

Hugh Fisher – A Life Remembered

By Andrew Fisher

Firstly, I would like to thank you for the wonderful turn out. It shows how truly my father had an impact of so many lives. If you look around there will be faces that are familiar and may that you may not recognise

I would welcome you to speak afterwards to someone you don't know and find out something new about my father's antics, that you hadn't heard before.

My father appeared to me in a vision.

Andrew

Yes Dad

I'm in heaven, says my Dad laughing

What's so funny Dad?

Well, I'm at the pearly gates and it's amazing it's so bright and there's St Peter

And...

Well St Peter just asked me, have you got a ticket?

My father grew up in North London the son of a book seller. He was as every young boy fascinated by trains and soon started collecting tickets. Something which he would continue to do so for the rest of his life. It was at the Free and Barnet Inter-church youth group that he found his faith and developed his love of Christ. He also met another love, who at first wasn't so keen, my Mother Judith Ollis. Judy was not easily swayed by my father's wooing and often arranged to meet at a railway station with multiple exits and sometimes she managed to avoid Hugh altogether. Hugh continued to court Judy on his broken down moped, until on 13th May 1972, they were finally joined in holy matrimony.

All this time Hugh was working his way up the corporate ladder at British Railways starting as an apprentice and excelling in all exams he was set, including, Rules and Regulations governing train operations, Block Signalling, Emergency Working procedures, freight and passenger freight movement etc etc. Hugh stayed with the railways for 38 years working in his final years as a financial planner for the Rail freight division.

His faith grew during this time and in late 60's he was asked to lead a crusader camp in a small Welsh village for the church youth group, where he took a group of strapping youngsters who helped out on the Ffestiniog Railway Blaenau deviation. Part of the 'god squad' they helped with rebuilding the railway line following the creation of the Tanygrisiau Reservoir for the new hydro electric power plant.

In 1977 Hugh and Judy welcomed Andrew their first son and three years later he was followed by Nathaniel.

We moved to Reading In 1984 where we grew up and stayed until eventually I flew the nest.

Hugh joined St John and St Stephen's Church where he became a valuable member of the congregation and also a member of the PCC and then Treasurer until his untimely death. Hugh lived his life following in Christ's footsteps. And like god we can say he was omnipresent. He is in the roof, which he climbed to carry out repairs, he is in the walls, which he repainted and in the floor which he re-laid. But also his memory and love will remain in each of our hearts today. While Hugh worked tirelessly for the church and others he was never one to take centre stage or be at the front, preferring to be the unseen engine that drove others forward.

While my father tried to impart his love of trains to me, I don't think he every quite got me. I was the rebellious one, I'd rather cycle than get the train, listen to Bjork, than Bach, drink beer rather than communion wine. None the less his eye for detail and silent commitment and sense of hard work and helpfulness has been an inspiration to me and set me in the right direction.

Over the last couple of weeks of planning and preparing for this day, speaking with friends and family it has made me come to realise how much he meant to so many and how much he gave and achieved. To give you a sense of his life here are a few of the lives my father has touched and the roles he has taken up: (if you associate with one of these please give me a cheer)

Working for: Pathfinder, explores, crusaders, St Michaels, and then St James, Muswell Hill, Free and Barnet Inter Church Youth group, St John & St Stephens Reading, Duchess of Kent, British Rail, Transport and Ticket Society, Ffestiniog Railway Greenbelt to name just a few.

Working as a Railway apprentice, Financial planner, consultant, Church secretary, PCC Chairman, Church Treasurer, handyman, children's leader, youth group leader, Youth Camp organiser, Leader, follower, teacher, pupil, labourer, linguist. painter, decorator plumber, bathroom fitter, kitchen fitter, Ball room dancer bronze award, taxi driver, travel agent, children's tent manager, chauffeur, fruit picker, cook, pot washer, Chairman, secretary, accountant, collector, archiver, writer, Councillor, minibus driver, roofer, parquet floor layer, neighbour,

But most of all a friend, a father, my Dad.