

**Mick Mockler RIP**  
**Funeral Mass**  
**Rathdowney Church**  
**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Michael (Mick) Mockler, Kilcoran, Rathdowney, Co. Laois. April 12th 2021. Peacefully at home in the presence of his family. Sadly missed by his daughters **Maureen**, Janet, Helen, and his son **Michael**, grandchildren **Lauren**, Ashleigh, **Georgia**, Breeze, Tommy, Harvey, **Faye**, Jack, Charlotte, Matthew and James, great-grandchildren, nephews, nieces, extended family, relatives and friends.

**Sisters: Eileen and Tess** (Brother Jimmy and Frances in Chicago)

In the last week and particularly in the last few days I have had an opportunity to reflect a little on the life of the man we honour with Christian burial today. My reflections have been informed by the conversations I've had with his great friend Jimmy Maher and most especially with Maureen and Michael. I know that Michael has a poem he wants to share with us later in honour of his dad but as I thought of Mick and his very full and interesting life I too was reminded of some poetry. The first of two poems I want to read for you is one which may be familiar to many of you. It is simply called; *The Dash*

## **The Dash**

by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak  
at the funeral of a friend.  
He referred to the dates on the tombstone  
from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth  
and spoke of the following date with tears,  
but he said what mattered most of all  
was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time  
that they spent alive on earth.  
And now only those who loved them  
know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own,  
the cars...the house...the cash.  
What matters is how we live and love  
and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.  
Are there things you'd like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left  
that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough  
to consider what's true and real  
and always try to understand  
the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger  
and show appreciation more  
and love the people in our lives

like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect  
and more often wear a smile,  
remembering that this special dash  
might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read,  
with your life's actions to rehash...  
would you be proud of the things they say  
about how you spent YOUR dash?

The two dates which may in time appear on Mick's tombstone  
are the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1935 and the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2021. In  
between those two dates is a little dash which for Mick  
represents almost 86 years of life

*"What matters is how we live and love  
and how we spend our dash."*

Well how did Mick Mockler spend his dash? Many of you who  
knew him a lot longer and a lot better than I, could answer that  
question very well.

In so many ways the story of Mick's life reflects the story of so  
many Irish men and women born in Ireland in the early  
decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mick was the first of seven children  
born to Michael Mockler and Julia Fogarty of Lisduff. By October 1937  
just two years later there would be two more Mockler boys, Phil on the  
12<sup>th</sup> of September 1936 and Jimmy in October '37 . Lisduff where the  
Mocklers were born was on the border of two parishes, two counties and  
even two different dioceses. While I know Phil was baptised in Grogan I  
could find no baptismal record in our parish for Mick. I assume he was

baptised in Clonmore and therefore in Co. Tipperary. That might just account for Mick's life-long loyalty and love of The Premier County and he will leave this church today on his final journey to the sounds of the anthem from The Premier County.

As with his brothers Mick was to begin his education in Clonmore and later with The Christian Brothers in Templemore. I'm not sure that Mick remembered his experience with the Brothers in Templemore as being all that Christian however, and soon his teenage thoughts and dreams focused on new emerging opportunities across the water in Great Britain. Economically, there were not many opportunities locally and in many ways rural Ireland was a somewhat restrictive, and some might even say oppressive time and place for a young person to live in. At the age of 17 Mick made the first of countless journeys on the Irish Sea. These were post war years and there were opportunities for those willing to work to find good jobs literally rebuilding the infrastructure of a country damaged badly by war. Mick went initially to live with his Aunt Kitty in the London area. He had no difficulty finding work but after a few years Mick was called up or conscripted for National Military Service. The four years in the army were to change his life. The main reason why so many young men were conscripted in the early to mid 1950's was to respond to an emergency in The Middle East. Mick was one of thousands who were sent to help defend the Suez Canal under threat from nationalists in Egypt. When on leave Mick was based in the army barracks in Suffolk. On a night off Mick and his friends went to a local dance and it was there that he met a local girl Janet Abbot. Mick and Janet were married in 1960 and they were to have four children, Maureen, Janet, Helen and Michael. Initially Mick and Janet lived in Peckham and later moved to Tooting. After his military service Mick returned to the building industry. He was joined by his brother Phil and they worked together as sub-contractors. Later with another Irishman the company, Mockler and O'Connor was established.

