

Robert A. Hinde, CBE, 1923–2016

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IN MEMORIAM

Robert A. Hinde, CBE, 1923–2016

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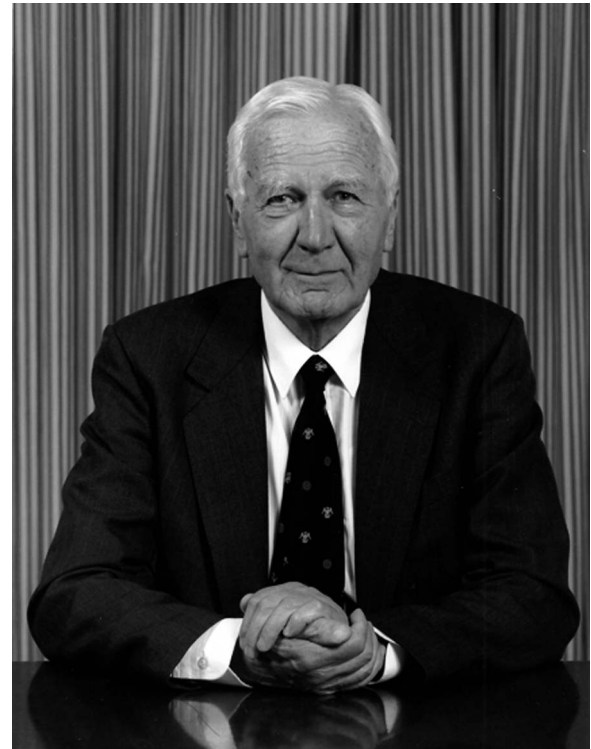
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Robert Aubrey Hinde, eminent student of animal behavior and a Corresponding Fellow (1962) and Honorary Fellow (1976) of the American Ornithologists' Union, passed away on December 23, 2016, at his home in Madingley, Cambridge, UK. Although his early work was centered on avian behavior, during his long career at the University of Cambridge he broadened his research focus to primates, including the development of human social behavior.

Robert was born in Norwich, UK, on October 26, 1923, the last of four children of Ernest and Isabella Hinde. He attended Oundle School in Peterborough, after which his education was interrupted by the onset of World War II. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force and spent the war as a pilot in Coastal Command, flying Catalina and Sunderland flying boats. In 1946, following his war service, he went up to St. John's College, Cambridge. While there he attended the first Student Conference in Bird Biology at the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology (EGI) in Oxford. After graduating from Cambridge in 1948, he returned to the EGI to work on his D.Phil. under David Lack. Although Lack wanted him to do a comparative food study of rooks and jackdaws, Robert was much more interested in ethology than ecology. Instead, he did a comparative behavioral study on the tits of Wytham Woods. His thesis was entitled *A Comparative Behaviour Study of the Paridae*.

Following completion of his doctorate, W. H. Thorpe lured Robert back to Cambridge to serve as the curator of the recently founded Ornithological Field Station on the Madingley estate near Cambridge. Initially, research at the station was focused on the development of birdsong, but under Robert's leadership the scope of research gradually broadened to include imprinting, avian neuroendocrinology, sensitive periods during development, primate behavior, and social development in children. In recognition of this much wider research focus, the university renamed the station the Sub-Department of Animal Behaviour in 1960.

Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey, pioneers in the field study of chimpanzees and gorillas, respectively, were two of many students who worked with Robert for their Ph.Ds. In a tribute to Robert ("Remembering my Mentor: Robert Hinde"), Goodall writes, "He was the perfect supervisor for



Robert A. Hinde, CBE. Photo credit: Royal Society in the early 1990s, courtesy of Joan Hinde

me, and I can never pay sufficient tribute to him for how he helped transform an enthusiastic, but naïve young woman into a successful Ph.D. candidate. And, most importantly of all, he taught me to think critically."

Robert authored 15 books, edited another 32, and published more than 300 scientific papers. His most widely cited papers on birds are "The biological significance of the territories of birds" (*Ibis*, 1965) and "The behaviour of the Great Tit (*Parus major*) and some other related species" (*Behaviour Supplement*, 1952). His most widely cited book is *Animal Behavior: A Synthesis of Ethology and Psychology* (McGraw-Hill, 1966), which has also been translated into Italian, Russian, French, and German.

Robert was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1974, and later Honorary Fellow of the British Academy,

Honorary Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), and Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was named Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 1988, and in 1996 he received the Royal Medal from the Royal Society “in recognition of his contributions to the field of animal behaviour.” He also received seven honorary doctorates, including one from Oxford. He was elected a Fellow of St. John’s in 1951 and became Royal Society Research Professor in 1963, a post from which he retired in 1989 with emeritus status. He served as Master of St. John’s from 1989 to 1994.

Robert was committed to showing that war is an unacceptable way of settling disputes. He served as president of both the British Pugwash Group and the Movement for the Abolition of War. His commitment is also evident in the title of one of his later books, *War No More: Eliminating Conflict in the Nuclear Age* (with J. Rotblat; Pluto, 2003), as well as his last book, *My ‘War’* (Spokesman, 2016), which he dedicated to his children and their descendants.

Robert married Hester Coutts in 1948, and they had four children, Francis, Kate, Jonathan, and Miranda, before they divorced. In 1971 he married Joan Stevenson, who had come to Madingley in 1964 to do a post doc with Thorpe on chaffinch song learning. Their marriage produced two daughters, Lara and Camilla. Joan remained at Madingley throughout her career, including serving as university demonstrator in the Department of Psychology and senior research fellow in the Department of Zoology. Joan, his 6 children, 18 grandchildren, and 5 (soon to be 6) great-grandchildren survive. In a biography written for the memorial service at St. John’s in May 2017, Professor Sir Patrick Bateson, a former student and colleague of Robert’s, concluded: “As well as a great scientist, Robert was a truly good man.”

I thank Joan Hinde for providing key information for this essay and for commenting on an earlier draft.

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