

Homage to
RICHARD HAY



1942-2025

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Richard Hay: A Tribute from AIACE



Notre très cher Richard, exceptionnel compagnon de route de l'AIACE internationale depuis si longtemps, méritait plus qu'une simple chronique nécrologique.

A l'annonce de son décès qui nous a tous bouleversés, j'ai personnellement souhaité qu'une brochure lui soit spécialement dédiée, reprenant les témoignages de toutes celles et de tous ceux qui ont travaillé avec lui à la Commission ou à l'AIACE.

Voilà qui est fait.

Merci Richard de nous laisser à travers ces petits textes de si touchants souvenirs de la belle personne que tu étais.

Dominique Deshayes



Dear Members,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the death of my predecessor as AIACE-UK Chairman, Richard Hay. He was 83 and died peacefully on 12 June following a stroke.

After studies at the Universities of Edinburgh and Oxford, Richard joined the UK Civil Service where he served in the Treasury for ten years. In 1972 he was invited to join the cabinet of Christopher Soames, one of the first two UK Commissioners appointed to the European Commission on the UK's accession to the (then) EEC in 1973. He later served as Head of Cabinet to Soames' successor, Christopher Tugendhat where he managed personnel, budget and administration portfolios.

In 1979 he became a permanent official and rose to the grade of Director General in DG IX (Personel and administration) serving in that post until he left the Commission in 1991. Thereafter he trained and was ordained as a Church of England priest and served as vicar of Addlestone in Surrey for eight years.

During that period he joined AIACE-UK and became our Chairman in November 2009, serving until June 2019. In parallel with his duties in the UK Section, he also served as the President of AIACE International between 2011 and 2015. As pensioners resident in the UK, we all owe Richard a debt of gratitude for the masterful hand that he played in ensuring that our interests were protected during the EU withdrawal negotiations.

Those bare details illustrate an extraordinary career of dedicated public service. Perhaps more importantly, he brought to his work gifts of great kindness, thoughtfulness and wisdom which are what we will most remember him for.

At the meeting of the AIACE Executive Board in the week following his death, on the proposal of the current President, Dominique Deshayes, it was resolved to produce a brochure in Richard's memory.

The AIACE-UK Committee will coordinate our contribution to that publication and we will collect together any personal appreciations of Richard's life and work from members, including anecdotes and pictures. Please send such material to the Editor of Connect, Belinda Pyke, at the connect@aiace-uk mailbox or by snail mail to our address at Europe House above. Some of the material collected will be published in the next issue of Connect (deadline end of July) but all will be collated and forwarded to Miriam.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been announced but we will publish them on our AIACE-UK website as soon as we know them.

We offer our sincere condolences to Miriam and her family who we also remember in our thoughts and prayers.

With my best regards,

Tom Kennedy
Chairman AIACE-UK

From **Commission en Direct** magazine

Former Director-General Richard Hay has died at the age of 83. Born on 4 May 1942, Hay grew up in Edinburgh and attended a day school before going on to study at the University of Edinburgh. He then transferred to the University of Oxford, where he read medieval history. Upon graduation, he joined the British Civil Service, entering HM Treasury after passing the civil service exam.

He served at the Treasury for a decade, including a secondment to the City of London in his final year, before being invited in late 1972 to join the Cabinet of Christopher Soames, the first-ever British Conservative Commissioner-designate to the European Communities. Hay was appointed to the Soames Cabinet as an expert on budgetary and economic matters, following the UK's accession in 1973.

During his time in the Soames Cabinet, Hay was involved in budget negotiations and rose through the ranks, becoming Deputy Head of Cabinet in 1975. When Christopher Tugendhat succeeded Soames in 1977, Hay became his Head of Cabinet. Under Tugendhat, he was responsible for the personnel, budget and administrative portfolios.

In 1979, Hay moved into the Commission's permanent services, first joining DG II (Economic and Financial Affairs) as a Director. In 1981, he became Deputy Director-General in DG IX (Personnel and Administration) and, in 1986, he was promoted to Director-General.

As Director-General of DG IX, which at the time accounted for nearly half of the Commission's staff, Hay oversaw



Richard Hay, pictured on 8 June 1998 when he was Deputy Director-General of DG IX Personnel and Administration of the CEC, in his office at the JECL, in Brussels.

a vast portfolio, including buildings, medical services, computing policy, recruitment, and translation services. He initiated the process of separating the translation service into a standalone Directorate-General.

He remained Director-General of DG IX until his departure from the Commission in early 1991.

After leaving the Commission, Hay pursued an entirely different vocation. He took up a post with a Christian charity for some years, then undertook theological training and was ordained as a priest in the Church of England, serving as a parish priest in Addlestone, Surrey, for eight years. In later years, he remained active in charitable work, served as President of AIACE, the association of retired EU officials, between 2011 and 2015, and remained its honorary president until his death.

He died peacefully on 12 June 2025, following a stroke.

From **Connect**

Richard Hay 1942-2025

A Tribute by Martin Clegg, Michael Hocken and Bob Hull

Brought up in Edinburgh where his father was Professor of Medieval History and after graduating from Edinburgh and Oxford Universities, Richard served at HM Treasury before joining in 1972 the Cabinet of Sir Christopher Soames, one of the United Kingdom's first two Commissioners. Richard was initially appointed as an expert on budgetary and economic matters and later became Deputy Head of the Soames Cabinet. He was then chosen as Head of Cabinet under Christopher Tugendhat in 1977, responsible for personnel, budget and administrative affairs. In 1979, he became a member of the Commission's staff, firstly as a Director in the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs before becoming Deputy Director-General in the DG for Personnel and Administration in 1981 and then serving as its Director-General from 1986 until he left the Commission in 1991. During this time Richard and his wife Miriam held key roles in the work of the Anglican Holy Trinity church in Brussels.

After the Commission, Richard returned to the UK but pursued an entirely different career, undertaking theological training and becoming ordained as a Church of England priest, serving as vicar of Addlestone Church in Surrey for eight years, after which he continued to be actively engaged in charitable and ecclesiastical work, including his



appointment as honorary assistant minister at his local church, St Paul's in Woking.

