

Speech of thanks to Nick Young at MSMT Lunch, November 20th, 2024

It is my great privilege, though one tinged with sadness, to pay tribute to Nick today and thank him for all he has done for the MSMT as Chair for the last two decades.

Certain words and phrases recur when describing him – energy, passion, indefatigable, enthusiastic, unstoppable force, inspirational leader. His attitude is not just “can do”, it’s “will do”.

For me, one of his greatest strengths is his gift for partnership – he loves working with, and alongside, others on a common purpose. One of his significant partnerships in the MSMT was with our founder Keith Killby who saw, and appreciated, in Nick qualities they both shared: being a mover and a shaker, someone who can galvanise people to get involved, a highly practical person who could propel the charity forward, always rooted in its essence and purpose: the recognition and commemoration of the help given to the Allied PoWs by the Italian people in the final years of the war. His partnership and friendship with Keith was based on shared values and trust – trust that Nick would take us from strength to strength which he has so powerfully done.

I count myself very lucky indeed to have also had the great fortune to forge a strong partnership with Nick over the years in our roles as chair and secretary, sharing many experiences and adventures in Italy and the UK, building a precious friendship along the way.

Many happy memories stand out: walking between fields of sunflowers in the baking heat on the Tenna Valley Trail, Nick striding out, head and shoulders above everyone else; laughing, in Nick's case very loudly, at long celebratory lunches in villages along the way, making many new Italian friends; holding a planning meeting in the gelateria at Servigliano, surrounded by coffee and ice-cream; laying wreaths at the war memorial in Monte San Martino itself; inaugurating the permanent memorial to the Italian helpers at Eden Camp in Yorkshire. Nick has always been right there, in the middle of it all, connecting, encouraging, appreciating, communicating.

He is the quintessential people person and anyone who has encountered him either as a fellow trustee, or as a supporter at Trust events, has enjoyed and valued his warmth, kindness and friendliness.

Nick, I know it was not your original intention to stay on as chair for 20 years but we are so glad you did, even though it is really sad to say goodbye. It seems only fitting, as a charity founded on gratitude for generosity shown, to end on thank ing you from the bottom of our

hearts for the huge generosity you have given – in your time, leadership, vision, expertise but above all, love, to the Monte San Martino Trust. We will be forever grateful – thank you – grazie mille dal cuore.