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Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you for being here to celebrate the life of my partner, my soulmate, Thomas William Hughes — Tom.

Tom was born on 15 January 1985 in Cardiff, and at 40, far too soon, he left us on 30 July 2025.

But if you knew Tom, you know that dates were never the headline. The headline was the way he filled the space in between — with creativity, hospitality, and a generous, joyful spirit that drew people in and made them feel at home.

We built our life together in Brighton after he moved there from university, eight years as civil partners and many more as best friends — a home full of friends, music and laughter, where the kettle never quite cooled, and where someone was always being handed a plate, a cushion, or a second helping.

He was partner to me, Daniel; beloved son of Eleri and Glyn; brother to Rhys; and adored uncle to Megan.

He carried those roles like treasures, with a pride that was always tender and never showy.

Tom poured his heart into his café — not just into coffee, though he was a brilliant barista — but into people.

He championed local artists and producers long before it was fashionable, giving wall space and window space and his time to anyone brave enough to create.

He believed community wasn't an idea; it was an action, a welcome, a seat pulled up at a crowded table.

He had that radiantly kind way of seeing you — really seeing you — and then somehow giving you exactly what you didn't know you needed:

a bear hug that reset your day,
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a joke at just the right moment,

a spontaneous playlist that stitched a room together.

He was exuberant and quick to laugh, a natural host who remembered how you took your coffee and what song you loved at 16.

There are so many memories, but the one I hold closest is this:

it's just after midnight, the café's quiet, and we're in our kitchen covered in flour, dancing while the cinnamon buns proof for the morning rush.

He's got a tea towel over his shoulder, Miles Davis on vinyl, and he's singing into a wooden spoon like the world might end if he didn't.

That was Tom — saying yes to joy, even when it was late, even when it meant an early alarm, even when the dough needed another hour and the sink was full.

He taught me to celebrate the small moments — to treat ordinary days like they were worth a toast.

He loved photography, sea swims at dawn, and the soft crackle of a record dropping into place.

Sundays were for potlucks with the neighbours — extra chairs from the cupboard under the stairs, someone turning up with a salad in a mixing bowl, and Tom insisting we all take leftovers.

He believed in community, creativity, inclusivity — not as slogans, but as habits.

He welcomed people until they began to welcome each other.

What will we miss most?

His smile that lit up a crowded room.

His playlists that made the kettle boil a bit brighter.

Those bear hugs that made you feel — for a moment — entirely safe.

To Eleri and Glyn, thank you for the man you raised.

To Rhys and little Megan, he loved you fiercely and bragged about you constantly.

To our Brighton family — the café crew, the artists, the neighbours — you were part of Tom's heartbeat, and he was so proud of what you all built together.

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Today is a celebration of his life because that's what he would have wanted — music, stories, warmth, and the gentle certainty that love doesn't end, it changes rooms.

Grief is love's echo, and in that echo, I can still hear Tom laughing, still feel him nudging us toward the sea at silly o'clock, still telling us to put out another plate because someone new might knock at the door.

I'm grateful, beyond words, for the love he poured into ordinary days, for the way he made a Tuesday feel like a holiday, for the lesson — again and again — to say yes to joy.

If you want to honour Tom, do something simple and kind this week:

buy from a local maker,

put on a record and dance while the bread rises,

invite a neighbour over and give them the good mug,

look someone in the eye and make them feel seen.

Tom lived 40 bright, generous years, and the light of them lingers — in every photograph he snapped, in every cup he lifted across a counter, in every person who found a seat at his table and discovered it was their table too.

Thank you, my love, for every laugh, every song, every cinnamon bun at midnight.

We carry you with us — in our homes, in our mornings, in the way we greet the world with open arms.

And we will keep celebrating, exactly as you taught us.

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