

A Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for the Life of Adrian Peter Heffernan



10th July 1958 – 10th January 2023

**Service Held at
Bierton Crematorium
Thursday 2nd February 2023 – 2pm**

Designed, written and delivered with love by



Entrance Music:

Music: Lazarus
by David Bowie

Introduction and Welcome

Civil Celebrant, Lyndsey Conquest

Welcome everyone. Today you, the family and friends of Adrian Peter Heffernan, known to some of you as “Adge”, gather here at Bierton Crematorium, to say a rather sudden and untimely farewell.

I would also like to extend my welcome to those of you watching via our webcast link today, including those of you in Ireland, India, New Zealand and Bahrain. Your virtual presence is just as much appreciated and we send you our love and strength from the chapel.

Today you face one of life’s most difficult moments. You are gathered here to support one another as you all begin to come to terms with the sadness surrounding the death of Adrian, and I know, for you all, it is a very sad day indeed but, as you all will know... Adrian was an upbeat, positive man, he liked a laugh and joke and he wanted to make others smile.

Our aim today is to make this ceremony a reflection of Adrian’s uplifting personality. Laughter, as well as tears, can be a meaningful part of a celebration of life ceremony and today, as we remember and celebrate Adrian, we will aim to make this ceremony a true reflection of who he was and the things he loved.

My names Lyndsey, I am a civil celebrant, and it is my job today to guide your through this ceremony, which has been thoughtfully and lovingly created by Adrian’s closest family.

We will hear from some of those closest to Adrian, share some photos taken throughout his life and listen to some of his favourite music. Adrian was a lover of music, particularly David Bowie, the Rolling Stones and U2. I think it's fair to say that we could have easily created a concert in Adrian's honour with all of his favourite songs, but his life, although cut too short, has been a full one, with so many experiences, adventures and achievements and we have some of these to share with you all in his memory.

Our thoughts today will be especially with Tricia, Dillon and Iona, and the rest of Adrian's immediate family.

On behalf of Tricia, I'd like to thank you all very much for coming to support her and the rest of the family at this time. The overwhelming love and support they have received from everyone, has touched them deeply. They knew Adrian was so very special but to hear just how special he was to so many, many people has meant so much to them.

After today's ceremony Adrian's family invite you to join them at The Three Locks Golf Club, the address can be found on your order of service. This will be an opportunity for you all to share your own memories of Adrian and the impact he had on your lives.

Also, on the order of service, you will find details for any donations you may like to make in Adrian's memory. The family's charity of choice is the British Heart Foundation.

A Tribute to Adrian

Adrian was born in Salisbury in 1958 to Philomena and Michael, he was the second youngest of five children. He grew up with a strong connection to his Irish heritage and as a child, spent many summer holidays in Ireland, staying with his Auntie Sue, memories that he cherished throughout his life. In his later years Adrian would ensure he revisited his family in Ireland, keeping in touch with his cousins regularly. He was incredibly proud to have received his Irish citizenship and passport in the last few years.

Adrian moved to London at the age of 16 to start building his own life and was able to strengthen his relationship with his brother Don, who had already relocated to the city where he met his future wife Christine. It was during this time in London that Adrian completed his train driving qualification with British Rail.

Adrian met Tricia at a party in London, where they both were living at that time. The story goes that Adrian made a memorable first impression by accidentally spilling red wine all over her.

At 19, Adrian was awarded a fully funded six-week trip to America and Canada to research industrial democracy and worker participation through the Winston Churchill Travelling Scholarship, this was shortly after meeting Tricia. He was quite rightly, extremely proud of this achievement. Adrian was determined and ambitious, often encouraging those around him to pursue their own dreams and not let self-doubt hold them back from reaching their potential.

After a move out of London, the couple married at Leighton Buzzard Register Office in September 1979. They settled down in Linslade and started a new chapter in their lives together. Adrian working along the

Marylebone and Euston lines whilst becoming involved in the Trade Unions. He was a proud member of ASLEF.

To this day Adrian had a love of trains, enjoying sleeper trips in the UK. He was even known to partake in a bit of train spotting on the balcony of Iona and Navid's flat in Watford Junction

Adrian and Tricia welcomed their first son, Dillon, into the world in 1987. In May 1992, the couple welcomed their second son, Connor, but Connor had many health difficulties and devastatingly, he died in January of the following year, at just 8 months old. In 1994, the couple welcomed their third child, Iona, into the world. Adrian was a devoted and loving father to his children. He cherished the time he spent with his family and was always there for them.

A recent article in the Leighton Buzzard Observer shared an insight into Adrian's roles within the local community and politics. It shared that in 1991 Adrian began reading European studies and sociology at De Montfort university and just two years later he was elected to Bedfordshire County Council. A successful councillor, he later became chair of the Bedfordshire Police authority which saw him take on additional responsibilities as chair of the national police negotiating board.

