

Service to the memory of the Marquess of Exeter

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Honesty and simplicity were two staffs of life which took David George Brownlow Cecil, sixth Marquess of Exeter through his 76 years. When the aristocracy and the world of amateur sport gathered in London on December 9th to remember his life they found those qualities as the theme of the service.

- The Guards Chapel in Birdcage Walk stands close to Buckingham Palace where the Royal Standard was flying, indicating that Her Majesty the Queen was in residence. It was another reminder that the Marquess was a member of one of England's premier families, loyal servants of the Monarch. The Duke of Edinburgh was represented at the service, Ex-King Constantine of Greece, The Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Prince George of Denmark attended and Juan Antonio Samaranch and Lord Killanin led a considerable representation of the Olympic Movement. A former British Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas Home read the lesson and the Band of the Irish Guards played from the gallery of the chapel, a modern somewhat stark building. The Right David Say, Bishop of Rochester and the Rev John Westmuckett officiated at the service.

Guards officers in red uniforms ushered guests to their seats as the Band and Organist played from Finlandia, Nimrod, from Elgar's Enigma Variations and Handel's Water Music. It was essentially a service of tradition with the congregation singing the hymn 'Love divine all Loves excelling' and 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise', hymns that David Exeter had heard and sung through his years at school at Cambridge University and at Stamford, the family home; hymns which still form cornerstones of the Christian religion. For those of us who knew David, the service reflected one quality and almost missed another. It was his request that there should be no address at his memorial gathering, modesty which relieved someone of an almost impossible task. The facets of his life were manifold and industrious and many of those in the vast congregation would have known much of one, little of the others; the bidding was an appropriate encapsulation of the man *"We remember... David who without thought of*

reward or glory, gave up his days to the service of his fellows; who was ever wise and gentle in his understanding and just and merciful in his dealings; who loved all things that were simple, beautiful and true and who by force of his unconscious example was a strength and an inspiration to all who knew him."

"We thank God for his sense of fun and ever present laughter ; for the love he gave his family ; for his unbounded enthusiasm ; for his dedication to the task of maintaining the fellowship of amateur sport, throughout the world. "

Those words emphasised the immense importance of the man in world sports. As the doyen of the Olympic Movement he reflected sometimes the view and standard of other decades, but he did so with clarity and without flinching from a belief and it is essential for all those who follow and shape a part of world society that they hear and understand the views and experiences of those who have gone before.

As the congregation moved away to the sounds of Handel's Scipio and Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1, the deep influence he had on the lives of many if not all of those present must have been felt.

