

Anthony A. Hughes

Died on March 24, 2025 at John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford



Anthony Ashby Hughes was born in April 1941 in the small village of Great Rollright in the Cotswolds in West Oxfordshire. At only the age of three, he met his future wife, Lucy, whilst attending nursery school. He later went to grammar school in Richmond, London. During his school years, he obtained a pilot's licence hoping it might be useful in case he went to serve in the British Royal Air Force. His intentions changed in 1960 when he started reading Physics at New College, University of Oxford.

Anthony would have known about the International Seismological Summary (ISS) – the predecessor of the International Seismological Centre (ISC) - from an early age, as his father, J.S.

Hughes, was practically running the ISS in Kew. Anthony probably first helped the ISS (as a summer job) whilst still an undergraduate at Oxford. Following his graduation, he worked for the ISS and managed its closure in Kew. He then moved to Edinburgh to join the ISC which was at the time managed by Pat Willmore.

When Edouard Arnold became the ISC Director, Anthony was appointed a Deputy Director and took responsibility for the content of the monthly ISC Bulletin. After Arnold was called back to the US in 1977, the ISC Governing Council (GC) appointed Anthony as the Director of the ISC.

Anthony wasn't a keen computer user himself, but he fully recognised the importance of computers in the operation of the ISC. In those days, the ISC used time slots on large computers belonging to other organizations. In July 1981, the GC meeting in London, Ontario (Canada) approved the acquisition of the ISC's first computer a DEC VAX750, which was overseen by Anthony.

Originally, the ISC was operating from a building of the University of Edinburgh and then, after moving to Southern England in 1976, from commercially leased premises in Newbury, which placed a large burden on the ISC budget. In 1986, a considerable rise in the US dollar/pound sterling exchange rate enabled the ISC to invest in its own building in Thatcham, with a building loan provided by Lloyds Bank. Anthony was very proud of this event as it offered financial security for the ISC for years to come. Anthony put a lot of effort

into keeping the ISC going for more than 20 years, navigating through financially turbulent years while gaining the support of new member-institutions with the help of his colleagues at the ISC.

During Anthony's time, the ISC Bulletin, the Regional Catalogue, the Felt and Damaging Earthquakes, and the Bibliography of Seismology were produced at a steady pace, month after month, using a printer in Bangkok, Thailand. It was common for Anthony to come out of his office joyfully announcing that "another month bites the dust". In later years, Anthony organised the production of CD-ROMs at the ISC which became the most popular way of distributing the ISC data before distribution over the Internet took over.

At the end of 1997 Anthony stepped down after more than 20 years as the ISC Director and a total of 33 years of service for the ISC. He left the ISC after a few weeks of assisting the new Director, Raymond Willemann, in taking over the role.

For his "services to global seismology", Anthony was honoured with the award of the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE), following a submission by a former Chair of the ISC GC, David Denham from Australia. In 2000, Anthony was presented with this award by Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace.

Anthony remained active in his retirement. He continued his bell ringing services at the St. Nicholas church in his home village of Old Marston, which he enjoyed for 40 years. He was also a Church Warden at the church of St. Thomas A'Beckett in the parish of Elsfield in Oxfordshire where he greatly helped fundraising efforts for the church restoration projects.

Anthony leaves behind his wife Lucy and daughter Tamsin, who were ever so hospitable whilst welcoming the rotating international seismologists and their families into their lovely traditional house in Old Marston, Oxford.

Written in April 2025, by Dmitry Storchak

(with thoughtful assistance from David McGregor, Robin Adams and Lucy Hughes)