

## A Venture Philanthropist Before His Time

Richard Q (Tigger) Hoare OBE, DL 1943 - 2020

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Richard Q Hoare, known to so many as Tigger, died aged 77. Tigger has been celebrated for his dedicated service to the family business, for his capacity for friendship, his generosity, his love of his family and for the OBE he was awarded in 2006 for his outstanding services to the charitable sector. But this is only half the story, the true legacy of Richard Hoare, lies in the bold, entrepreneurial and empathetic spirit of his extensive philanthropy.

Venture philanthropy is a term that has only recently become fashionable in charitable circles and it is one that I don't think I ever heard Tigger use. It is however increasingly recognised as the most effective way to give funds. Venture philanthropy is a sharing of expertise as well as money but at its heart, it is trying to capture a change in the power dynamic between the donor and the charity.

Recipients are treated as respected experts in their field and supported in their endeavours to create social change. By trusting and investing in people, change becomes embedded and communities are able to both invent and take ownership of the activities that improve lives. This way of thinking has not been the norm amongst those distributing charitable funds for the last half century.

When I first started working in the charity sector in 2007, I was fortunate to have one of the greatest tutors: Richard Hoare had taken me on to help him run his foundation The Bulldog Trust. Richard's standard way of operating was, when he came across a small charity he was impressed by, to simply ask what they needed. Having started and run a number of businesses himself, he was well aware of the challenges in running organisations. He (or his friends) were pressed into service as mentors, advisors or trustees of the organisations he supported to ensure that not only were his funds helping, but his knowledge was too. A relative newcomer to the charity sector, I learnt from Richard how to make grants and offer help, while I learnt from the charities that these methods were exceptionally well-received but also highly unusual.

Richard was a man without artifice and without ego. He charmed everyone he met with his kindness and his warmth. Whether it was a troubled young man who was finding his feet through an apprenticeship in boat building or a member of the royal family, it was instantly clear that Tigger cared. The humanity of his response to people was reflected in the way he looked after and nurtured the charities he supported. Much like the investor that he was, when he believed in the work of a charity leader or social entrepreneur, he invested his support in the whole. He was happy to take risk when he believed in a project, understanding of circumstances and realistic about what could be achieved. But perhaps most important of all, he trusted those he worked with to do their jobs.

Tigger's philanthropic spirit was never more in evidence than in his purchase of the stunning neo-gothic mansion on the Embankment, Two Temple Place. Tigger had fallen in love with the house in 1999 and swiftly decided to buy it for The Bulldog Trust because he felt its stunning interiors should



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be seen by the public. His unflagging support for the unprecedented programmes that were set up, establishing the house as a space devoted to showcasing regional museums and collections, characterised his conviction to back ideas he believed in even if prevailing opinion might advise otherwise. The annual, free exhibition, education, events and volunteer programmes that have run since have welcomed over 300,000 people to the house and built an extraordinarily loyal and enthusiastic army of individuals who have also fallen in love with Two Temple Place. They are a tribute to both Tigger's vision and to him personally that, along with the house, will live forever.

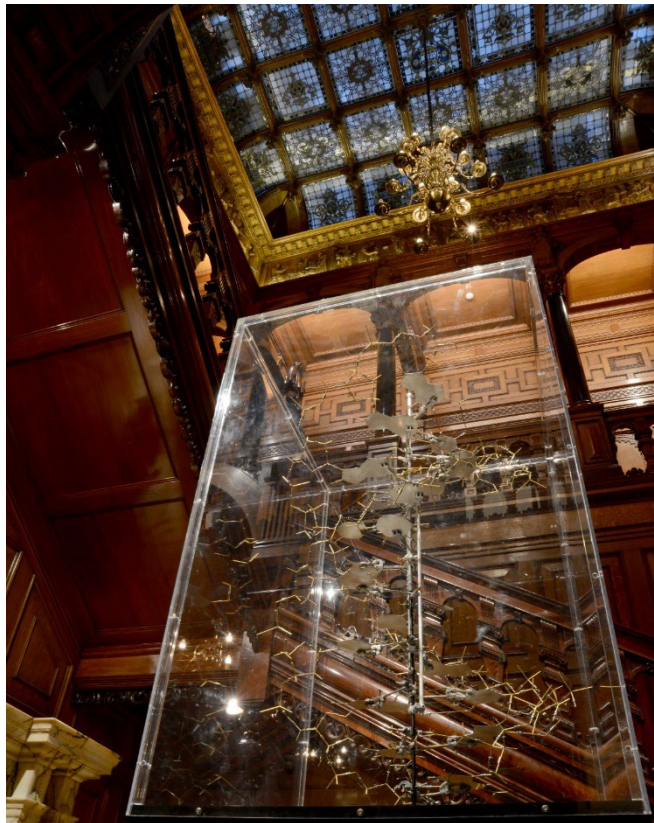
Richard Hoare was a not man who was just about the triumphs. Should hard times hit any of the charitable endeavours he was involved with, he was there to listen and learn and continue to provide what help he could to get the organisation back on track. What is the most satisfying outcome of all is that Tigger's humane, hands-on methods of supporting charities worked better than any others I have

seen. While so many of his successes are hard to document, not least because Tigger was not a man who had much time for paperwork, the legacy that he has left is evidence that this man really was on to something.

The Bulldog Trust, chaired by Tigger's son Charles, has now spent eight years attempting to put Tigger's methods into broader practice. The Fore is the ambitious project that has evolved from piloting a new funding model generously supported by Tigger's fellow partners at C Hoare and Co through the Golden Bottle Trust. The Fore is, in essence, our attempt to support charities in a way that embodies Tigger's extraordinary respect for people working at the front line, his love for the entrepreneurial and his belief the best kind of support is that which is offered in the spirit of partnership. All our research – we aren't so sure about paperwork but we do love data - shows that these methods are creating greater impact, stronger relationships and increased respect between parties.

In the current uncertain times, The Fore is doing its best to ensure small charities and social enterprises offering fresh solutions for societies greatest challenges - reducing knife crime, fighting childhood obesity or connecting the isolated elderly – are able to make it through the pandemic and continue supporting the most vulnerable. But whatever we do and whatever direction we are required to take, we will strive to exemplify the spirit of our visionary founder and the values he taught us.

*Mary Rose Gunn has served as the Chief Executive of The Bulldog Trust since 2007 and is the Founder and Chief Executive of the subsidiary, The Fore. In April 2020 The Fore launched RAFT, its response to the Covid19 crisis, offering resilience funding and urgent skilled volunteer support to small charities and social enterprises in the UK. RAFT is dedicated to the memory of Richard Q Hoare.*



*Reproduction of James Watson & Francis Crick's 1953 skeletal model of DNA from the Cambridge Laboratory of Molecular Biology, in the Staircase of Two Temple Place Discoveries, 2014 © Paul Tucker*