

Mark Andrews

1958-2022

In early June, in sunlit Paganella in Italy, Mark Andrews jumped out of this world and into the next. In that moment the world lost a remarkable man who lived a life full of interest and rich with family, friends and experiences.

Mark was born in Cornwall but left England as fast as he could, remarking often that the only good things about the UK were three point plugs and The Cresta Run. He started his professional career in Aerospace but quickly moved to becoming a specialist driller, and in time the world's most successful sub-terranean oil fire extinguisher, working inter alia, in Siberia, Brazil and off many oil rigs. He was the man who first breached the UK / France channel tunnel, using a long drill to create a tiny aperture. When asked what momentous words he employed when he stuck his head through the breach the answer was "where are you French Bastards?".

Mark however had many more strings to his bow than his work. He was a passionate motorbike rider, with a collection of Ducati bikes sitting in every room of his house in the south of France. He competed in multiple TT Isle of Man races. He only signed work contracts in free fall, pen or paper flying into the abyss and usually taking three jumps to complete the exercise. He did more than 10,000 free fall jumps, and then, at the age of 56 base jumping found him. Between 2014 and 2023 he completed more than 600 base and wing suit jumps, off cliffs, bridges, out hotel suit windows and famously from around 150m off a hang glider over the lake in St. Moritz a few seasons ago, falling for about two seconds before his chute deployed just before he met the frozen surface, only to be admonished for his foolishness by an old Swiss lady walking her dogs.

Mark found The Cresta in the early 90s and was immediately bitten by it's unique combination of fun, friendship and fear. He rode in the colours of Cornwall, always with his red Mohican whizzing through the upper banks. He had 691 rides most of which were from Top, never worrying the winners, however he did compete in sixteen colours races even once achieving a rare, frightening and on this occasion successful fall at Brabazon in the 2014 Brabazon race. He loved the social aspects of our Club as much as the sporting, enthusiastic at lunch and dangerous in The Zoo bar teaching us drinking games learnt on oil rigs. Mark was such good company, kind, bright, positive and never without a smile on his face.

In July a number of Cresta friends gathered in Cornwall to say farewell to "The Driller" and to celebrate his life and to support the two people he loved most, his wife Mihaela and his son Joe.

In one Eulogy those famous words of Epictetus were quoted, "It is our attitude toward events, not events themselves, which we can control. Nothing is by its own nature calamitous - even death is terrible only if we fear it". Mark did not fear death. He died doing what he loved. Goodbye The Driller. We won't ever forget you."