In 2002 Adrian oversaw the introduction of PCSOs, the reopening of Leighton Buzzard Police station in Hockliffe St and increased the number of officers in the area.

The LBO goes on to share that during his political life Adrian was also chair of Bedfordshire probation trust and on the County Council Adoption Panel. He was also Chair of the Social Services Committee, Member of the Valuation Tribunal and Justice of the Peace, otherwise known as a Magistrate.

One of Adrian's proudest moments was standing for MP in Southwest Norfolk in 1997. Adrian was a doer! Hardworking determined and keen to make a difference!

Adrian's political interests were Interwoven throughout his life. Both Dillon and Iona remember going with their dad to deliver leaflets and also experiencing Adrian's work life from a young age, often attending meetings with him.

Such was Adrian's sense of humour, he often enjoyed engaging in light-hearted and lively discussions on current affairs and sports and would often be known to discuss these into the early hours.

Football was also a huge part of Adrian's life, and he was a referee for the Bedfordshire Football Association from his early 20s. As a child, his father would take him to watch Southampton play, which is where his love of the sport began, but at around 17, Adrian began working at the bar at the Arsenal ground along with his friend's dad and this is where his devotion to Arsenal began. Dillon described his dad as a "Gooner" through and through and shared how he and Adrian enjoyed watching many matches together. As a supporter Adrian would love what he called "A Post Match de-brief" in the pub after a game, something many of you in the room would have experienced. As a referee, Adrian was well respected in the field, known for his fairness and encouragement. He would referee wherever was needed, overseeing more than 1,000 matches locally, travelling across the county at weekends, including refereeing at Aylesbury prison.

Adrian loved tennis and he and Iona would spend Sundays together playing tennis locally. They also went to Wimbledon together many times. Adrian continued to play tennis locally at the Leighton Buzzard Tennis Club.

Time spent with the family would often involve a trip to Ivinghoe Farm to pick their own fruit and veg, a family ritual which began when Dillon was only a baby. As well as family BBQs, either at Tricia and Adrian's or at Dillons. Dillon shared how his recent move to Leighton Buzzard with his wife Meera offered the opportunity for more time together as a whole family, which they all cherished.

And no tribute to Adrian would be complete without mention of his love of music. The last concert he attended was with Dillon and Martin last October, to see Roxy Music reunite on stage.

Tricia shared how as a family they have been to see the Rolling Stones and Adele in London and that she and Adrian have travelled Europe to watch their favourite bands, The Stones in Brussels, U2 in Geneva and Paris, and the Eurythmics several times.

Adrian's first gig was to see David Bowie in June 1973 at the age of 15, and from that point on there was no turning back, he loved the atmosphere, he fell in love with Bowies music and coincidentally, they both died on the same date, the 10th of January. Adrian would have loved that!

Over the years Adrian has collected memorabilia from the many concerts he has attended which are all proudly displayed in the family home, including coins, first edition stamps and artwork.

But Adrian's collections didn't stop at music memorabilia, he was quite a film buff and had a huge collection of DVDs and some years ago he was featured in a half hour TV Collectors special showcasing his huge collection of Trade Union badges.

Adrian was not only a loving husband to Tricia and devoted father to Dillon and Iona, he was also a much loved father in law to Meera and Navid, a loving brother to his surviving siblings Bernadette and Martin, and a loyal friend to many.

Some of Adrian's friendships spanned years and he would enjoy taking many friends on different walks of London, visiting his old haunts, or to the cinema or theatre.

The family have received so many lovely messages from friends. One shared fond memories of working with Adrian whilst active in the Leighton Linlade Labour Party, describing Adrian as always being the cheerful face at branch meetings. Another shared that Adrian would be remembered for his great sense of humour and lovely, happy personality, describing him as a multi-talented man who achieved so much.

One final memory shared is from Alan. Alan first met Adrian when he became a member of the police authority some 30 years ago, but he got to know him well once he became the chairman and they formed a close working relationship. He shared that Adrian was always approachable and had a rare ability as a politician - he would listen and even accept when he was wrong (which was not very often). He was also very good at building consensus and always remained calm, he can't actually recall Adrian ever losing his temper. He went on to share that Adrian was easy to work with as he was always open and honest and consistent in his views and what he stood for. To sum up Alan shared that Adrian was a larger than life figure, somebody you couldn't help but like. He was outgoing, witty, sociable and good company. Yes, an extrovert, but he had a sensitive side and was always there for him and he never let him down.

It is clear from all the many memories shared that Adrian was a much loved family man, a good friend and a well-respected member of his community. He will always be remembered for his kind heart, his sense of humour and his love for his family and friends. He will be deeply missed, but his memory will live on through the lives of those who knew him.

We will now hear from Christine Heffernan with a reading of John 14, verses one to four.

