

Eulogy by sons Crispin and Rupert at the funeral service.

Hugh Charles Wingfield-Hayes  
January 16<sup>th</sup> 1932 – June 29<sup>th</sup> 2013

Hugh Charles Hayes was born on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1932 in Mandalay in Upper Burma. The photographs show a handsome young couple holding the baby Hugh in their arms, on the lawn in front of an elegant colonial villa, surrounded by nannies and servants. It is an image of late imperial privilege. But within a year tragedy was to strike – one that would have a profound effect on Hugh for the rest of his life. Not yet one, he lost his mother, the victim of a botched operation and septicaemia.

His widowed father and baby Hugh moved on to China, to booming, bustling, decadent Shanghai. They took up residence in the French quarter, with Chinese cooks and nannies in attendance. Hugh would later recall watching in horror as their Shanghainese cook skinned live frogs and threw them in to a pot to cook.

Tales of the East are something he would pass on to his own children: of escaping to Hong Kong on the last train south as Japanese bombers swarmed overhead; of the train hiding in tunnels, many of the adults kneeling and praying, sure that they would soon be dead. But they survived – and shipped out of Hong Kong to, of all places, Japan – where late in 1938 Hugh recalled staying in a hotel on the slopes of Mt Fuji.

They sailed across the Pacific and arrived in America under the shiny new Golden Gate Bridge. In New York the six-year-old Hugh remembered his great excitement at going to the movies to see Snow White and the Seven Dwarves – the first full-length colour animation.

They arrived in England to find Europe on the brink of war. Hugh was sent off to boarding school in Devon. It was there at the age of seven that Hugh was called to the headmaster's office.

He remembered walking down the huge staircase, his heart filled with trepidation. There had been a terrible accident, the headmaster told him. His father had fallen from his horse and suffered severe brain damage. He would never recover.

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Now a virtual orphan Hugh was sent to Clifton College in Bristol where he took to shooting and boxing – and developed his life-long loathing for Latin.

At 18 he was offered a place at Cambridge to study medicine. He decided to get his National Service out of the way before plunging in to seven years of medical school. It was decision that would change his life.

Hugh loved the army life. He transferred to Sandhurst to become a professional officer. Perhaps it was the structure, the security, the camaraderie that he found there that attracted him to the army. Certainly the friendships he made then are ones that lasted the rest of his life. Some of you are here today who new him then.

It was also in the army at the age of 21 that Hugh changed his name to Wingfield-Hayes in memory of his mother. So began his passion – some might say obsession – for everything Wingfield.

Hugh joined the Royal Tank Regiment and was by all accounts an excellent soldier. His rise to the rank of Captain was, however, not without problems, the main one its seems insubordination.

Hugh was posted to Berlin – the front line of the Cold War – although judging by his stories it was not without fun

One of their favourite ruses was racing their Tanks against the Americans down the Unter Den Linden in the middle of the night. The British tanks were lighter and faster than the American ones so they usually won. To give the American cousins a chance they offered to swap tanks and race again.

Of course it was all a British trick. The American tanks had automatic gearboxes, the British ones a clutch and a stick. The poor Americans lost again.

Tiring of barrack life Hugh volunteered to join the Army skiing team. He was sent off to Chamonix in France to learn from a former Olympic instructor. It became another passion, but ultimately one ended his army career. Practicing for a race in Switzerland he fell and smashed his ankle.

Hugh was told by the Swiss Army doctors he would walk with a stick for the rest of his life. But fate intervened in the shape of John Fairbank, a young orthopaedic surgeon who had recently married Hugh's cousin Jinny. John took a hammer to Hugh's ankle, breaking it again and then screwing it back together, this time properly. Hugh never needed a stick.

3)

Out of the army, Hugh was hungry for new adventure. He hitched a ride on an old World War Two era RAF bomber flying to Nairobi. There he bought a second hand VW beetle. He drove from Nairobi to Cape Town and back. In Tanzania he picked up an English hitchhiker. It turned out he was a mercenary heading for the Congo to join Tsonbe's Katanga separatists.

At this point Hugh might very well have gone in to journalism. Instead he returned to London and went in to business.

In London it was the Swinging 60's. There were parties and girlfriends; a number of very beautiful ones.

In 1963 he met a young South African model – Henrietta Graham – and a year later they were married. In 1965 Crispin was born, and two years later Rupert.