Richard also managed to combine his ecclesiastical duties with participation in the activities of AIACE, bringing to the organisation his wisdom and experience, serving as Chairman of the UK Section from 2009 to 2019. During that time, when difficult issues arose, Richard dealt with them in a scrupulously fair way, finding compromise solutions which were in due course agreed. He saw the importance of the regional groups



which he toured assiduously, explaining complicated matters in clear and understandable terms.

Assises Bratislava, 2015

As UK chair, he attended a meeting of the Bureau of AIACE-International in 2011 and probably against his better judgement he found himself put forward as President of AIACE-International, a role which he performed magnificently in the period 2011 to 2015, representing the interests of pensioners from all the EU institutions and bodies, irrespective of their place of residence. An important innovation was the introduction of the scheme of “AIACE Ambassadors” across all Sections, an enduring legacy that is greatly appreciated by the administrations and pensioners alike, epitomising Richard’s collaborative approach to dealing with potentially contentious issues. In a period of some turbulence inside the Bureau of AIACE-International, his calm and reasoned manner ensured that he earned the full respect and confidence of those expressing the views of AIACE’s fifteen different national sections, enabling common positions to be presented on behalf of pensioners in relations with the Commission and the other EU institutions. Dealing with many different nationalities

and contrasting personalities, Richard, with his calm manner and deep experience in personnel matters, was often called upon to patiently exercise his impressive powers of persuasion and conciliation. On stepping down in 2015, he was appointed Honorary President, a unique recognition of the high esteem in which he was held. His successor wrote “You are the kind of person who in an organisation leaves an indelible and unforgettable mark. Your wisdom and gentlemanly style will be something which we will miss.”

Shortly afterwards, Richard found himself leading AIACE-UK’s response to the challenges confronting EU staff and former staff living in the UK posed by the outcome of the UK referendum of 2016. This result was a sad blow and a deep personal disappointment for Richard. However, he realised the potential consequences for EU pensioners in the UK and, as head of AIACE-UK’s negotiation team, he quickly identified the principal matters of concern for our colleagues,

“Richard, with his calm manner and deep experience in personnel matters, was often called upon to patiently exercise his impressive powers of persuasion and conciliation”

drawing up as from autumn 2016, a detailed assessment of the principal issues affecting UK pensioners and ensuring that our position was adopted with the full support of AIACE-International as a whole. Indeed, throughout the lengthy period of the Withdrawal negotiations with the Commission and other bodies, Richard was always careful to ensure that AIACE-International was completely involved at every stage, knowing that this would only strengthen our arguments with our interlocutors in the administrations. He built up close relations of confidence with the major actors in Brussels up to and including Commissioners., emphasising that, as far as possible, EU staff and pensioners should continue to be treated as if the UK was still a Member State after Withdrawal.

At the end of the negotiating process, all key objectives for pensioners in the UK were achieved. Provisions for the continued exemption and non-declaration of the pension from national taxation, which required the consent of the UK Government, were enshrined in the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement of 2020, whilst the Commission was able to agree to the maintenance, after Withdrawal, of the UK correction coefficient on the pre-2004 part of the pension, both for existing pensioners in the UK and for those staff who would choose to live in the UK after their future retirement. In that respect, UK staff were able to retain the UK as their recorded place of origin. Similarly, the system of parity coefficients for JSIS reimbursements was maintained, enabling continuing account to be taken of



higher UK medical and dental costs.

After the end of his term as Chairman of AIACE-UK in June 2019, Richard remained an enthusiastic member of AIACE, actively participating at annual general meetings both here and abroad at the AIACE-International congresses, where he was usually accompanied by Miriam, as well as at other events such as regional groups. He took the initiative to form a regional group for members living in Surrey (of which he was co-convenor), which later merged with the Sussex membership to form the AIACE-South regional group. He only stepped down from his co-convenor role in spring 2025. Of course, quite apart from his continuing church work, Richard could not stay inactive and earlier this year he took on a role representing the residents of Mayford Grange, the retirement village in Woking where he and Miriam had recently taken up residence.

We remember Richard with thanks not only for his dedication and achievements on behalf on pensioners but also for his personal qualities which inspired us all. He will be sadly missed. We offer our most sincere condolences to Miriam and their two sons, Jonathan and Tim as well as to their grandchildren.

Mon Directeur général, mon Président

Par Dominique Deshayes

Richard Hay a été mon Directeur général, puis mon Président de l'AIACE Internationale (lorsque j'étais secrétaire générale) et pourrais-je dire au fil du temps est devenu mon ami.

Chef de l'unité Personnel B, C et D, je n'avais que peu l'occasion de le rencontrer, lui le Directeur général de la DGIX, mais il était toujours à l'écoute, toujours si cordial et surtout bienveillant. Certes il m'impressionnait, l'époque empreinte de hiérarchie voulait ça... et en même temps il avait le don de vous mettre à l'aise avec son merveilleux sourire.

Richard avait cette habitude étrange que je n'ai connue nulle part ailleurs, de mettre son bureau face à la fenêtre, alors lorsqu'on entraînait dans son bureau, on ne voyait que son dos...

Il a toujours gardé cette habitude, notamment lorsqu'il fut notre Président de l'AIACE Internationale.

Richard habitait tout près de chez moi, et il m'arrivait de le voir attendre tranquillement son bus (le 36) et alors je m'autorisais à lui proposer de monter. Autre époque, ou transporter un directeur général constituait un réel évènement....

Et puis il a quitté la Commission, fidèle et loyal serviteur de l'Institution. Je ne suis pas certaine que la gestion du Personnel avec ce que cela comporte de «compromis» était vraiment un poste qui lui convenait,

un poste à la hauteur de l'homme si intègre qu'il était.

En 2015, il m'a approchée pour une fonction à l'AIACE et c'est ainsi que je suis devenu sa secrétaire générale. Il m'a témoigné une grande confiance et était toujours là en cas de difficultés.

Sous des apparences parfois sérieuses, Richard était en fait doté d'un grand sens de l'humour, ce qui rendait les relations si faciles.

Je relis son dernier message du mois d'avril «*Malheureusement, Miriam et moi, nous ne serons pas avec vous aux Assises 2025 - pour la première fois (je crois) depuis Madrid en 2008. Ce sont des obligations familiales qui rendent impossible notre participation: l'arrivée de deux nièces de Miriam en début de semaine, et vers sa fin le mariage d'un de nos grand-fils, et à Liverpool, dans le nord de l'Angleterre, ce qui nécessite un départ au moins la veille.*»

Comme il nous a manqué à Bruxelles en juin.

