



A Celebration of the Life of
Tim
(Timothy John Maskell)

20th January 1961 – 11th May 2019

Wealden Crematorium, Horam
31st May 2019, 10am

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The Tribute

Tim was born at home in Rotherfield on the 20th January 1961, the younger child of Margaret and Fred Maskell. Fred was a builder, among other things – having multiple careers and jobs is something that seems to run in the Maskell family – and he built a house for the family in Crowborough which they moved to when Sandra was eleven and Tim seven. Tim went to primary school in Rotherfield and on to Beacon in Crowborough, leaving at 16 to begin his varied career.

As a young man, Tim was very involved in martial arts and running. He did two London Marathons (his fastest time being 3 hours 15 minutes), the Brighton Triathlon, and the astonishing South Downs 100 mile run. He did that one twice too; once, ironically, for the Anthony Nolan Trust, a charity which works in the area of leukaemia and stem cell transplantation. He also did the Lewes to Newhaven raft race, dressed in a Wee Willy Winky outfit – Sandra remembers standing on the river bank throwing things at the raft.

He trained as an engineer, but found that he was not so keen on the hands on stuff, so went into engineering administration, working for the Engineering Council. This took him round the country, training and delivering lectures, and encouraging young people to take up engineering as a career. From there he moved to Sussex Enterprise as Head of Business Development. Then, in one of those dramatic changes of direction he was capable of, he moved on again to be marketing manager of Brighton Bears Basketball Club. And then, he retrained to work with people with autism and learning disabilities, going on to work in two care facilities. His final job was with Headway East Sussex. He started there in early 2018 as an Outreach Support Worker, working with adults with acquired brain injury - a job he loved and had hoped to return to. At the same time he had also enrolled on a part-time Post-Graduate course in psychology and hypnotherapy – so another transformation was definitely planned.

And somehow between those various activities, he managed to spend some time as a dustman, a cleaner, and delivering Thompson directories. It was because he'd done this kind of role as well, that he was comfortable interacting with everyone and anyone, and was such a special person.

Had Tim lived through a full working life, how many more careers would he have managed, I wonder? In everything he did he was well-respected, and he

threw himself in to learning about his chosen area, as his various degrees and certificates make clear. Eventually, though, his thirst for a new challenge would drive him to change direction – no wonder one of his degrees was a Masters in Change Management.

He met Hilary, who he married in 1992, when he was 31, becoming a new dad for David and Samantha. They bought a house in Maresfield, where Luke was born and grew up. Many of Luke's memories of his Dad at that time are of playing football together, going running with him first thing in the morning, cycling across Devon and going for long walks.

Luke will now talk to us.

I never could have expected to write my father's funeral elegy aged only 23. All of us in this room will have our own varying weird, wonderful, and wayward memories of my Dad, but amongst all of these at least will be absolute: Dad's death was untimely, too soon, and altogether too quick to feel real. I can, however, take some comfort in the thought that Dad definitely lived more lives than many.

As Felicity has mentioned, Dad embarked on far more careers in his lifetime than could be considered rational; who could conceive a man occupying roles as the managing director of a basketball team before becoming a care worker for autistic patients in the space of only a few decades? He also lived more lives than many in the way that he simply did not need to sleep! Right up to the end in hospital he woke half the ward up to give me a travel checklist for the Monaco Grand Prix! And Dad lived more lives than many in the way that he would live vicariously through others.

Whilst his problems often became the burden of others, in recompense, the problems and ambitions of friends, family, and colleagues very often became his problems too. I have heard from a few people today how he inspired them to follow their dreams and I can certainly attest to that in regards to his support to my career as an actor.

Dad could be downright dizzying with some of his decisions and that's where he and I at times departed, but I think the wacky decisions of this wacky man were ultimately born of the incomprehensibly full life my Dad strived to live: He behaved differently around different people

(don't we all), his life ambitions could change with the seasons, and his social standing in the world underwent many transmutations in even the short 23 years that I got to share with him, but through all his phases, the mood of the man, and ultimately the man himself, was the same. He was a positive, ambitious, and opportunistic being with whom all could find moments of connection. There is a lot about my Dad that I will do my absolute best to differ from! Getting cancer in my 50's is probably one of them. But it is his constant and relenting spirit that I will be celebrating today, and I would like to thank all in attendance, for allowing me the moment to do so.

Thank you

Thank you, Luke

Tim had what we can only call eclectic tastes in music. His Facebook page talks positively of Bananarama, The Pretenders, Lulu, and Fleetwood Mac, and even as a middle aged man, he was quite happy to go to Little Mix concerts on his own. The music you heard at the beginning was by George Ezra, who's concert was the last one that Tim went to. And, for a marathon runner, he had strangely indulgent taste in food. He enjoyed eating all kinds of sugary and fried stuff, which he called "filth" while wolfing it down.

Caroline and Tim met face to face on 12th June last year, at the Thomas a Beckett pub in Tarring, only a day or two after they had first made contact. They immediately knew that they had both found the person they wanted to be with, and they saw each other every single day for the rest of Tim's life. They moved in together in July, and were poised to begin a long life together.

