in this country and abroad. This was when he got to enjoy his train journeys, and to use his extensive and honed skills in map reading.

Mike also had great fun when many of his friends went on holiday together, whether in a hotel or a cottage. The holidays where his close friends were together in a cottage, or sometimes a villa, or even a chateau, were particularly good times. Mike was, of course, and quite naturally, great at supermarket shopping in whatever country, as you can no doubt well imagine. Michael made sure that there was a good selection of red wine, cheese and port in the trolley – the port would later be always passed to the left of course, Michael would have it no other way- Such a selection of fine wines and wholesome foods, led to many a lovely and long relaxing evening of chatter, perhaps even mardling, punctuated with much laughter..... great memories, memories that will remain with all those friends forever.

Mike will not be remembered as a quiet individual, his nature dictated that everything he did was undertaken with fuss and bluster. He was generous with his time, helping and supporting many individuals and organisations, whether sporting or social, in his village, his Heacham....

He was a font of knowledge on very many subjects, offering his opinion whether, or not, it had been sought. It was important to him that everyone, new or old, were welcomed and included in village life. He was always involved with the Sports and Social Club, helping and participating in the Carnival, village Fete, as well as many sports. He enjoyed organising 5 a side football competitions for both adults and children, helping with the Heacham Magpies, and to this end, he also trained as a football referee.

Michael also very much enjoyed playing Bowls for the Social club team and latterly decided when active participation was no longer required, decided instead to watch his old team mates play. For recognition of his 'outstanding services to the Heacham Club Charity' Mike was awarded Honorary Lifetime membership in 2015; a rare honour bestowed on but a few.

Mike raised funds for many organisations by arranging and writing quizzes using his knowledge of all things weird and wonderful to confound the participants.... If anyone would dare to question his knowledge... if there were any arguments about the correct answer, (woe betide them) Michael would simply refer them to his 'rule number one'..... **the question master is always right!!!**

MICHAEL COLIN RUMENS - 20.06.1947 - 30.09.2016

Eulogy as read at the Funeral service by Andrew.

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I can picture Mike right now Listening at the conclusion of this almost inadequate tribute to him..... He almost certainly would have said

there you have it! 69 years squeezed into a few minutes

Yes, that would have been Mike.... just before throwing his pen across the paper, and forcefully rocking back in his chair.

A life well spent..... thank you Michael Colin Rumens.... thank you.

(Eulogy as read at the Funeral service by Andrew, at St Mary's Church, Church Lane, Heacham, King's Lynn PE31 7HJ on Tuesday 18th October 2016)

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