Depuis mon élection comme Présidente Il m'a toujours encouragée et ses conseils et compliments m'étaient précieux.

Un grand Monsieur, une belle personnalité, un grand serviteur de l'Europe.

L'avoir connu est un privilège et un honneur.

Dominique Deshayes

Woking GU22 8LP
27 February 2016

Dear Karen

Brexit, the Donald (or the Boris?) and God's Kingdom

Now that the referendum date is known, we are writing to everyone on our address list. Two years ago we were challenged to do this if a referendum was called. We think it matters how the UK votes. The media debate is often ill-informed (or worse). So here are comments that try to explain why we think the UK should stay in the EU. They are meant to contribute to your thinking: each of us needs to come to our own conclusion, and we won't all follow the same reasons. Thank God for difference! (Background: we lived in Brussels for 19 years and Richard worked for the European Commission for 18.)

On cost, we hear of 'huge sums of cash' going from the UK to the EU – or other conveniently vague terms hiding the fact that it's only a very small part (1 – 2%) of UK public spending.

Migration is a problem. But the big issue is not migrants from the EU - it's those who come from non-EU countries, where we already have full control. Our experience shows that it's very difficult to manage. But it's a problem we share with other developed countries. Surely we face it better together than alone. And we must avoid being fearful of migrants (as some would wish us to be). Violence is in the hearts of a few of every faith; the vast majority of people of every faith are peaceful. (We also have to confess to a bias: our local general hospital is only kept going by a very large number of devoted staff of many faiths from all around the world. We give thanks for them, tinged with shame because we know that in their own countries healthcare is far below the standards of Western Europe.) Compared to this, migration from within the EU is a side-show; mostly it brings us younger people to work and pay UK taxes, while just about as many UK citizens go and live in other EU countries, often in retirement.

But we really shout at the radio about sovereignty ('being ruled by unelected bureaucrats'):

- very few of our UK laws are 'made in Brussels'. Over the past 20 years, only 1.4% of main Acts of Parliament, and 11.8% of secondary laws, even mention the EU (says the House of Commons library). We have sovereignty for the vast majority of issues
- all EU legislation is decided by the European Parliament (elected directly), and Council of Ministers (who are elected to national parliaments). The (unelected) Commission can only propose legislation, and if so decided administer it. As in the US, the power to propose law is separated from the power to decide. (And now the European Parliament has to approve the Commission and its President)
- having formal power doesn't necessarily give control. Some of us remember the 1960s, when the UK government did everything it could to avoid devaluing the pound ('in your pocket'); in the end they were overwhelmed. Control can be found only by the right framework of government for the issue, and in some areas we have to work with others to have real impact
- the emotive claim that 'we' need to be in charge goes deeper than effectiveness. We all cling to our independence. But we (like every part of creation) cannot live fully on our own. Despite Donald Trump's assertions, we don't live in a 'zero-sum' world (well said, the Pope, urging bridges, not walls). Our flourishing depends on working together, on taking account of others' needs, on accepting that better things can and are done together.

The EU is a framework in which to do together what is needed to sustain peace based on democracy, still a challenge in Europe (as Russia, the Middle East and migration remind us). Within, we have weight to shape this process, and also to share in choosing directions for the environment and much scientific research, as well as some economic sectors. Of course, the EU has many faults. But we should work from the inside to adapt and strengthen the EU with the many others who also see need for change, rather than petulantly asking for a 'special deal' and testing the patience of our friends.

Many of us pray regularly for God's Kingdom to come. Government is a human need, but the Bible, and history more generally, is full of examples of abuse by the power-hungry. Sovereignty is about means, not ends. God's Kingdom is concerned instead with values and results in public policy and private life of generous self-giving, forgiving, respect and acceptance of difference. The only power in God's Kingdom is love. Being in the EU seems a bit nearer love for our neighbour than leaving 'to do our own thing'.

Some thoughts – we have others, but we'll stop there! They come with warm best wishes from us both and our prayer for wisdom for you as you explore the issues and in God's grace decide how you will vote.

P. Deshayes

Jonathan's Eulogy

By Jonathan Hay

Given at Richard's Memorial Service
in Woking, 7 July 2025

Thank you all so much for coming here today to give thanks for Richard's life, and to show your support to my Mother and our family.

It means an enormous amount. We have been astonished by how many people have written or rung us to say how much Richard meant to them, with beautiful outpourings of their sorrow and affection for him.

I'm quite sure it's no exaggeration to say that every one of us here loves Richard. How could you not?

But because his life was so rich and varied, each of us knew only part of the man. So my brother and I are going to share some thoughts about him from our perspective. We are also looking forward to meeting and talking to many of you and hearing your thoughts and memories too.

In a moment Tim is going to talk particularly about Richard's Christian faith, which was so vital to him and to his engagement with the people around him.

—★—

Richard was born in Buckinghamshire in May 1942, the depths of the second world war. His parents Denys and Gwyneth and older sister Sara lived through the war



in and around London, where Denys was helping to write the official war history, and spending nights on top of St Paul's Cathedral as a fire lookout.

My Father's earliest memory was VE Day, when he travelled on top of a tram with his mother into town to join in the celebrations.

Soon after the war Denys was made professor of medieval history at Edinburgh University and the family grew up in Edinburgh. When Richard was eight, his sister Jenny was born — legend tells that Richard greeted her with the words "she squirms like a worm".

It was a spartan childhood by modern standards — Father used to go off to school with a hot potato in his pocket to keep his hands warm, and a dripping sandwich for lunch. Learning to swim in Edinburgh's chilly Warrender Baths, where there was a metal contraption to support the learner, was an experience Richard shuddered to recall.

But the family were comfortable — Richard went to the private Edinburgh Academy and then George Watson's College, benefiting from the high standards and rigour Scottish education is famous for.

And they enjoyed holidays, often with Piercy cousins, in Scotland, Wales, France, the Newcastle area where Denys and Gwyneth came from, and as far as Venice, where with a queasy stomach Richard had to wait ages for the lavatories behind a queue of German pilgrims singing psalms.