By any measurement, Mick Mockler's life in England was a very positive one. He achieved great success in his working life. He not only found

employment but also went on to create employment. He helped others to get the start that he had gotten when he first arrived as a teenager all those years ago. In particular he looked out for fellow Irish people. His long friendship with you Jimmy was born when he reached out to you and in turn you have been a great support to Mick and his family since he came back to live in Rathdowney and particularly in the final weeks of Mick's life. In England Mick also experienced great love, He loved and he was loved. He enjoyed the love of family life and like so many he experienced the Joyful, Glorious but also the Sorrowful Mysteries that come with family life. Mick enjoyed the fruits of his labour and he relished the freedom that gave him to enjoy his golf whenever and wherever in the world he wished to play, drive the car he wanted or holiday in the places he loved.

But despite all that personal and professional achievement, Ireland was always going to be in Mick's DNA. Every year he would bring his family home to Ireland and to Daly Terrace where his parents had moved in from Lisduff. That annual pilgrimage across the Irish Sea brought to mind a second poem. It is written by a Cork man who like Mick spent most of his adult life in London. It describes very well the feeling on an Irish person in England coming home. It is called *Westering Home* . All of us who have made that journey across England and towards either Holyhead or Fishguard will identify with these lines.

## Westering Home by Bernard O Donohue

Though you'd be pressed to say exactly where  
It first sets in, driving west through Wales,  
Things start to feel like Ireland. It can't be  
The chapels with their clear grey windows,

Or the buzzards menacing the scooped valleys.  
In April, have the blurred blackthorn hedges

Something to do with it? Or possibly  
The motorway, which seems to lose its nerve  
Mile by mile. The houses, up to a point,

With their masoned gables, each upper window  
A raised eyebrow. More, though, than all of this,  
It's the architecture of the spirit;  
The old thin ache you thought that you'd forgotten –

More smoke, admittedly, than flame;  
Less tears than rain. And the whole business  
Neither here nor there, and therefore home.

That last line is an extraordinary one. *'Neither here nor there, and therefore home'* Does it say something very profound about the Irish emigrant experience. You can live a very full and successful life in one place and yet a big part of your heart is somewhere else, therefore you are neither here or there but you are still at home. There is an old joke which says: 'an Irish boomerang doesn't come back, it just sings about coming back' Mick proved that joke to be wrong, at least for him

When Mick decided sixteen years ago to come back to Ireland to live, he first settled in County Wexford, near to Rosslare, near to the port that was the gateway back to England. He did not immediately come to live in Rathdowney. In a sense he was neither here nor there and yet he was at home. Seven years ago Mick did come back to this community, bought a house close to the golf club and close to Jack and Phil. He visited both of his brothers almost every day and the Golf Club became another home. I was struck by the number of people who left messages on RIP.ie commented about how they knew him from the Golf Club.

So that is something of Mick Mockler's story and I hope we have honoured his life in some little way. I cannot speak with any knowledge or certainty about Mick's relationship with his God. Last week, through his friend Jimmy, Mick asked if I would come to say a prayer with him. He knew his journey was coming to a conclusion. We had a good chat, we celebrated The Sacrament of The Sick, I anointed him and I prayed a prayer we have used here almost every day in the last year:

*Dear God, my guide and protector, fear of the future gnaws at me. Thoughts of what might happen may disrupt my inner peace. I long to have a safe and secure life, full of joy and well being. Help me to recognise my fears, to see how they push me around and shove me into dead-end corners. Do not let them have control over me. Protect me from all those concerns that threaten to overwhelm me when I think about this situation. I give myself and all my worries into your wise and merciful care. I entrust to your loving heart my anxiety and my weariness. You are near, guiding my life. May this truth hold me fast. Amen*

Mick , after so many journeys in your life you begin your final journey today. Like to final words of that poem you are in a sense again, neither here nor there. You are however Going Home. May your soul rest in Peace.

