

## **Michael Hadfield – the eulogy given at his funeral by his son-in-law, John Parkinson**

Sometimes, you are lucky enough to share your life with someone truly special; Michael Arthur Hadfield OBE, Justice of the Peace, Chartered Accountant, was that person.

We celebrate Mike's marvellous and memorable life today, in the certain knowledge we were all incredibly fortunate to have known him - a man who gave so much love and was loved by us all. It is a time of great sorrow but we should all feel privileged that his unique qualities and personality enriched us all and the Michael 'gold dust' is all around us today.

As we approach the Coronation of King Charles, it is only fitting to remind ourselves that, in 1994, at Buckingham Palace, the same Charles, then Prince of Wales, bestowed on Mike the honour of awarding him the Most Chivalrous Order of the British Empire, the OBE, for services to business and the community. And on Saturday, just as the King, like our beloved Queen did before him, will pledge his life to service, Mike's life too was distinguished by the same commitment to serving.

The tremendous accolade of the OBE was in recognition of Mike's unstinting devotion to helping numerous charities and organisations, dedicating much of his adult life to investing his time, patiently, quietly and without fuss, to do his bit to help others to prosper and have better lives. He did it all with such humility and commanded total respect, something that he, being so humble, was not always aware of. He was, quite simply, an immense force for good, a man for all people.

Mike was born and bred in Chesterfield, educated at Chesterfield Grammar School (he chided me for being a Yorkshireman but then I always reminded him that he had the great good sense to marry a Yorkshire lass in Susan!), and anything he could do to assist and promote the interests of his home town, he did with his usual passion and gusto: Chesterfield FC, Chesterfield RUFC, Chesterfield College, Chesterfield General Charitable Fund, Chesterfield Rotary Club, Chesterfield 41 Club, Chesterfield Crime Prevention, Chesterfield Operatic Society and the Old Cestrefeldian Society, all benefitted from Mike's selfless commitment.

You would think that would be more than enough for most people but, oh no, not for our Mike, he didn't stop there!

He held senior positions with the Chamber of Commerce at local, regional and national level covering almost 40 years of service. He was a Justice of the Peace for 21 years. He was Vice President of The St John Ambulance Service for 23 years (what a lovely gesture from them to provide the guard of honour for Mike today). And don't forget his roles with Ashgate Hospice, Derbyshire RFU, Rotary International, Chatsworth Round Table, the British Red Cross Society, Camra Real Ale and last but not least his deep involvement with the Masonic movement.

How did he do it? Who knows but he did, and, in addition to all that, this human dynamo found the time to establish and run a successful Chartered Accounting business which bears his name and where the family tradition is continued through his daughter Rebecca and assisted by the special team who all loved 'Mr Hadfield' so much.

Over the last few years Mike's health may have suffered but his tenacity to carry on his good work never faltered and he covered many miles of the UK highways fulfilling his duties and obligations, determined never to give up. How appropriate then that Mike's final day was spent attending a social function of a cause he dearly loved. And whether, as an accountant, there is any significance that it happened on April 5<sup>th</sup>, the end of the tax year, is for us all to ponder. Knowing Mike's sense of humour, maybe there is.

Behind a great man stands a great woman and in Susan, the love of Michael's life, he had a wife and very special lady who provided him the incredible support and devotion to raising a family and running the family home that enabled Mike to pursue his active community service life. Sue was Mike's rock, his strength and stay.

At home, ensconced in The Warren, his old family home and his haven, the private Michael was dedicated to his family and he was so immensely proud of the achievements of his daughter Rebecca and his son Marcus, Marcus's wife Natalie and his grandchildren, Sophie and Amelia.

Whenever you visited Mike at The Warren, your arrival would invariably be met with 'would you like a drink' and his look clearly suggested he didn't have green tea in mind. He educated me on the delights of Kings Ginger, put me off Warninks Advocaat for life but his G&Ts were always sublime. His 'super duper' ice machine was a source of personal pride!

Mike was always so welcoming and cheerful, gentle and generous, diligent and serious when the need arose, a brilliant orator and raconteur, mischievous and a bit of a rascal. He was to us all a loyal and true friend.

And did I mention a sense of humour, well, and some - his escapades and stories are legion and I'm sure you will all have your favourite ones tucked away. Mine, too numerous to mention but his dry wit was always to the fore. I was particularly chuffed one year to have found him, after much searching, a pair of his favourite, old style pyjamas, brushed cotton with a drawstring waist; in return I received car speed detector ... he loved gadgets.

And at our wedding, after delivering one of the truly outstanding speeches I have ever heard, Mike, with that intrinsic wit and charm managed to convince - well almost - some ex England rugby player mates in attendance that in its day the Chesterfield 3<sup>rd</sup> XV front row, of which Mike was a mainstay, would have been a match for anyone!

And on joining his dear friends at the Spire Investment Club after teasing me for weeks on end that the chances of my membership application being blackballed were high he gave me that magisterial stare and advised: it's ultimately all about having a bit of fun John but in my opinion October is a particularly hazardous month to speculate in shares. And July, January, September, April, November, May, March, June, December, August and February are a bit tricky too!

But having the good fortune to spend time with him in the peace and quiet of the sitting room at The Warren I would soak up his wisdom, his knowledge, his compassion and zest for life In a rapidly changing world where things can get a bit topsy turvey. Mike was a constant, an English oak of a man, with roots and values that could never be uprooted. He was of a generation where tolerance, respect, kindness, and love of Queen / King and country were part of his DNA.

But most of all, in a man as remarkable as Mike was in every respect, his most enduring quality, which caused me and countless others to smile and feel better every time we saw him, was, quite simply, his happiness.

In the immortal words of Ken Dodd:

'Happiness, happiness the greatest gift that I possess.  
I thank the Lord that I've been blessed  
With more than my share of happiness.'

And in a twist of irony, just a few weeks ago when we were having a natter, we touched on death and Mike said, 'I don't fear death, John, but I know that when it comes, what I'll miss is the fun and joy of being with you all'.

The final word is from Becky. 'He was always there for all of us, his gentle hand on my shoulder as he guided me towards taking over the running of the business was incredible; he was just so inspirational. He gave me so much strength to carry on his great work. I worshipped the ground he walked on.'

God bless you Michael. We love you, we miss you; you'll be in our hearts forever.