In a sport-obsessed school culture, skinny Richard does not seem to have been a prominent Watsonian, but he made a few strong friendships, notably Peter Brand, who has remained close ever since.

The Hay family life was not always easy. Despite their strong left wing principles, which Richard inherited, Denys and Gwyneth were conservative parents, and in her teens Sara — bold, independent — clashed with them fiercely.

Richard could be caught in the middle. Recently he told me he had angered his parents by sticking up for Sara in one battle.

He really combined the best of both his parents. Denys was brilliant, inspiring, witty and sociable. Gwyneth was exceptionally kind, gentle and never complained.



Father never criticised them, but he was clearly very anxious as a father not to repeat some things he had found difficult in his own father.

Jenny's overriding memory of Richard is that he was so kind — "even when I was an annoying brat", and he was always being helpful.

From his childhood Richard gained a curiosity about the world, a zest for enjoying life, and a sense of responsibility. Not just the public responsibility one has to take for living and acting well — but a private, hidden responsibility, to silently fill the gaps when others are wanting.

—★—

Studying history at Edinburgh and then Balliol College, Oxford, where his father had been, was an obvious choice. Richard on the whole enjoyed Balliol, and made another small group of close friends, though in his last year he was unhappy and suffered from depression — perhaps partly due to doubts about his future course.

His interest in the wider world deepened.

After leaving Oxford in 1963 he won a scholarship to travel round America on his own. Making the outward journey by sea, he was befriended by two old ladies from I think Phoenix who invited him to stay. Imagine his embarrassment when their idea of entertaining the young Englishman was to take him to a louche nightclub.

A few years later Richard visited Ghana and Ethiopia.

But in a way the most important thing Oxford gave Richard was an obstacle. Had he got a first class degree, academia in his father's footsteps beckoned. But he got a 2.1 so that door closed.

It was a blessing. Life threw a setback at Richard, but he rose above it and found a path that suited him much better.

Sensing this might happen, he had taken the civil service exam, and must have excelled, because he was placed among the elite, at the Treasury.

Michael Scholar, who worked under Richard at the Treasury, immediately admired him. He remembers "An acute intellectual, but focussed on getting the right economic and diplomatic advice to our seniors, on time, in the correct form, and objective, unbiassed — and clean and correct."

Richard worked closely for Harold Lever, financial secretary to the Treasury, through the turbulent years in the 1960s when Britain was battered by waves of financial pressure that repeatedly threatened the value of the pound.

It was thanks to one of these bouts that some of us are here. The Sterling Area Agreements involved cooperation between the Treasury and Foreign Office.

The Foreign Office sent Miriam England to communicate with the Treasury, and on one of these visits in April 1969 she noticed a tall, handsome official who was always polite to those who worked for him and — an added plus — didn't smoke.

She invited him to a party and a rapid courtship followed. Thenceforth they were rarely apart — Miriam jokes that for decades, the only letters between them had copies stored at the Bank of England.

In October Richard proposed, in a cinema during the interval of the film *The Battle of Britain*. But he failed to hear Miriam's answer, and had to endure the second half of the film in agony before finding out at the end — an episode worthy of an Ealing comedy.

Marriage came swiftly. There followed a partnership that made each of them the centre of the other's life for the next 55 years.

As a husband, Richard was tender, affectionate, considerate, protective, and above all, happy. As a child I never heard them use each other's names — they were always "Darling" or "My love". I also remember they never argued — except very occasionally in the car.

Richard was guided by Miriam in many ways, notably in the growth of his faith. Their love for each other ensured that they respected each other's feelings and strengths and always seemed to act and feel as one.

—★—

In 1973 the UK joined the European Economic Community, and Richard embraced the chance to be one of the first dozen British civil servants who joined the European Commission in Brussels.



This meant learning to work in French and reconcile the habits of officials from nine and later 12 different cultures. Richard was in his element. His professional talents — courtesy, patience, consideration for others, thorough preparation, the ability to distinguish what was important from what wasn't, encouraging people to express their opinions while tactfully guiding the group towards a decision — were ideally suited to this organisation, whose mission was to achieve international consensus.

Colleagues loved working for and with him, and many have spoken of how his quiet authority and warm generosity inspired and encouraged them.

The Commission recognised Richard's strength in personal relationships by putting him in charge of its personnel department, where he had to deal with

disgruntled employees and strikes.

Richard loved the diversity and talents of his colleagues and believed wholeheartedly in the Community's purpose — to build cooperation among European nations, to promote peace and for the good of their peoples.

Father's service was honoured by receiving the CBE from the Queen.

—★—

In 1990 life bowled Richard another googly. Under EU rules, political leaders could change their top civil servants, and his job came to an end.

This opened space for Richard to commit more of his energies to his deepening Christian faith, as Tim will describe in a moment.

When we look back on Richard's wonderful contribution in two careers, are we not overjoyed that after university he did not shut himself up in libraries?

Later in life, Richard volunteered his organisational skills and experience to many groups and organisations, from the East Woking Good Neighbour Scheme giving lifts to people who find mobility difficult, to chairing the residents' association at Mayford Grange, and being president of the Europe-wide association of pensioners of the EU.

—★—

Through all Richard's varied activities and relationships, some things are constant. He was witty, saw the funny side of things and was always ready to burst into a gale of laughter.

He was open and friendly to people of all backgrounds, faiths, generations and characters, and believed passionately in bridging divides. He always saw the good in people, never the bad. Anger was reserved for those in authority who caused war or injustice, or disregarded the needs of others. He had true compassion, knowing that even those who have committed crimes or grievous wrongs still need human contact and spiritual support. He was generous to a fault, but had no interest in money — I sometimes wondered how he had managed at the Treasury. He was never instructive — if you talked to him about a problem, he would listen carefully, ask questions, and somehow help just because you knew he cared.

Despite his amazing qualities, he had no pride or vanity at all. He always dismissed his own abilities, and suffered from doubts that, for example, he had let us down as a father, when the opposite was true.



Growing up, Father's presence meant you were in safe hands, and it meant excitement and fun. His strong hands, his dimpled smile, the smell of his clothes were among the high points of my childhood, and what they meant was a solid base, utterly dependable.

When I became an adult, Father's spontaneous delight whenever he saw Tim or myself, and his pride in us, extended to his daughters-in-law and grandchildren. He was always full of praise for them, regularly telling me "you have a super family".

