

MICHAEL JOHN STEPHENSON (53-62)
8TH JULY 1943 – 7TH JULY 2020

Mike was born in Gateshead on 8th July 1943 to his mother Nora and his dad Harry.

His first school was Musgrave, Low Fell, where his Auntie Vera was headmistress.

He attended the RGS 1953-1962.

His first job was to train as an actuary with Friends Provident in Dorking Surrey, but he never actually qualified – I think he found it too exciting!!!!

He worked for IBM in Newcastle after his return to the Northeast.

We met at Moor Hall, Cookham, Berkshire where we were both attending a course on ITC computers in 1965 - he in Systems Analysis and me in Computer Programming. Mike was working for ICT at the time (later ICL).

We got engaged in July 1966 and married in March 1967. We lived in a rented house in Co Durham. I'm from Bradford originally.

Mike joined Honeywell computers in Leeds in 1968 and we moved to Barwick in Elmet – a little village east of Leeds - until 1971 when he was transferred to their headquarters in Brentford. We lived in Beaconsfield to start with and after 10 years we moved to Gerrards Cross in 1981 and finally to Stoke Poges in 1996. Our oldest daughter Joanne was born in October 1969 and our second daughter Nina was born in November 1975.

Mike started his own business in computer financing with 2 friends - their first office was in Acton and later they moved to Paddington. This company was sold and Mike and Iain went their own way to start another company based in Slough doing similar things, but the computer business was rapidly changing. Mike retired in the mid 2000s.

Mike loved sport, especially Cricket and Tennis. We attended test matches at Lords and also in Australia, and we were lucky enough to attend the Centre Court at Wimbledon, most notably the 1985 Men's Singles final when a fresh-faced 17 year old Boris Becker became the youngest and first unseeded player to win the Championship.

Mike was always a fan of football – especially Newcastle United and Sunderland – and he often said it was unusual to support both teams as they were seen as rivals.

In 1994 we took our first cruise - having being persuaded by friends to join them – and then he was hooked. We sailed from Athens to Venice where our oldest daughter joined us to celebrate her 25th birthday.

After that it was full steam ahead. Never on a big ship – we always said small is beautiful – visiting all kinds of destinations.

We were lucky enough to travel to most parts of the World by sea and by air – but never managed mainland China or New Zealand. His favourite destination was The Galapagos Islands which we visited with our daughters when Joanne was having a gap year with a friend in Central and South America. One of the most moving visits we made was to Gallipoli where we visited the battlefields of WW1. Near to home we have a graveyard where so many of these brave soldiers were buried after they'd been sent on hospital ships to England.

For the last 30+ years we also made an annual trip to the beautiful island of Sark where we could just relax and take things easy. We met many lovely local people there and the best chocolates in the world are made on the island.

It was 2 years ago whilst on Sark that things took off with Mike. He turned yellow which meant he had jaundice. Tests at home showed that there was a tumour affecting his bile duct. After chemo and then surgery in March 2019 we thought he had won the battle, but scans in February 2020 showed us that the tumour had returned. Unfortunately his body wasn't strong enough to withstand the brutal form of chemo that he was put on and it was decided to withdraw treatment in April this year. He showed great fortitude and never complained about his lot.

Apart from proudly giving Joanne away in November 1998 he also acted as proud "father of the bride" on 2 other occasions. One on World Cup Final Day in July 1966 when England were playing Germany at Wembley. His friend Robin (who wasn't a football fan so hadn't realised the significance of the day) was marrying a French lady whose father was unable to travel to England, so he was doing the honours. To say that his "father of the bride" speech at five to three was rather short is an understatement. The second occasion was when his cousin David married a lovely Chinese lady from Jamaica. Her father was unable to make the trip too.

He was the proud grandfather to George (15) and Isabel (14) who are the children of Joanne.

Mike passed away on 7th July 2020 at home in Stoke Poges. It was one day before his 77th birthday.

Mike was the big brother of Bryan Peter Stephenson who passed away in May 2016 in Sydney Australia, who also attended the RGS.