

HUGH MARSHALL (1934–2016)



Canon Hugh Marshall and Diana retired to Deddington in 2001 and threw themselves into village life. For many years he oversaw the Writing Competition for the Deddington Festival. When the farmers' market started he grabbed the opportunity for a Traidcraft stall in the church; now Deddington Fairtraders turns over more than £6,000 a year.

From 1960 Hugh served as a priest, first in the London diocese then in Hereford and two parishes in Southwark. For six years he was Chief Secretary for the Church of England Board of Mission. From there in 1996 he moved to Wendover and then to Deddington. He not only chaired the Diocesan Pastoral Committee, but was also chair of governors of Deddington Primary School.

He was a great family man, husband, father and grandfather. Particularly fond family memories are holidays and Monday night suppers when Diana was at work and rules were replaced by raucous laughter, bad jokes and risotto. Meals were important family occasions where information was shared and politics debated. They were also invariably interrupted by phone calls and people at the door, a constant reminder we shared Hugh with his parish. We knew from an early age how to greet the homeless, to welcome them in, and sit them down with a cheese sandwich and a cup of tea. No one was ever turned away, however regularly they visited.

You might think that having a father working from home was an advantage for a household with four children. It did make it difficult to truant from school, come home early or bring new friends round. But it also meant that legitimate time at home during the school day could be spent with Hugh who was always around to listen to woes, to pass on advice or just chat. He kept a close eye on us as teenagers, demonstrated in the evenings by a tick chart on a clipboard in the hall. We had to sign in to the house so that the last one in would lock the front door and close our parents' bedroom door, signalling that we were all back. Of course, the first one in always shut the bedroom door and it wasn't unheard of to come home, tick the chart and go back out again. I suspect Hugh was fully aware.

He was very proud of what we have all achieved. His 13 grandchildren enabled him to continue to enjoy going to pantomimes until last year. He supported us well although sometimes rather irritatingly. He would lend us money if we really needed it and entered the details into a book, latterly a spreadsheet, with interest rates and repayments calculated meticulously.

Although it was often embarrassing to have a father wearing a black dress, it was also quite exciting to have a father who delivered sometimes rather edgy sermons, who took a stand against things he felt were wrong and wasn't afraid of asking difficult questions.

His links with Africa have lasted since Hugh and Diana visited Zimbabwe in 1990. There they saw members of the Matabeleland Mothers' Union immaculately stitching communion linens. He conceived the idea of importing and marketing their handiwork in Britain. The use of their linen at altars, Roman Catholic as well as Anglican, across this country including Canterbury Cathedral, and in continental Europe and Latin America, has yielded thousands of pounds for the MU in Zimbabwe. Their new project is to sink a bore hole in

dry land costing at least £6,000. At Hugh's Thanksgiving on 28 October over £1,700 was donated – and more is flowing in yet. Springs of life-giving water from a 'Hugh Marshall Well' will be his lasting memorial. He was friend of immense goodness and of self-effacing humility.

The Marshall Family and Christopher Hall