My Father taught me how to be a father, how to be a man, how to be a person.

It's a hard example to live up to, but trying gives me hope, strength and cheerfulness.

As we think about this magnificent man, I think we all feel as my Mother does, "just say how much I love him".

He is not gone. As my wife Cybele said, he has gone to the next world, and you only take the good with you — and his hands are very full.

And he can still help us. Each of us will keep with us his spirit as a question. When faced with any decision, we will ask ourselves, "What would Richard do?"

Tim's Eulogy

By Tim Hay

Given at Richard's Memorial Service
in Woking, 7 July 2025



When I was little, I used to picture God as looking like my Father, specs and all. At some stage in childhood, I managed to shake that off, but that was because I was growing to understand more of God, not because my Father had disappointed me in any way.

As a child, I loved holding his hand, being led by him. I loved making things with him, and learning from him. I have always loved making him laugh, and being loved by him.

I fondly remember how, when he had to leave for work too early to have breakfast

with us, he would draw us little pictures of what he'd be doing that day, for us to enjoy over our cornflakes later.

And how, despite being incredibly hardworking, he would find time to play with us, in my case, even joining in as I grew to love playing football. He would kick the ball around with me in the garden, and also take me to training on Saturdays. I would frequently coming back to the car, freezing, muddy and dripping wet, to find him sitting under a mountain of paperwork, the heating on full blast, and some classical music playing, in his relaxed Saturday wear of shirt and tie,

cardigan and tweed jacket. Maybe even a scarf and cap too!

I assume that almost everyone who's here today is here because they knew and appreciated my dad. So take a moment, and have a think. What words would you use to describe his character?

Where did all of that come from?

My Father grew up in a loving and pretty intellectual home in Edinburgh. His parents had met in a library in Newcastle. They'd both been brought up in Christian homes and were strongly principled, but not particularly religious. Faith was not much talked about at home.

But even at a young age, my Father was interested in spiritual things, and would discuss the meaning of life with his friend, Peter, with whom he used to cycle to school. Peter recalls that even then, Richard was insightful, and yet gentle and open-minded.

There are vague recollections of him taking part in some kind of school play, which, the story goes, was even televised, for some bizarre reason. Interestingly, he played the part of the somewhat absurdly-named "Preaching Happy Jacob John". A sign of things to come?

At a similar stage, as a teenager, he would take his sister Jenny, 8 years his junior, on the bus to the children's service at St John's Church, at the end of Princes Street. In later years, he apparently connected the birth of the idea of going into Christian ministry to one of those services.

With the exception of one memorable incident when he kicked his Father in the shins because he didn't want to come in for dinner, Jenny recalls that Richard was almost always good-natured. Understandably, this was sometimes

infuriating for her! And a little later, his gentle trustworthiness cast him in the role of confidant and mediator between his parents and his older sister, Sara.

Despite what may have been an inkling of a call to ministry, as we've heard, the next few years took him to Oxford, London, and then Brussels. By which time, in God's kindness he had a wife and two wonderful sons!



In Brussels, he worked at the European Commission, but perhaps even more crucially in shaping his later life, started going to Holy Trinity Brussels. It was there that my parents really grew in their faith, it seems to me, in a church which they loved and were totally committed to. But even more significantly, their personal relationships with the Lord were deepening, as they developed and nourished a daily habit of Bible reading and prayer, further shaping their character and priorities.

At Holy Trinity, my Father was in due time asked to put his considerable administrative and organisational abilities to work in the PCC and as a church warden. But he was also fondly remembered for being generous with his time, caring in relationships, sensitive to other people's vulnerability.

And it seems that those characteristics were also seen in his work, and the way he interacted with colleagues at the

Commission. Colleagues there have commented on the fact that he was open about his faith, but not pushy, discreetly wearing a little lapel badge in the shape of a fish every day, to gently point people to the one he was ultimately serving.

After a reorganisation of his department at the Commission nudged him on to the next thing, and after careful reflection, he went to be trained for ordination in the church of England. He found theological study in Durham hugely stimulating and rewarding, and he and my Mum developed a great love for Durham, and in particular, its spectacular cathedral.

He then spent over three decades in full-time ministry, albeit half of them after he had already retired! This brought a wide range of experiences, from "blessing of the animals" services he inherited in Hastings, to hospital Chaplaincy in Chertsey. From dealing compassionately but firmly with needy people who came to the door of our little house in Hastings for a meal voucher, to engaging with a wide range of religious people through Woking People of Faith. As vicar of St Paul's Church in Addlestone, he was the right man, in the right place, at the right time to lead the reconstruction of the church building after an enormous fire. And after he'd retired, leading services in retirement homes, and supporting lots of local parishes during vacancies or at other times of need, including in his own church family, here at St Paul's.

My dad enjoyed many things, from woodwork and Heath Robinson style fixes around the house, to classical music. From reading about history, politics and theology, to the humour of "Yes, Minister", Jacques Tati and even Asterix. In the last year or two, he even finally gave a couple of hours a week to painting. Nevertheless, my mum's long-held and occasionally regretful diagnosis was substantially true:



"Richard doesn't have hobbies: work is his hobby". Even beyond a faith context, my dad's character, gifts and willingness to serve led to him being on countless committees, and even post-Brexit negotiations on behalf of British EU pensioners.

Despite his achievements, I'm sure most of us will cling more to memories of who my dad was, than anything particular that he did. And those who were close to him miss him all the more because of how very much he loved us.

I invited you at the beginning to think of a few words you would use to describe him.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit, the visible outworking of a heart that belongs to God. The character of a person who is being gradually shaped into the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

"...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." It's quite striking, isn't it? In honouring my Father, I want to give great thanks to his heavenly Father. And to his Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose image he was being shaped by the Spirit, more and more, day by day, as he was being prepared to enjoy an eternity with his Lord.

Richard Hay

Finding one's feet in the Commission

For me, a job in Brussels began one dark December day in 1972, when I was interviewed by Sir Christopher Soames and David Hannay, who wanted someone from the Treasury in the Soames *cabinet*. Would I (and my wife) like to go to Brussels for four years? Would they want to have me? The answer, a double positive. Then the rush began. Could I start in February? Only when we could move as a family, I said (we had a two year old, and another due in three months). But in a few weeks we were looking at houses in Brussels, and in March we moved. Once in Brussels, the work began instantly - I wrote my first brief for Soames sitting on the ensuite lavatory in the hotel while Miriam and our child slept (I don't think it was much good!).

