

One last great gig for Masher Myke

By Sally Burton

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A STANDING ovation, cheers and shouts formed the finale of a musician's funeral at Rotherham Crematorium.

The folk music fraternity (and others) turned out in force for the memorable send-off of Rawmarsh Masher Myke Barritt.

The crematorium was full as mourners filed in, many carrying guitar cases, after greeting each other in the sunshine for what became affectionately known as Myke's last gig.

But it was a great gig, Myke's partner Phoebe Taylor-Thorpe told the Times after a service led and sung by Myke's closest friends.

In a eulogy, Phoebe's sister Sylvia May said that although Myke's many musical talents did not appear to be inherited, he did share a love of model trains with his father and set up a business. His love of nature, too, and passion for environmental issues stemmed from within his family.

Sylvia could not even try to list all Myke's musical involvements over the years – there were simply too many. But, she added, he was a legend on the Rotherham and Sheffield music scene, most



MISSED: Myke Barritt.



Some of Myke's friends who gathered at Rotherham's Bridge Inn, for his wake following the June 30 funeral.

recently as one half of the famous Mashers, with his friend Richard Millard.

Myke was also in Earth Tales, which he formed at one of his annual June 27 birthday bashes.

But despite his death, the parties will continue, and next year will feature a song writing contest, as the Myke Barritt Trust Fund launches to encourage live musicians around South Yorkshire.

Myke's old friend Stella, who performed with him in Rhiannon, evoked smiles when she said: "I might have had a normal life if I had never met him".

Fields of Barley, one of Myke and Phoebe's special songs, was sung by duo Theresa and Doug.

They were followed by Karl Ampofo of Earth Tales, who lived close to Myke. He stood up to say his band mate was "both consistent and unpredictable" and would have wanted everyone to have fun at his funeral. He then raised a glass in his memory.

Long-standing friend and fan, singer Sue Sutherland, received great applause after singing her



TRIBUTE: Richard Millard, AKA Dickie Masher, leads the way.

personal tribute unaccompanied, before Richard Millard, aka Dickie Masher, closed the ceremony with a quip that this was the first gig Myke had not been late for, and the only one he had ever beaten him to.

Many joined in as he sang, before he invited all to stand and give Myke his last ovation.

A cult LP 'The Birds of Rhiannon' has been digitalised and will be on sale as an MP3 download.