

Mike Walker

I am sorry to have to report that Mike Walker of Mutual Circle died on the evening of Sunday, 22nd February, at the QE hospital. He was 76. He had been admitted to hospital two weeks earlier after contracting an infection following a skiing holiday in the Alps. Mike was diagnosed as having pneumonia. He did not respond to antibiotics and, as part of his treatment, was soon placed under anaesthesia and on a ventilator. He does not appear to have ever regained consciousness. Mike was found to have a blood clot in one of his lungs and other blood clots in his brain. These complications probably contributed to his death.

As a young man Mike was a keen sportsman and had particular prowess at swimming, basketball and distance-running. After a (short ) career false-start as a schoolteacher, he became a lecturer at Birmingham University where he remained for many years until his retirement. He spent much of his time at the Department of Economics, but he also worked in the Department of Urban and Regional Studies, and in Transport studies. Although at the time of his death he had been officially retired for around 10 years, Mike still liked to stay in contact with the academic world, and maintained a particular interest in applied mathematics. He was an enthusiastic member, officer, and general factotum of Mutual Circle chess club for some 40 years. This season he served as Captain of our Div 5 team. He had played for this team (perhaps unwisely) only two days before his admission to hospital.

Mike had also been active in the Birmingham & District Chess League, serving as President (1995-96), Honorary General Secretary (2008-13), Chairperson of the Rules Committee for around 30 years, and as a valued member of various sub-committees. He occasionally represented the BDCL at English Chess Federation meetings. He had trained as a chess arbiter, and helped run several weekend chess congresses. He continued to participate in chess tournaments as a player, and in particular was a regular at the New Year tournament at Paignton. He was also a keen and regular skier, and a life-long supporter of West Ham football club.

We at Mutual will remember Mike fondly for his friendliness and kindness, his hard work, and his readiness to help out in any capacity - whether that be as chauffeur, team and tournament organiser, rules arbiter, or simply setter-up of the pieces for matches. His cheerful optimism with respect to the adjourned games of Mutual players was legendary!

Mike is survived by his wife, Frances, and by his son, two daughters and several grandchildren. I am sure that you will join me in wishing them well at this difficult time.

Chris Evans (secretary, Mutual Circle)

18/03/15