Very soon, I was installed on the Berlaymont 12th floor. The procedures were bewildering. My schoolboy French was painful for others, though they were gracious about it. The subject matter was hard to understand - everything looked very different from within the Berlaymont, and I hadn't worked much on EEC matters in London.

I soon learnt some things. Council of Ministers' marathons are not fun for hangers-on. You could buy Marmite and marmalade in the Commission staff shop, but Nappisan came from the UK. Soames was a very good judge of the caption competitions that went round the office each time a suitably awful photograph arrived of him with some foreign dignitary.

More gradually, I came to see that though they did things differently, and the administration was much more political than in London then, the quality of work in the European Public Service was mostly very high. When people were recruited, they usually already had some professional experience and argued their corner much harder than in the UK civil service (where Brownie points went among generalists to quick agreements that respected the facts). That, and the differences of language and culture, made meetings take longer. People tended to say everything twice in different ways, so that like map references the real meaning was where the two statements crossed. Also hierarchies were shorter and much more flexible. As a result levels of individual responsibility could be much greater than in the British civil service. (The UK overestimated the value of their rankings compared to those of the European institutions.)

It was a big change. Come the end of the year, I was wondering whether the job was a good thing for me to be doing. I didn't feel my efforts were useful to Soames (my responsibilities were not at the centre of his portfolio). And I hadn't built up the essential network of contacts. I thought seriously of going back to London early. But in 1974 Labour won the election, and Harold Wilson announced his intention to renegotiate the UK's terms of membership. Soames got me involved in the resulting budget rebate work (he took me into the initial secret meeting as an interpreter, though he didn't need one; I was so bad at interpreting that he kicked me under the table to shut up). I started working with a number of senior officials (including Emile Noel, the Secretary General, and a member of the President's Cabinet) to find a solution. We met together a lot; I got to know them and other colleagues, and began to find my feet in the Commission. What was to have been four years might have been only one. But in the end – that's a longer story - it turned into 19.



Extract from 'Changing Horizons – Memories of European Pioneers'
 Edited by Martin Vasey, with Robert Elphick and Robert Hull
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Étonnant Richard!

Par Philippe Petit-Laurent, avec la participation de Sylvain Bizarre

Les premiers souvenirs de lui remontent aux années 1970, plus exactement à l'année 1973, première année de la nouvelle Commission nommée après l'élargissement des Communautés au Royaume Uni, au Danemark et à l'Irlande. Dans l'entourage du Président François-Xavier Ortoli, auprès duquel je commençais ma carrière, on observait avec sympathie, admiration et curiosité ce singulier jeune homme issu de la Treasury britannique: travailleur inlassable, parfait francophone et, ce qui frappait peut être le plus, associant humilité et courtoisie en un alliage tout à fait rare.

Ses qualités humaines et professionnelles remarquables lui valurent de s'imposer rapidement au sein du cabinet de Sir Christopher Soames dont il devint en 1975 chef de cabinet adjoint, avant de devenir, dans la Commission suivante, en fonction depuis 1977, chef de cabinet de Christopher Tugendhat Commissaire au personnel et au budget. J'ai alors appris à mieux le connaître, par l'entremise de mon ami Sylvain Bizarre qui était à l'époque, sous son autorité, le budgétaire du cabinet. Sylvain a d'ailleurs tenu à nous redire, se souvenant de cette époque, combien il appréciait « la compétence de Richard, ses qualités de négociateur et de conseiller du Commissaire, son indéfectible sérénité en toutes circonstances ainsi que la gestion habile de son équipe ».

L'estime que portait à Richard Hay

François - Xavier Ortoli, devenu Vice président de la Commission, en charge des Affaires économiques et financières, explique qu'il lui ait offert en 1979 de rejoindre la Direction générale des Affaires économiques et financières dans les fonctions de Directeur. C'est pendant la période de deux ans passée à ce que l'on appelait alors la Dg II que Richard eut l'opportunité de se faire apprécier par ce remarquable détecteur de talents que fut Jean-Claude Morel. Et que j'eus pour la première fois la possibilité, en ma qualité de responsable au cabinet des questions relatives au portefeuille du Vice-Président Ortoli, de travailler de temps à autres avec lui.

En 1981, nous nous sommes retrouvés à la Direction générale du personnel et de l'administration, lui comme Directeur général adjoint, moi plus modestement comme assistant du nouveau Directeur général, Jean-Claude Morel. Pendant les cinq années que nous y passâmes, Richard fut, je crois, très heureux; son immense expertise et sa rigueur souriante firent merveille dans les innombrables dossiers techniques qu'à Bruxelles, au CCAB, à Luxembourg et dans les concertations techniques avec les OSP, il eut à traiter. Même si la redoutable machine de guerre mise en place par Morel lui a, sans doute à tort, donné l'impression que le job était plus facile qu'il ne l'était en réalité, protégé qu'il était des coups les plus durs par un patron qui y détruisit sa santé...

En 1986, Richard Hay remplaça tout



Richard parle à Maroš Šefčovič lors de l'assemblée générale de l'AIACE, 2012.

naturellement Jean-Claude Morel, devenu Directeur général des Budgets. Et là, je dois dire, les choses se gâtèrent : après quelques temps, des tensions se manifestèrent, tant avec les représentants du personnel qu'avec le collègue et son Président, Jacques Delors. Je n'étais plus là pour comprendre les origines de ses tensions. Mais j'imagine les sources de malentendus que purent représenter la nationalité de Richard, soumis aux pressions de ses compatriotes, et son entêtement d'homme de bonne volonté, déjà en proie aux exigences d'une foi religieuse impérieuse. Bref si je crois que son comportement était souvent difficile à comprendre, je suis aujourd'hui également convaincu que, sur plusieurs points, Richard avait raison : par exemple lorsqu'il préconisait la création de multiples Agences, afin de soulager les effectifs et le budget de fonctionnement de la Commission... alors que les partisans de l'orthodoxie (dont j'étais) s'arc-boutaient contre le démantèlement du service public européen Il est vrai que tout cela se passait bien avant le cataclysme de la chute de la Commission Santer et l'arrivée de Neil Kinnock...

