

Saturday, 3rd May 2008

Guitar man Bragg accepts charity tribute in South Yorkshire man's memory



Still rockin': Anne Hirst, left, and Joan Tye hand over a guitar to Billy Bragg Picture: Steve Ellis



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By [Tim Cotton](#)

FAMILY, friends and colleagues of a South Yorkshire probation officer killed by carbon monoxide poisoning in his home raised more than £1,500 in his memory.

Mark Ellis, aged 41, of Hawthorne Crescent, Dodworth, who was well known in Barnsley and Sheffield, worked for more than 10 years in Sheffield Council housing department before starting work for the Probation Service in Barnsley in 2001.

An electric guitar and money raised in tribute to the Barnsley FC season ticket holder were handed over to musician Billy Bragg, before his concert at Sheffield City Hall.

The money will go to Jail Guitar Doors campaign, an independent initiative set up by the singer-songwriter to provide musical equipment for the rehabilitation of prisoners.

Close friend Ken Isherwood, of Abbeydale, Sheffield, said: "Mark was a great music fan and because of the work he did we thought this cause was a fitting tribute to him."

Billy, who buys acoustic guitars at around £50 a time and delivers them to prison, said: "People like Mark, who make a difference, are so important. It shows what sort of man he was that his friends have done this."

Mark's sisters Joan Tye, of Staincross, and Anne Hirst, of Royston, were at the concert where Billy dedicated two songs to Mark.

The sisters said: "Mark's death was a tragedy, so it's great that something good has come out of it."

"Mark cared about disadvantaged people and always gave of himself. He'll be smiling down watching this."

A 29-year-old local man, who ran a Barnsley-based plumbing and heating business, and his apprentice heating engineer were arrested following Mark's death and released on police bail.

Visit jailguitardoors.org.uk or markellismemorial.org.uk to donate.

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