But in August they flew to Edinburgh to see Luke's comedy sketch at the Edinburgh Fringe. As the plane landed, Tim was in real pain from what turned out to be an adrenal bleed. He spent most of his time in Edinburgh in hospital.

That collapse in Edinburgh was, sadly, only the start. In October, Tim was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, and told that he only had six to twelve months to live, unless he could get a bone marrow transplant. Even that would only give him a 10% chance of recovery, but 10% would have been better than nothing. However, the transplant never came, and Tim spent 19 of his remaining 27 weeks in hospital.

Did this daunt him? Well, you knew Tim, of course it didn't. Almost to the end, he would get up every day, dress himself presentably and use his Tom Ford aftershave. Then he would go to his "office" – a chair next to his bed, with a tray across his knees. There he studied for a Buddhist exam, which he passed, and read constantly, particularly anything which related to Luke's career. He did some admin, like ringing the landlord to save Caroline from having to do it. He also used his phone to get in touch with family members he had not seen for a long time, and with people he'd worked with during his varied careers. In particular, he became close to Sandra, who spent a lot of time with him in those last few weeks.

He was polite and positive to everyone he came into contact with in the hospital. When medical staff asked him "How are you today?" he'd respond "I'm fine, how are you?" – they probably expected something more illness-related as a response. His politeness did not, however, stop him muttering his mantra "For fucks sake" under his breath when he believed they were not getting it right according to his own plan.

Caroline was at his side pretty much all the time she wasn't at work, and he would WhatsApp and text her constantly when she wasn't there. On the last Sunday before he died, Caroline, Sandra and Luke were all in his room listening to the radio with him when Glenn Miller's *In the Mood* came on. Tim perked up and asked Caroline to dance. Caroline questioned this saying "But how can you dance?". Tim said, "We will soon, one day we will glide across the floor to this at home". Caroline took his hands in hers and they made out that they were dancing from his bedside. Tim's feet moved from side to side under the sheets. In their minds they were gliding across the floor already.

He loved having his feet rubbed in those last weeks – Caroline did it constantly, but Sandra, and Caroline's brother in law, Steve, were also recruited to give him that comfort. This was a considerably more pleasant job than it would have been a few months earlier, since the chemotherapy had done wonders for his fungal toe nails! And he indulged his strange love of "filthy" food almost to the end – his last proper meal was scampi and chips.

He fully recognised what was happening to him, as his ordering of his own flat-pack coffin demonstrates. It arrived at the flat addressed to Caroline – fortunately Tim had warned her to expect it! But despite this realism, he fought almost to the last, trying to defeat the inevitable, and wanting to live

that life that he and Caroline had expected to share. Caroline, Luke and Sandra were all with him when he finally let go

Caroline will now talk to us about Tim

As Felicity has mentioned, Tim and I met for the first time on 12th June 2018 in Worthing. We knew from that moment that we had both found that special one we had been looking for - Soulmates. We were inseparable from that point on, no matter what life through at us over the following 334 days.

Most of our short but intense life together involved living in the cancer bubble, but we didn't waste a single day. Every moment was about living, about encouraging each other, inspiring each other. Having gratitude and creating value in our own lives and the lives of those we met along the way.

A couple of days before Tim died he'd had a very unsettled day so we changed his regime that night. 6am the following morning I watched him as he woke, he was bright and breezy although very pale and tired. He smiled and thanked me for my support in improving his regime. I told him he'd had a good sleep and that he looked rested. He replied 'That's because I am loved'. He was.

When we had to be apart in the day we used phone, text, email and what's app to communicate.

So, I just want to share a brief glimpse into the love we shared, this is taken from a text conversation we had on Tuesday 19th March. It was early morning and I had left him at home in bed recovering from pneumonia, I wanted to let Tim know how much he meant to me that day as I went into town on errands.

Me: When I am with you I don't feel pain, I can live again. You are the light in a long dark room. You are the one I cried out for when days were long and nobody came. I am me when I am with you and love is an insufficient word. Love you darling.xxx

Tim immediately replied: Thank you darling ☺xxxxxxx❤️☺ I love you so much darling, you are my world. I'm so positive because of our deep love,

we have a long life together 🍷🍷🍷🍷❤️🍷

Followed 2 seconds later by: Darling, if you get time please can you get milk, crumpets, peanut butter & marmite 🍷🍷xxxxxxxxxxxx🍷

Tim you were perfect in every way. You were and always will be loved darling. Thank you for everything.

There's so much more I want to tell you about Tim, who he really was (to me)and you must have your own memories too. Please share your stories with me and make sure to introduce yourself if you don't already know me.

I have placed a bowl of emojis and a bowl of sunflower seeds next to the coffin. When we leave please feel free to take an emoji, you can stick it on the coffin or take it home with you. And please take a little bag of sunflower seeds, plant soon and watch them grow."