Je retrouvais professionnellement Richard Hay, une ultime fois à la fin 1989, lorsque je fus nommé Directeur du Personnel. Mais la messe était alors pratiquement

dite: à peine une année après, il quittait la Commission et était remplacé par Franz Dekoster.

Je garde un triste souvenir de cette période d'attente malsaine où chacun savait que le « roi était nu »... Avec douceur et dignité, Richard subit, résista, tint bon jusqu'à la fin ... avec une force de caractère peu commune face à l'adversité.

La suite est beaucoup plus sympathique: après quelques temps Richard rejoignit la carrière de clergyman qui était, depuis tant d'années, sa véritable vocation. Puis-avec l'appui, je crois, de quelques collègues inspirés ... au nombre desquels figurait Dominique Deshayes- il a pu conjurer les mauvais fantômes de la dernière partie de sa carrière à la Commission: de 2011 à 2015 il aura été, pour moi comme pour tant d'autres collègues pensionnés de nos Institutions, le Président compétent, amical compréhensif et consensuel d'une AIACE, ou il a retrouvé, paradoxe de la vie, un grand nombre de ceux qui l'avaient vu quitter ses fonctions de Directeur général sans regret.

Étonnant Richard Hay!

C'était un « Monsieur bien » et je suis heureux de l'avoir connu. Son épouse Miriam, compagne d'une vie, peut être fière de lui.

Joaquín Díaz Pardo

Dear Richard,

You will allow me to make this an open letter—yet at the same time preserve the tone of our long epistolary exchange, which we kept alive over these past years and which I always found especially rewarding.

You honoured me with reflections that were always stimulating, and together we shared opinions, certainties, and, not infrequently, concerns about Europe, which you loved so dearly. We also shared perplexities and hopes. And how could I forget your frequent invocation of hope itself, and of its “daughters” — indignation and courage — in the Augustinian sense, whenever you spoke of the European Union: its challenge to become more united and stronger, and your sorrow at the United Kingdom’s departure from it. You disliked the word *Brexit* and always called it what you believed it to be: a grave political mistake. Yet you ended such reflections with the hope that one day a genuine EU–UK partnership might help to heal that loss.

You will remember that in our parents’ time, and even in our own younger years, we often kept the letters we received, so that we could reread them, recall shared ideas and feelings, and even revisit differences of opinion—which always enriched us. I have done the same now, rereading our digital correspondence: where we alternated between discussions about AIACE, about Europe and the UK, and, depending on circumstances, more personal matters in which sensitivity was present. And, not least, the religious

dimension: Christmas and Easter were often occasions when you shared your thoughts on what unites people in Christian faith and your persistent vision of ecumenism.

—★—

From you I always received advice filled with true *words of wisdom*. I recall an anecdote: my idea—wisely discouraged by you—of quoting *Humpty Dumpty* on one occasion. I thought humour might be helpful, but you, despite your fine sense of it (not always visible to everyone), steered me toward a more fitting approach.

Not long ago, and I shared it with Miriam, I reviewed my personal archive from my time as a Commission official. The very first document marking my entry into service bore your name: R. Hay. At that time, you were Director-General for Personnel (now Human Resources). Thirty-three years later, you proposed me as a candidate for President of AIACE International. Who would have imagined it then? I accepted because I shared your vision—the one you yourself had expressed in our correspondence—that our work in AIACE should be guided by a “spirit of service.” In retirement, we gave back what we had received from the institutions and from society: working to defend the interests of EU pensioners, under the philosophy of honouring the nobility and effort of the European Civil Service. That was our shared mission, and the reason we worked together in AIACE.



Every person leaves a mark on the institution they serve. If I were to highlight one distinctive quality you gave to AIACE International—alongside conciliatory firmness, temperance (a virtue British gentlemen always link to Kipling), and sensible dialogue—it would undoubtedly be your generosity and your conviction in that “spirit of service.” Pope Francis once said in a homily: “*Life has no meaning unless it is lived in service.*” You embodied that truth admirably. You were rightfully honoured by being named Honorary President of AIACE International, and modestly, AIACE Spain also wished to acknowledge you with its medal at its anniversary in 2019.

I am certain that what I express

Richard signing the Social Contract for Progress by the EC and the trade unions and staff associations, 1989

here—however incomplete it may be—is above all a tribute to the human qualities that defined you. You will remain in the memory of all who benefited from your generous work, and very particularly in mine. In one of your letters you wrote: “*Memory is a blessing...*” You will always remain in ours.

With my warmest best wishes, as we used to say,

Joaquín Díaz Pardo

Richard Hay

Par Jacques Lecomte

Cela m'a fait beaucoup de peine d'apprendre que Richard nous a brusquement quittés. Nous nous étions connus dès son arrivée en 1970, lui comme chef de cabinet adjoint de Sir Christopher Soames, beau-fils de Winston Churchill. Il était chargé des questions administratives au Cabinet et moi comme assistant de la DG Relations extérieures, nous avions de fréquentes relations. Quant il est devenu en 1977 chef de Cabinet de Christopher Tugendhat, il me demanda de venir le rejoindre, ce que je ne fis pas.

Par après nos chemins se sont recroisés à nouveau quand, avec lui comme directeur général adjoint de la DG Personnel et Administration, nous avons élaboré avec Evelyne Delauche ce qui est toujours l'annexe X du Statut et qui régit nos collègues en délégation, avec quelques changements mineurs. Richard s'est beaucoup investi dans cette tâche et son autorité fit beaucoup pour que le Conseil adopte cette nouvelle réglementation en moins d'un an.

Richard était un homme d'une droiture et d'une intégrité au-dessus de ce que l'on peut imaginer et avait un œil particulier sur mon unité qui gérait les bureaux de la Commission en dehors de Bruxelles et Luxembourg. Un jour je dus lui présenter la demande d'un fonctionnaire voulant déménager son cheval de Caracas vers Bruxelles. "Un cheval !" s'écria Richard. Finalement je pus le convaincre de même que le Contrôleur financier que cela coûterait moins cher que du mobilier. Mais je me souviens encore de sa réaction.

