

Timo

Thank you all so much for coming today. Dad would have been delighted – and not a little surprised – to see so many of you here. Mum, Lara and I are very happy and grateful that you could join us. I hope you won't mind if I share a few reflections.

When you're a kid, you take almost everything for granted, and I was no exception.

My dad was a pilot, so I thought it normal to spend the school holidays in America or Africa. Once, our family flew to California on our own Boeing 707, with not a single other passenger on board. Another time, I sat in the cockpit as we touched down at Nairobi airport at a landing speed of over 200 miles an hour, Dad at the controls.

When I was 11, I spent a week over Christmas on the tropical island of Mauritius while Dad flew planes back and forth to Bombay. For most of that time I snorkelled among the coral reefs (and, incidentally, became obsessed with the creatures I found there, sparking my interest in biology). On Christmas Day, Santa came across the lagoon on a speedboat and gave out gifts to the children staying at the hotel. At the time this all seemed perfectly natural.

I also thought it usual to have a dad who builds boats in the garage (specially extended for the purpose, of course). And one who appears in the local paper for stopping the town's traffic while his creation is transported out of the driveway on the back of a lorry.

I once joined him for a trip to Weymouth Speed Week, where competitors try to set new speed-sailing records. He had designed and built a 20-foot catamaran, which we towed to the south coast on a tiny dinghy trailer, pulled by an ancient Austin Maxi. (In his youth and middle age, Dad invariably drove old cars, only succumbing to the lure of a brand-new set of wheels as he himself got older.) On the roof was a huge triangular launching trolley of his own design that he commissioned to be built out of welded steel. I'd like to give you some

sense of the true size and weight of this paraphernalia, but my childhood memories are an unreliable guide, so all I can say with confidence is that it was 100% illegal. We made our way to Weymouth slowly, with branches crashing down onto the road as the huge launch trolley smashed into the trees above.

On his first exploratory run in this new catamaran, Dad sailed fast enough to pull away quickly from the support speedboat, then almost immediately crashed into a buoy and ripped a hole in the bow. So he posted no official time and that was the end of his Speed Week. We only discovered later that the speedboat which had been following him – and trying in vain to keep up – was comfortably faster than the world speed sailing record at the time.

I don't recall Dad ever being disheartened by such events. He was competitive – you don't become an elite sailor any other way – but for him the true sources of satisfaction were a cunning design, a cleverly implemented race strategy and a well-trimmed sail: man and machine, wind and water in perfect harmony. The trophies and awards, when they came, were just more stuff to put on the shelf.

And how much stuff there was on his shelves– not to mention his desk, floor and every other available surface. Decades' worth of sailing and flying magazines, great tomes on aero- and hydrodynamic theory, random pieces of rigging, samples of plywood or fibreglass, and reams and reams of paper, much of it covered in his inimitable and illegible scrawl.

I remember slipping into his office in the evenings to see what he was up to. As the clouds of pipe smoke parted, he'd be revealed sitting at his drawing board concocting a new design, or poring over some aerodynamic charts. He loved to show me what he was doing. When sharing some particularly interesting insight or clever contrivance, he would sometimes literally cry with delight.

These memories bring to mind Wordsworth's description of Newton as a man "voyaging through strange seas of thought". That was how Dad seemed to me as he sat in his office. He worked slowly and methodically, but came up with designs of startling originality and – when they were built – uncanny effectiveness. I'm biased, of course, but in this I believe he was something of a genius.

Yet he was modest to a fault. He described his job of airline pilot as 'a glorified bus driver'. He never seemed concerned whether he got credit for his achievements. Once on holiday in America we came across one of his creations – a Galion 22 – in the local marina. It was for sale and the notice proudly proclaimed the boat to be nothing less than a "Hannay design". He was visibly pleased, but seemed to think this funny rather than flattering.

The fact that he didn't take himself too seriously also helped to make him a great family man. He never took umbrage when his children poked fun at him (as we did frequently, even into adulthood). He was also, I am pleased to say, a faithful guardian of that eternal truth known only to we men of a certain age – namely that the highest form of humour is the pun.

I can't speak with any objectivity about how he saw his children, but I know – because he told me and it was plain for all to see – that he took huge, heartfelt delight in his five grandchildren, all of whom are here today.

He must also be congratulated for wooing and marrying Mum. Of course, Lara and I have special reason to be grateful for this. But Mum has also been a wonderful wife to Dad, not least in his latter days, when he needed constant care.

A familiar pattern developed: Dad would apologise for his infirmities, Mum would attend to his every need, then Dad would tell Lara and me to take care of her as well. To the end they looked out for each other. The Japanese arts scholar Kakuzō Okakura once said (writing in

English): "He only who has lived with the beautiful can die beautifully". Dad was fortunate enough to achieve that elusive goal.

I prefer to think of his life not as over, but as complete. Complete, of course, in the sense that it is over. But complete, too, in the sense that it was a full life and a good one that touched many people and left us better for it. No one can ask or hope for more.

Dad was the living embodiment of the phrase, 'still waters run deep'. A man of relatively few words, he had a profound appreciation for life and a strong dedication to the things he loved: family, friends, flying and the freedom of the seas. Thank you so much for being with us as we bid him farewell on his final voyage.

I'll leave you with the words of Karen Blixen, writing as Isak Dinesen. They somehow seem apt: "The cure for anything is salt water – sweat, tears, or the sea."

Thank you.