

Nick Evans

1952-2024



On 18th May, Nick Evans sadly and very suddenly passed away at the age of 73 at his home in Forest Gate, London. He graduated from Bangor University with a first class honours in Biology and went on to study for a PhD in the Zoology Department, Liverpool University (see N. J. Evans 1977, 'Studies on the variation and taxonomy in species aggregates of terrestrial slugs; *Limax flavus*, *L. aggregate* and *Arionater* (L.) *aggregate*'). He also found and named *Limax pseudoflavus* in Ireland.

Nick married Penny in August 1975 and joined the Mollusca Section, Zoology Department, British Museum (Natural History) in September that year. Nick was initially an assistant to John Peake. During a major reshuffle of the Zoology Department, Nick was assigned to the marine contracts team under David George at first and later Roger Bamber. The Contracts Team was undertaking research to generate funds for the Department, and this usually included extensive fieldwork in which Nick took an active part. The Anglia Water contract in North Norfolk, for example, involved monitoring the artisanal crab fishery along the coast during modernisation of the antiquated sewage system that opened directly onto the bathing beaches. Nick's work also included SCUBA diving and operating the Museum's ridged hull inflatable boat. One of these projects involved monitoring the recovery of the salt marshes in Morecambe Bay following the laying of gas pipes from the field in the Irish Sea to the Rampside Gas Terminal and the Roose Gas Powered Station, in Cumbria. Some contracts were abroad and Nick was in the team involved in generating an estimate of the cost of damage to the coral reef after three shipwrecks in the Red Sea for the insurers Lloyd's of London. In addition, Nick and I attended two Land Rover driving courses. One involved driving vehicles off road and the second was a winching course. These courses were the

greatest fun we ever had at the expense of the Museum and come fully recommended! Nick became an accomplished writer of contract reports.

In March 2006 Nick was invited to join the RAF expedition team to study the recovery of coral reefs in Thailand following the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. He took the lead on writing up the study, which won the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the BSAC award for Expedition Benthic Monitor for Environmental Research. In November 2006, this award was presented to the team at Buckingham Palace by the late Duke of Edinburgh. Nick Robson, RAF, recalls that Nick “was a wonderful chap and always will be the RAF’s diving ‘Papa Smurf’! We did think we had nearly killed him on the diving trip with 4 dives a day!”



Nick was also an extremely active member of the Ray Society, a charity that publishes natural history books dating back to 1844. He was on the Ray Society Council for 28 years, starting in 1996. He served as Honorary Secretary for 17 years until 2013, then acted as President and Vice President, and edited numerous published volumes. The latter enable him to accurately cost the publication of a book and the profit margin required for the Society to recover some of its investment. This underrated skill will be greatly missed. He was also responsible for changing the Society’s agents to the Natural History Book Services which would see a greater increase in funds from book sales.

Following Nick's retirement in 2008 after 33 years of service to the Natural History Museum, he led a rich and active life. He was an accomplished artist and attended weekly life drawing classes. He also joined London Green Wood in Hackney to use a foot-driven pole lathe to turn beautiful wooden bowls. He was a fully qualified SCUBA diver and, with Penny, would regularly go to the Spanish Mediterranean to undertake a sport they both enjoyed. Nick and Penny also loved sailing and would often act as passage crew for a friend moving his yacht around the Mediterranean, when they were not taking ball-room dancing lessons back home in London. Nick led his life to the full until it came to a sudden and unexpected end. It came as a complete shock to all those who knew him. He will be remembered as a loving husband and fun and gentle colleague and friend. He will be missed.

Paul Clark, Penny Evans, and Nick Robson