N'oublions pas non plus, nous pensionnés, ce que nous lui devons, avec Ludwig Schubert, pour la défense de nos droits à pension. La ligne suivie par lui à sa sortie de la Commission convient parfaitement à son style austère mais surtout à la correction très anglaise de sa personne.

Merci Richard pour ce que tu as donné à la Commission et à l'Europe.

Jacques Lecomte

I will never forget his wisdom. Our long telephone calls. His doubts. His kindness, his moral assistance when I lost my husband. Admiring his serenity when he was trying, in vain, to repair damages!

When I lost my husband Richard Hay sent this poem to me, without delay. I will never forget my family's and my reactions when I read and translated it to all gathered at home. May Miriam and his children find the same consolation I had reading it! God rest his soul!

Goodbye dear friend and excellent President of AIACE International! I, personally, will miss you enormously.

Despina Vamvakidou, President Section Greece

Gone From My Sight

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship, at my side,
spreads her white sails to the moving breeze and starts
for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength.
I stand and watch her until, at length, she hangs like a speck
of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then, someone at my side says, "There, she is gone."

Gone where?

Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast,
hull and spar as she was when she left my side.
And, she is just as able to bear her load of living freight to her destined port.

Her diminished size is in me – not in her.

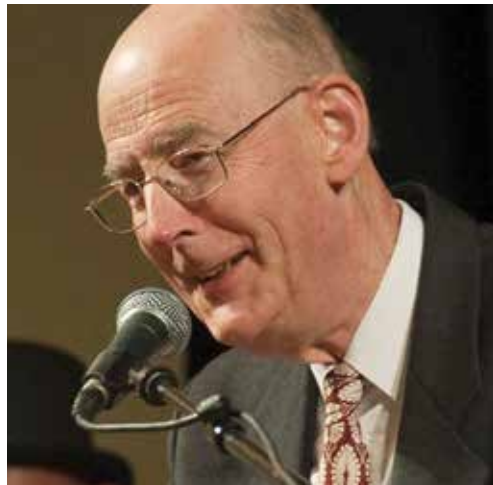
And, just at the moment when someone says, "There, she is gone,"
there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices
ready to take up the glad shout, "Here she comes!"

And that is dying...

Henry Van Dyke

Je perds un ami précieux

Par Didier Hespel



Il n'y a pas plus de 3 semaines, Richard et moi étions encore en conversation (par courriel). Le choc de son décès est d'autant plus vif et j'en suis atterré. Il m'avait encore répété à quel point il était navré de ne pas pouvoir assister aux Assises de cette année en raison d'engagements dans sa vie familiale (à cette même date!). J'ai connu Richard tant dans ma vie professionnelle (particulièrement lorsque j'étais président du Comité central du Personnel) que AIACEienne. Lorsqu'il était Directeur général de la DGIX (l'époque des chiffres), il y avait une collaboration franche et ouverte et une estime réciproque.

Plus tard, lorsque nous nous sommes retrouvés à l'AIACE, les relations sont devenues encore plus cordiales et constructives, véritablement amicales même, bien au-delà des limites de l'AIACE, y compris avec Miriam. A une exception près, Richard a toujours été un grand sage qui n'a jamais fait l'économie de ses avis lorsqu'on le lui demandait et n'a jamais hésité à remettre les pendules à l'heure. Depuis mon engagement actif dans l'AIACE, il n'a cessé de m'accorder son soutien et a toujours montré sa grande appréciation pour cet engagement. Nous perdons un éminent collègue et je perds un ami précieux.

Didier Hespel

AIACE members share their loss

Richard was an eminent figure for all of us. As new AIACE members we Finns experienced how Richard combined his constructive and positive presidency with a kind and supportive approach to all members of the AIACE community.

We fondly remember how Richard took time for numerous discussions with us during the assises that he attended with his equally considerate wife Miriam every year even after his presidency. Richard's wise knowledge and advice helped us better understand where we come from and where we are heading.

We extend our deepest condolences to Richard's whole family. Richard's legacy will continue to inspire us all, and he will be greatly missed.

With heartfelt sympathy,

Section Finland

*Pres. Tapani Piha, Heikki Salmi,
Elisabeth Helander*

—★—

The AIACE Italy section expresses its sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Richard Hay on his passing.

Section Italy

Pres. Franco Rinaudo

La section Belgique exprime ses plus sincères condoléances à la famille de Richard pour cette nouvelle aussi inattendue que triste.

Section Belgique

Pres. Raffaella Longoni

—★—

On behalf of the Irish section of AIACE, I would like to pass on our deepest sympathy to Miriam and the family and to all his colleagues in the UK section. Richard was loved and respected by all of us and will be greatly missed.

May he rest in peace.

Section Ireland

Pres. Anne Hennon

—★—

Triste jour. Notre communauté perd un grand européen et un homme d'une grande gentillesse mais aussi un « eurocrate » et un président de l'AIACE de tout premier plan. La section France présente ses très sincères condoléances à son épouse ainsi qu'à sa famille.

Nous rendrons un hommage plus solennel à Richard dans notre prochain INFO qui doit sortir à l'automne.

C'est effectivement une bien triste nouvelle. J'avais eu le plaisir de le rencontrer et de converser en toute confiance et simplicité avec lui, lors d'un voyage organisé par la section Aiace-Grèce, il y a quelques années. Un homme de valeurs...

Nos condoléances à sa famille,

Section France

Pres. René Guth

Vice President Marie-Claude Blin

On behalf of the board of the Dutch section (AIACE NL), I would like to express our sincere condolences to the family and other loved ones of Richard Hay.

Our thoughts are with them. Much strength in the days to come.

Section Netherlands

Brigitte Kimman

—★—

On behalf of the Section Austria let me express our sincerest condolences to the family of Richard Hay and all his colleagues in the UK section. He will be greatly missed by us – rest in peace.

Section Österreich

Pres. Karl Kellner

—★—

On behalf of AIACE-Danmark, I express our deepest sympathy with Miriam, it is indeed shocking news. He was a wonderful person, so warmhearted and wise. We shall all miss him.

Our thoughts will be with Miriam at this difficult time.

Section Denmark

Pres. Eva Dudzinska

—★—

On behalf of the board of the Swedish section, we would also like to express our condolences to the family and loved ones of Richard Hay.

Section Sweden

Pres. Lars-Olof Hollner

