

MAD MIKE

**Clubs all have their sporting legends,
Their heroes and their myths
Accounts of which may vary,
It depends on who you're with.
Inverloch is no exception,
We have our legends, too;
Most famous is the story
Of Michael Maurice Murphy -
Mad Mike - in all his glory,
His glory and his gas
And how he helped us win a flag,
Using tactics some thought unseemly,
Others - downright crass.**

**If you've heard of old Mad Mike
But not seen him in the flesh
Let us here describe him, briefly,
His image to refresh:
Mad Mike was somewhat oversize,
Smelly, rough and hairy,
And his beady eyes were yellow, like his teeth.
His manner dark and threatening
His glare was mean and scary,
His B.O. overpowering
And his hair looked like a wreath.**

**Mike bulged at pecs and biceps
And at the trousers, too
Some said he's made of concrete,
Or rocks, or coal or coke
And all agreed that Mad Mike's heart,
If he ever really had one
Was made of solid oak,
He was, in fact, a man apart;
A man you didn't mess with,
A really scary bloke.**

**Mike's appetite for food was said to be prodigious
His capacity for tucker was part of local lore;
He was known to eat a leg of beef and half a full-grown sheep
At a single, savage sitting,
Then look 'round, and ask for more.**

**But Mike's impressive eating
Had a side-effect - unfortunate,
He was known to break a lot of wind,**

And his timing was often quite importunate,
And in this thing he often sinned,
Not out loud, like your normal macho bloke,
Proud of their achievement - proud as Punch and Hades,
But sneaky, quiet and lethal
Like genteel and well-bred ladies.

Now what's this got to do with bowling
I can hear you think and ask.
Well, it explains, at least in part,
How Mad Mike, one Pennant finals day
Confronted and surmounted, a most demanding task.
It happened that Mad Mike was captain
Of the local premier team,
Which hoped to win another flag,
And great was their esteem.

But they were way behind the pace
When the tea-break bell rang out
And things were looking grim;
The way they had been bowling
They did not deserve to win;
Although half the game was still unplayed
They had all but given in.
But Mad Mike, the crafty devil
Had an ace tucked up his sleeve,
Just waiting to be played.

Rather than a cuppa - that's a cuppa tea and biscuit
Of which the others all partook,
Mad Mike went to the boy's room
Wherein he kept a secret pantry,
In the last place you'd think to look
If you went searching for his treasure.
He scoffed three cans of Heinz baked beans,
Baked beans in stuff that Heinz calls sauce,
And a jar of pickled onions, for even better measure
He washed this down with lots of beer,
His home-brewed stuff, of course,
It didn't have a name, this brew of rising fame,
And Mike strained this preparation,
Through cast-off jocks and socks
So it tasted much the same,
Or maybe even worse.

Mike emerged from there refreshed,
And back to his bowling rink,
Where the game was clearly slipping from their reach,
And he chose with care the moment
When the wind blew from the beach.
And without the slightest wink, or other indication,
He bent down low, as if to drive,

Then gave full and awesome vent
To a massive eructation,
Of the type which rhymes with Start,
Or even Horse and Cart
It was lightning without thunder,
Sustained and really vi'lent -
Starting way up top, and going right down under
But strangely almost silent
And the methane gas released,
Smelt like seaweed long deceased
And Mad Mike himself was filled with silent admiration,
Satisfaction, awe and wonder.

The person first affected was the other team's poor skip
Out there waiting unsuspecting on that fatal bowling rink
He gagged and choked and coughed, and looking up aloft
Cried "Ye gods - what the hell is that god-awful, rotten stink"?
And Michael, calm and quite detached
That cunning, mean old fox,
Said "It's not coming from the loo,
It's the smell of rotting seaweed,
Out there on Flat Rocks
And it only lasts an hour or so - never more than two,
In fact, it's often gone by six;
We locals really love that smell,
It's known as Invy Doctor, or sometimes Doctor Hoo
And there is no earthly illness that aroma cannot fix,
And if you lived down here at Inverloch,
You'd come to love it too"

The gentle breeze now carried
That evil smell along,
Where it struck the skips on all three rinks,
It dillie-dallied and it tarried,
And Mike, he silently kept adding,
He sang his silent song;
Mike kept his voice pitch-perfect,
And his instrument was tuned,
Yes - tuned to make no sound
No sound, but an awesome potent pong
And Mad Mike, the Master Blaster,
Just hummed and bummed along.

The rival skips were pallid, sick and quite unwell,
One was even seen to yodel in the sand,
So distressed was that poor man, with vomit on his lips,
Cried "That evil smell has brought me to the brink,
And no man should have to bowl in these impossible conditions:
We could all be dead by six o'clock,
I have never known such stink"

So they held a hasty conference

On the green that fateful day,
And decided to concede the match,
For they could see no other way;
Then sadly they departed, their tails between their legs,
Defeated by conditions far from normal,
And Mad Mike just wore a little smile
So sweet and enigmatic,
Like the famous Mona Lisa
Though slightly more informal,
As he watched the losing team depart,
His victory was emphatic.

Well, celebrations followed, running very late,
And Mike was hailed a hero
His reputation never higher,
'Tho it truly must be said,
That whilst treated like a king
With large amounts of beer and other treats and cheer,
They *did* lock him up securely
In the green-keeper's little shed,
To protect the rest of Invy's bowlers
From the risk of friendly fire,
So they watched it very closely,
And the food old Mike was fed,
No wish to add more fuel to that explosive fire.

So, please call at our little club,
If you visit Inverloch
And the flag that hangs there proudly,
With our extensive stock.
If you check that flag out closely
In one corner you will find
An embroidered dedication,
Best read between the lines,
It says, in tiny gothic script:
"With thanks to Michael Murphy -
Mad Mike of Inverloch,
A jar of pickled onions, and a certain Mr. Heinz,
Together they produced the Kamikaze Wind;
Thank God that Mister Murphy is not at all refined,
And please God, now forgive him, if in fact he sinned
The day he won this pennant flag
With the aid of baked beans - tinned".

Harry Dunn
received 9/12/2012

Note: The Mike described in this flatulent little piece is entirely fictitious, and bears no resemblance to any other Mike living or dead.