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Mad about the Boy

On a bright, cold day in mid-November a great many people headed to St Paul's Cathedral where the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management was hosting a memorial service for Nick Reeves, who died in July. *The Leisure Review* joined them.

St Paul's was, of course, both an apt and an incongruous venue for a memorial service for the late and much-missed Mr Reeves. Speaking on behalf of the Institution, Jim Oatridge, chair of the CIWEM board of trustees, gave tribute to the man who had led CIWEM for 15 years. "Nick put CIWEM on the map," he said, "and made us all proud of being a member of CIWEM." He also observed that it was fitting that we had come together in the chapel of the Order of the British Empire. Nick's OBE had been a well deserved honour, Oatridge explained, but Nick had always been determined to ask the questions he thought needed asking regardless of the status of those around the table. "It was this ability to raise issues and challenge people in their comfort zones that made him such a leader," he said.

Further tribute came from Nick's wife, Janet, and his daughter Kristy, who read *In Bar Italia*, one of Nick's own poems. Alastair Moseley, a CIWEM past president, provided a musical interlude, playing The Beatles' *Blackbird* on clarinet accompanied by John Gough on the piano, and Professor David Haley gave an address celebrating Nick's radical instincts and his preference for "turning impatience into a virtue". In times of such profound change, Haley urged that we learn not to forget our dreams and learn to make art for life. "Nick's passing has left no void," he said, "but an inspirational force that draws us onwards. We must learn to maintain his radical voice with grace."

Finally Dr Peter Matthews, another CIWEM past president, spoke warmly of Nick as a colleague and a friend. "I stand before you in my brightest socks," he said. "I know many of you have done something similar today in tribute to a man who challenged convention. He was a good friend and a good companion. It was a honour to know him." In keeping with the unconventional instinct, Matthews invited everyone to give a round of applause to give thanks for Nick's presence in our lives. The congregation was delighted to oblige.

With the formal service complete, a significant proportion of the congregation made its way down a few lanes and round a couple of corners to recongregate for an additional memorial event in *The Cockpit*, a historic pub with an appropriately simple approach to life as it should be lived. Safely installed, the gathered ranks pursued conviviality in an environment that would have been rather more familiar to Mr Reeves than a cathedral. One or two observers were moved to recall that one of Nick's most recent trips to St Paul's had been to visit and meet protestors involved in the Occupy movement's residency in the cathedral forecourt, a movement for which he had a great deal of sympathy and by which he was much inspired.

Over a few pints talk was of memories of Nick and a celebration of life with many old friendships revived and new acquaintances made. Although Nick had been at CIWEM for a decade and half, it was a measure of the affection in which he was held that there was a strong representation from leisure sector, including many of Nick's former colleagues at the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, among www.theleisurereview.co.uk

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them plenty of ILAM House staff, two presidents and one former chief executive. Few residents of the Grotto can have been remembered so warmly.

CIWEM is currently in the process of moving to a new headquarters in London and will be establishing a permanent memorial to Nick in their new building. Meanwhile, the Wilkes Society, a forum for dining and debate founded by Nick, will continue in the spirit intended by its originator and The Leisure Review is hoping to establish the Reeves lecture as a regular feature in the calendar. Further details will be reported in The Leisure Review in due course.

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