

Mike Kingsland (1944-2026)

Michael John Kingsland was born on 24 December 1944 in Newick, the son of Herbert John (Jack) and Kathleen. The family then moved to Uckfield when his father took a job in the town and Mike lived in Uckfield for the rest of his life.

On leaving school Mike started work in the timber trade. His first job was based in Sheffield Park, then for many years he worked in Croydon, driving up every day. He eventually took a redundancy package in the 1990s after which he effectively retired.

In the 1960s Mike played in whist drives in Uckfield several times a week, partnering his friend Peter where possible. Once he stopped playing whist Mike started taking lessons to play bridge.

Although he lived in Uckfield he played most of his bridge at Tunbridge Wells, initially at the West Kent club, before it merged with two others and become part of Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club. He did play occasionally in Sussex competitions and was part of the winning Sussex league teams three times between 1976 and 1987.

Mike started playing at the West Kent club on Tuesday and Friday evenings in the 1970s and continued to play on these days for 50 years, in later years as part of Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club. He won the cup presented for the most local points scored on a Tuesday no less than 15 times.

Mike played with many partners at the West Kent club but by the late 1970s he was playing regularly with Terry Goldsmith and they won nine Kent cups between 1978 and 1986, as listed below. Altogether Mike won 22 Kent cups between 1976 and 1991, after which he did not play in so many competitions.

Many of the cups were won with Terry, Jeremy Willans, Gerald Soper and Colin Wilson who all started playing at the West Kent club around the same time and had interchangeable partnerships. They played as a team of five in the Spring Foursomes in 1984 and reached the final of the Punchbowl which they lost on a two board play off after a tie.

He also played regularly in EBU congresses in the 1980s & 1990s. He won the Harold Poster Cup in the Brighton Summer Congress in 1980 playing with Jeremy Willans. Another cup he won was the Spring Bank Holiday teams in 1986. He also had many other high finishes, for example third place in the Lewis Levy Cup at the Autumn Congress in 1986 playing with Jeremy Willans.

The Jersey Congress was another competition Mike enjoyed and he played for quite a few years in the 1980s and 1990s winning the Swiss teams in 1988 and 1993.

When Covid restrictions were put in place in 2020 all face-to-face bridge ceased so Mike stopped playing and he did not take it up again once the restrictions were lifted.

In later years Mike enjoyed many holidays to Malaysia and surrounding countries. He would travel out early in the year, normally in January, and return six weeks or so later. He managed to visit some of the places where the timber he dealt with was shipped to England. While out in Malaysia he could also participate in one of his other hobbies, philately. He was particularly interested in stamps from Malaysia.

Another interest of Mike was history in particular local Sussex history and also steam trains. He was a member of Uckfield & District Preservation Society (now Uckfield Heritage) and Sussex Archaeological Society. He had a substantial collection of local history books.

Mike died on 20 February 2025 in hospital where he had been treated for bowel cancer.

A list of all the Kent cups won by Mike are set out below.

1976	Clark Bowl			
1977	Arnold Plate	Len Cumbers	Peggy Palmer	Paul Dingli
1978	Owl Cup	Terry Goldsmith	Tony Price	Mary Betts
1978	Phillimore Cup	Terry Goldsmith		
1982	Arnold Cup	Terry Goldsmith	Colin Wilson	Jeremy Willans
1982	Pearson Cup	Colin Wilson	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1983	Arnold Plate	Terry Goldsmith	Colin Wilson	Jeremy Willans Gerald Soper
1983	Hunter Homines	Terry Goldsmith		
1983	Pearson Cup	Colin Wilson	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1984	Birkle Bowl	Terry Goldsmith	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1984	George Griffiths	Terry Goldsmith	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1984	Pearson Cup	Colin Wilson	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1984	Invicta Cup	Gerald Soper		
1985	Pearson Cup	Colin Wilson	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1985	Brook Cup	Terry Goldsmith	Colin Wilson	Jeremy Willans
1986	Pearson Cup	Colin Wilson	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1986	Birkle Bowl	Terry Goldsmith	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1987	Pearson Cup	Colin Wilson	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans & others
1988	Arnold Plate	Colin Wilson	Gerald Soper	Jeremy Willans
1988	Invicta Cup	Jeremy Willans		
1989	Invicta Cup	Jeremy Willans		
1989	Owl Cup	Jeremy Willans	Gerald Soper	Terry Goldsmith
1991	Arnold Plate	Barry Juxon	Anne Mills	Rod Oakford David Woods