Together they moved to Ockley in Surrey. There, at Oak House, Hugh and Henrietta set about creating a rural idyll in which to raise their children – There were dogs and cats and chickens and horses, even an African Grey parrot named Kalulu – who had a remarkable aptitude for mimicking Hugh – often with rather colourful language! It could be a little embarrassing when the vicar came to call. There was an apple orchard and a huge vegetable garden. It was “the good life” – and in 1974 the arrival of Georgie made it complete.

One morning in the mid 70's the family was awoken by a loud report from a gun. Rushing to the window Henrietta and the children were confronted by the sight of Hugh, stark naked except for his slippers, taking pot shots at the chicken house with his shotgun. What any passer by peeking over the hedge would have made of this is hard to say. It turned out a fox had got in to the chicken house. Hugh, hearing

the commotion has grabbed his gun and run out – apparently unaware he didn't have a stitch on.

At work Hugh had entered the brave new world of computing. The company he ran "Consort" was in many ways ahead of its time. They were developing systems-software for banks and large corporations while Steve Jobs was still making computers in his parent's garage. In the basement of their King's-Cross office Hugh installed one of Britain's first mini-computers. The size of several large wardrobes, it probably had less computing power than a modern laptop or smartphone – but in 1976 it was state of the art.

4)

The late 1970s was not a great time to be in business in Britain. The oil shock, the endless strikes, the winter of discontent. In 1980 the investment bank Hugh's company had borrowed from collapsed. Hugh and the family sold up and moved here to Chichester. It was the start of another chapter.

Hugh poured his energy in to his passion for horses. He bought a huge German dressage horse called Peppy, an ancient Land-Rover and a horse trailer, and took to the road competing on the local dressage circuit. He once told me it was dressage that taught him real horsemanship – much harder mentally and physically than any of the riding he'd done before.

In the 1980s Henrietta also converted Hugh to her passion for bird watching. Together, binocular's in hand, the two of them would walk for miles along the shoreline of Chichester harbour carefully counting and noting the numbers and varieties of water birds. For many years the data they collected formed part of the RSPB's annual survey of British birds.

With the children grown up and gone to university - to Africa and to China, Hugh and Henrietta were looking forward to retirement and travelling. But in January 1997 Henrietta was diagnosed with cancer. For a while it looked like she would recover. But in August, three days before Prince Diana was killed in Paris, Henrietta died at St Richards in Chichester. Hugh's world was once again riven by loss.

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There were some dark days following Henrietta's death. Hugh often said: if it hadn't been for Bury St Edmunds cathedral he probably would have followed her fairly quickly.

But fate intervened again, this time in the shape of Steven Dykes Bower. Steven was a famous architect, and distant relative who had drawn up plans for the rebuilding of a gothic cathedral at Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. When he died Steven left 2 million pounds to the cathedral trust on condition that his plans were completed. He appointed Hugh as one of executors.

For the next ten years Hugh navigating the complex world of church politics. He saw it as his mission to ensure that Steven's vision was fulfilled. At times it looked like he might fail. But today in Bury St Edmunds there stands a gothic cathedral, faithful in every detail to Steven Dykes Bower's original plans.

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Hugh's work at Bury St Edmunds not only carried him through the loss of his beloved Henrietta – it led directly to the next and final chapter .....and you'll be glad to know there is a happy ending to this story.

On a bitterly cold day in November 2005 Hugh knocked on a door in a small village just outside Bury St Edmunds. He wanted some advise about a house he was thinking of renting. The lady who answered the door was a little horrified that the elderly man on her doorstep was wearing such a light coat in such cold weather. As they chatted he started to turn blue. She was seriously concerned he might drop dead, so she invited him in for a cup of tea.

The lady was of course Anne Pearson. Two years later Anne and Hugh were married. For Hugh it was the Indian summer of his life. The two of them shared a passion for culture, reading, the theatre and most of all history, particularly the history of the Wingfield family. Hugh was happier than he'd been in many years. It was a happiness that continued right up until last weekend.

I should apologise here to those of you who have over the years had to put up with Hugh calling and telling you to switch on the radio

because his son was on it. But on the day he died it just so happens that I was on "From Our Own Correspondent". For some reason hearing me on that program always made Hugh inordinately happy. After it was over Hugh and Anne walked around the garden cutting roses to give to their next-door neighbour Christine. Christine was holding a birthday party and Hugh wanted to give her something from his own garden. It was by all accounts a lovely party and Hugh as-ever thoroughly enjoyed himself. At about 4 O'clock in the afternoon Hugh told Anne he was feeling a little unwell and needed to go home for a rest.

In the drive way Hugh suddenly felt dizzy – he sat down on low wall, and fell backwards in to a flower bed.....