



Blades of Grass

The Story of George Aylwin Hogg

MARK AYLWIN THOMAS

George Aylwin Hogg was a man of remarkable dedication and honour. Though he died in 1945 at the age of thirty, Aylwin's name and legacy is remembered in China to this day—where as a wise and noble friend to the people of China, he immersed himself in the culture and life of the Chinese people whom he served in his mission.

In *Blades of Grass: The Story of George Aylwin Hogg*, author and nephew of the late Mr Hogg, Mark Aylwin Thomas, explores his uncle's own letters and writings and shares this astonishing life story of perseverance, service, and dedication. Thomas offers a personal and compelling window into the character of this remarkable man, and Hogg's own words lend an authentic and distinctive insight into his service—training young Chinese men in their vocations in the remote confines of Northern China in Shandan.

George Aylwin Hogg was part of a vision to create a unique form of industrial training on which to base the reconstruction of industry for a new post-war China. While a vignette of Aylwin's life was portrayed in Roger Spottiswoode's 2008 film, *The Children of Huang Shi*, the full picture of this remarkable life—often painted with Aylwin's own words—shows how this young Englishman's life was deeply interwoven in the lives of the men and people he served.

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Mark Aylwin Thomas was born a few months after Hogg's death, was raised in England and has lived in Finland since 1974. He shares the same unusual middle name—of ancient Celtic origin—as his uncle, whom Thomas became fascinated with after attending a 1988 memorial event in China. Since then he has acted in the role of his uncle in a six-part miniseries for Chinese television, and he has been the guardian of his uncle's papers and legacy.

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