

*Ar Lan y Mor played on the harp and sung by Joy Cornock.*

That was beautiful and I know Dad would have loved it - it was one of his favourite songs. He would have been sitting here singing along ... quite loudly and slightly embarrassingly as my daughters will agree .....

So I want to say a few words about Dad. But before I do I want to thank you all for coming here today. It means such a lot that you are all here to say goodbye to him. Each of you with your own memories. We've had many messages from friends and former colleagues all over the world - many who weren't able to be here today but who send their love and have their own memories of Dad as a leader in outdoor learning, as an adventurer and explorer, as a thinker, a teacher, a friend and a colleague.

For me he was all these things and more ...

It's hard to know where to start when you're talking about your Father's life, my memories of him, the influence he had on me, and the influence and impact he had on others.

My own early memories of him are dominated with him telling Flora and I stories of his time in Antarctica... of leading a team of huskies across wide open icescapes and mountains, of shooting and skinning seals for dog food, of long dark winter days, freezing temperatures and narrow escapes and of that all important once a year visit from a ship carrying supplies and news from home. He also told us how he came close to being thrown overboard a little rowing boat in the freezing Antarctic Ocean (Life expectancy of around 20-30 seconds). He was trying his luck at fishing for dinner when he heard a splash and turned around to see the large eye of a blue whale peering up at him. A quick flick of the tail would have overturned the little boat in an instant but luckily the whale glided effortlessly away sparing Dad from being sent flying into the unforgiving sea.

His love of taking risks permeated everything he did and therefore most things we did as a family. It made our childhoods exciting and it certainly shaped me.

Dad growing up in Africa meant that we visited our grandparents fairly regularly. But it wasn't enough just to take his family to visit their grandparents at a suburban house in Harare - there was always an extra trip planned. One Christmas I vividly remember a trip to lake Kariba. Not to stay in one of the nice hotels with actual bedrooms and swimming pools - we were to go to a little island about two hours away by boat across the far side of the lake and stay in a grass hut where crocodiles and bilharzia were rife.

Once there Dad decided it would be nice to hire a little motor boat and explore. It was a beautiful evening, the sun was setting and the Lake was silent and still, broken only by the sound of the old off board engine and the occasional cries from Flora and I when we spotted something new along the banks.

We could see the hippos coming down to the water for their evening swim, with mothers and their young jostling their way into the Lake. Heading a little further out Dad decided to turn the engine off to watch and enjoy the peace and quiet. We sat for a while watching the swimming hippos and the African sunset. After a few minutes Dad decided we'd better get out of their way as it hadn't been unheard of for hippos to come and take a great bite out of the bottom of boats.

Reaching for the pulley on the motor he gave it a great tug - nothing. He tried again - each time becoming slightly more determined and slightly more panicked as by now we were drifting pretty rapidly towards the hippos. Realising that we were now in fact in some danger and shouting instructions for us to MOVE OUT OF THE WAY - he gave one massive pull and the engine spluttered into life.

It was with some relief that we headed back to our little beach....

Even at home in Glasbury - we had a pretty special childhood. Growing up in an outdoor education centre with a jungle gym in the back garden and canoeing, mountain climbing and caving at weekends and holidays seemed the norm to us. Dad would always involve

us. Taking us out with groups of children - learning how to navigate mountains in the dark or how to pitch tents or dubbing boots!

But I loved going with him and learnt a lot just by watching him.

Many of the children coming to the centre every week had spent very little time outdoors and their experiences at Woodlands helped shape their lives. Dad understood how outdoor learning helped develop long term physical and emotional wellbeing amongst children, equipped them with skills, built an understanding of teamwork and helped overcome personal barriers and fears.

I remember watching Dad sit in a tree for over an hour with a tearful 14 year old terrified to make the leap onto a rope swing - under his patient persuasive coaching they always finally did it and the sense of personal achievement that gave them was always palpable. He fought many times to keep Woodlands from closing - passionately articulating the positive impact outdoor learning has and winning the battle many times over.

He was shaped by his values - strongly political in his beliefs with a clear sense of social justice and equality shaped from his childhood in Africa, seeing apartheid first hand and fighting for racial equality.

And Wales was also very important to him. He believed Wales was a more equal society without the pomp and class structure of England. Some of this must have rubbed off on me...

And he always appreciated and valued things. Ideas, music, art and books were just some of the loves he had and which he always spoke.

I am proud to have him as my Father and his thoughts, experiences, ideas and values will stay with me in everything I do and say.

So I hope you'll all share your memories of him and continue a celebration of his life in St Nicholas village Hall.

And I will end by quoting from one of his favourite books that he passed on to me and which I now cherish:

*Love in the time of Cholera by Gabriel Garcia Marques:*

*"Age has no reality except in the physical world. The essence of a human being is resistant to the passage of time. Our inner lives are eternal, which is to say that our spirits remain as youthful and vigorous as when we were in full bloom. Think of love as a state of grace, not the means to anything but the alpha and omega. An end in itself."*