

Mike was born to Douglas and Doreen Turner in Birmingham on the 18th of May 1945. Doug had been in the Royal Engineers during the war so on his return the family initially lived with his parents in Regent Street, Willenhall. When Mike was little he was already very inquisitive and not content to sit at home. One time his mum said you are absolutely not allowed to go to the football without an adult, and he promised to obey. The next day in the paper there was a photo of one of the goals and there he was in the crowd right behind the goal, caught on camera!! Despite these occasional mishaps, Doreen doted on him. Doug was a huge jazz fan and a regular at the Trumpet pub in Bilston. Initially he could not persuade his son to share his passion but eventually Mike succumbed and not only enjoyed listening to jazz but taught himself the clarinet, and later the soprano and alto saxophone.

Mike was schooled locally at Little London School. He passed the 11plus and went on to Willenhall Comprehensive where he met John Southall, his lifelong partner in crime. It was here Mike's passion for jazz really took off. During his sixth form years he would travel regularly to Birmingham with friends to go to concerts – they saw many visiting American musicians, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Louis Armstrong himself. He and friend Derek Burns even dodged off school one day so they could hitchhike down to London for a gig. Derek said 'It was a great time – we were living for the music'.

One of Mike's A level French teachers maintained he was his best ever French student, so it was inevitable that he should go on to study French at degree level at King's College, London. He was to remain a great Francophile all his life, to the extent that even the French thought he was French.

In 1966, Mike and Derek spent 3 months in America. They spent the majority of their time in New York, working during the week and digging out jazz joints on the weekend. They felt compelled to get to New Orleans one way or another and travelled on the Greyhound buses, not always having enough money for food, and stopping off en route to stay with Mike's uncle Geoff. Geoff immediately made Derek and Mike get a haircut. When they finally arrived in New Orleans they were awe inspired to find themselves in the birthplace of traditional jazz. This trip started a lifelong love for travelling, and an interest in all things American.

While at King's, Mike chose to do his year abroad in Annemasse on the French border near Geneva. He was attracted to the city because of the thriving jazz scene. This sojourn not only led to joining a jazz band but also to Monika, who was studying at Geneva university and going out with the piano player in the band. Having met Mike she decided to change instruments to clarinet and sax. She also had a desire to go hitchhiking to Greece and identified Mike as a suitable chaperone. The couple continued to travel throughout their relationship – only last August they travelled by train through Switzerland backpacking and staying in Youth Hostels.

After his year abroad Mike came back to the UK to finish his studies. When he graduated he returned to Geneva for a year to work. However, this wasn't all plain sailing because, as a result of his employer not completing the correct paperwork, he got deported so had to live in France with Monika nipping over the border to see him. On the day he got the permit he crossed the border at 1 minute after midnight.

Mike and Monika decided to settle in the Midlands and were married in 1969. Mike found a job teaching french at Northcote Comprehensive. Katharine came along in 1974 when they were living in Appleby Magna. Isabelle followed 3 years later. By this time Mike was teaching in Burton-on- Trent at Abbot Beyne and playing in the Mardi Gras jazz band. His colleagues remember him as a loyal and dedicated teacher always having the best interests of the pupils at heart. His pupils probably remember him as smelling strongly of garlic, as they would often remark on this to him. The family moved to Lichfield in 1978. Mike followed in his father's footsteps and became a regular fixture at the Trumpet, playing on Friday nights with his band Swing Parade. Good friend and talented trombone player Brian Casson has been playing with Mike for over 30 years, the last time being at the Trumpet just before Christmas. Brian said he played a storm.

Mike was sensible enough to take early retirement from teaching 11 years ago which enabled him to devote himself to his music full-time. Throughout his musical career he has enjoyed playing with many different musicians, and he was thrilled to have the opportunity to play alongside heroes such as Bruce Adams, Alan Barnes, Humphrey Littleton, Wally Fawkes, Tommy Saunders and Roy Williams. Latterly he joined the Old Fashioned Love Band and travelled all over the country playing at different venues.

Katharine & Isabelle told me that 'their hearts burst with pride when they think of dad'. When he was ill they said I love you to each other all the time and he cried a lot and said 'I'm soft as shit just like me mum', and he was.

It's clear that his daughters idolise their dad. They see him as a great role model and have always tried to live their lives the way he did – with a laid back and positive attitude, enjoying all the good things – spending time with friends, enjoying great food and drink and good music, and travelling the world. He had the right perspective on life, feeling that there was no point getting het up on trivia. As long as he could have a beer and listen to some jazz, he was happy. If he was out gigging they would wait for him to come back late in the evening and then the laughter would start. He often had new jokes to share, and always made them laugh when he had that bemused look on his face. The picture on the order of service has 'that look'. It was taken in Marrakech. Mike and Monika got on very well with Isi's partner Stuart's parents, Eric and Liz, so much so that they invited them, together with Isi and Stu, Katharine, her friend Ashley, Stu's sister Jane and her friend Ali, to Morocco to celebrate their 60th birthdays. It was a truly magical holiday. Now Mike is with Liz, Stu's mum, who very sadly passed away in 2006.

The family have been overwhelmed with the kindness and support they have received from Mike's friends and colleagues since Mike died so suddenly. The one thing that has struck them is that people have used the same recurring words to describe Mike; he was kind, modest, gentle and got along with everyone. His dry sense of humour and his laidback attitude to life resulted in lots of laughs. He was loved, respected and admired. He was, in short, 'a nice bloke,' who will be greatly missed.