

Sir Hugh Bidwell

January 21 2014, 5:31pm,
The Times



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As Lord Mayor of London from 1989 to 1990, Sir Hugh Bidwell was an early advocate of Crossrail and was instrumental in helping to secure

agreement from the Government to proceed with a project that he regarded as critical to the long-term competitiveness of the City of London, a subject which he remained passionate about for the rest of his life. As recently as November, despite fighting against motor neurone disease, he found the energy to meet and brief Daniel Moylan, the Mayor of London's aviation adviser, on his views about London airport policy.

Hugh Charles Philip Bidwell was born the eldest child of Edward Bidwell, a wine importer, and his wife, Elizabeth. He was educated at Stoneyhurst College, subsequently commissioned in the East Surrey Regiment, and was seconded to the King's African Rifles, serving with the latter in Nyasaland. In his mid-twenties Bidwell embarked upon what was to be a long and successful career in the food business, serving successively as managing director of Viota Foods and as a director of Robertson's Foods before joining Pearce Duff as deputy chairman and managing director in 1970, becoming chairman the following year.

Subsequently, for eight years, he was president of the British Food Export Council. In this capacity he once spoke in French at the opening of the SIAL food exhibition in Paris, sharing a platform with Edward Heath, the Prime Minister, which prompted the Sunday Times business section to remark that "Monsieur Bidwell did a good job promoting the entente cordiale but the quality of his French made Monsieur Heath sound like a founding member of the Academie Francaise!"

Elected Alderman for Billingsgate Ward in 1979, Bidwell served as Master of the Worshipful Company of Grocers and as Sheriff of the City of London, and was elected Lord Mayor for 1989-90, when he was appointed GBE. Throughout his year of office he travelled extensively and his visit to Kyiv in 1990 marked the first official visit of a Lord Mayor of London to the Soviet Union.

After stepping down as mayor, Bidwell served variously as chairman of Riggs AP Bank, deputy chairman of the conference and exhibition company ITE Group, and chairman of both British Invisibles (set up to promote UK financial services abroad) and the London Tourist Board.

In his final months, battling against motor neurone disease without a word of complaint, Bidwell demonstrated a remarkable spirit and strength of character symbolic of the determination that characterised his life. He hosted three wonderful lunches at White's for 60 of his friends, providing an opportunity for him to entertain and share memories and amusing anecdotes with those he loved and cared about most. He will be remembered most for his kindness, generosity and good humour.

He married Jenifer Celia Webb, a dedicated gardener and flower arranger, in 1962. They had three children. His wife supported him in his civic life and a wide range of charitable activities until her death in 2001. In 2003 Bidwell married Priscilla Pode. He is survived by her, by two sons, James

and Mark, and by a daughter, Sophie.

Sir Hugh Bidwell, GBE, Lord Mayor of London 1989-90, was born on November 1, 1934. He died on December 7, 2013, aged 79