Reading: John 14 1-4
read by Christine Heffernan

Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God still, and trust in me.
There are many rooms in my Father's house, if there were not, I should have told you.
I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too.
You know the way to the place where I am going.

We will now pause to watch a very special visual tribute to Adrian which has been lovingly created by his family.

A Visual Tribute to Adrian
Accompanied by Miss You, The Rolling Stones

We will now hear from Adrian's brother Martin who would like to share some of the life lessons, learnt from Adrian.

My Life Lessons from Adrian
Martin Heffernan

So.

Over the past few weeks, Adrian has been described to me as flamboyant, colourful, vibrant, a big personality and larger than life. Even his post code ended in 2XS (to excess!), which always made me smile when I sent a Christmas card.

I can add my own few words to that list: My Big Brother.

That's Adrian, obviously. And this worried little girl is me. As Tricia pointed out to me, that's a stranglehold!

As you can imagine, I've been thinking about our relationship a lot and how my older — and allegedly wiser — brother shaped and inspired me on many subjects in life, so I thought I'd share some of these lessons with you.

Fashion

Obviously, I have to start with fashion and Adrian's striking sense of style. Naturally, he was a major influence on the way I dress. As in he influenced me to dress in the complete opposite way — and more like a normal human being.

So I'm wearing this shirt as a tribute. And on that note...

Many, many years ago I was at the NEC in Birmingham to see the Eurhythmics. Walking away at the end with over 15,000 other people, I saw a bloke ahead of me and I genuinely thought someone had been sick all over his back. I soon realised it was actually a truly shocking shirt and I thought to myself, “Who the hell wears a shirt like that?”

Who the hell turned out to be Adrian. What are the odds?

Music

Hand in hand with being a fashion icon goes Adrian’s passion for music. When I was young, Adrian inspired me with his great love by frequently singing to me. Sounds nice, doesn’t it?

When I say inspired me, he would tip me to the ground, sit on my chest and, for good measure, pin my arms down with his knees. He would then proceed to sing to me the back catalogue of David Bowie, Sparks and Roxy Music into our Mum’s hairbrush.

Big brothers, eh? But it did all eventually rub off on me.

Sport

Adrian also loved all things sport and he actually took me to my first footy match, our local village team called Bemerton FC, or Athletic or International. Something like that. A little way into the game he whispered to me, “If you want to be a proper fan, after 3 shout come on you reds! OK?” So I enthusiastically shouted “COME ON YOU REDS!!!”

All on my own.

The crowd turned on me like a Lynch mob. Yep, Bemerton were playing in blue...

And that was my first lesson in fact checking.

Economics

Next, economics. Now Adrian was the master of a bargain and taught me about true value for money.

He was a fan of my wife’s baking. After many requests and the lure of what he promised to be “Number 1 chocolates” Nai sent him a large, delicious tomato bread (or toe-maato as he would say mimicking our mum). He swapped this lovingly homemade, time-lavished artisan loaf for a small selection of price left on, heavily discounted easter chocolates. In June. That’s quality bartering!

Now, hopefully, there’s nobody here from Inland Revenue... When I ran my own business, for many years Adrian — and frequently Dillon — enjoyed being my “London client”. And no matter how much I guided Adrian to a tasty, reasonably priced dish on the menu, he would nobly help reduce my tax bill by stampeding straight for the Chateaubriand!

So in Adrian’s world, there really was such a thing as a free meal.

Science

Adrian even taught me a memorable lesson in science, particular the physics of mass and acceleration. In our house we had a spare room full of the normal spare room things. Battered furniture, old clothes and a 7 foot fully inflated lilo.

Now Adrian had the bright idea of turning our stairs into a Winter Olympics run. We hopped on the lilo, me at the front. At this juncture, I should point out that at the bottom of the stairs, again like most normal houses, was a massive, very heavy, mirrored bedroom wardrobe.

What could go wrong?

Adrian gave a big heave ho and within a few seconds I began to realise having a much larger and heavier brother behind me was not a good idea. All I remember is an almighty crash, everything going black and

our mother in full Irish mode screaming “Jesus, Mary and Joseph and all the Saints!!!”.

But to be fair, all she could see was four arms and four legs sticking out of a wardrobe!

International relations

Finally, the importance of diplomacy.

Many of you will know that professionally Adrian was very interested in fostering positive relationships through his trade union skills. So it was strange that he caused major damage to international relations with our Irish cousins, the Foudys.

A few of them very kindly flew over for our Auntie Anne’s funeral years ago. Adrian and I were talking to the boys at the wake. It was lovely. They went to top up their teas and honestly, all I said to Adrian was, did you follow all of that? As a proud and frequent visitor to our homeland, Adrian was far more fluent in the Irish accent than me. But he admitted he hadn’t quite kept up.

So the boys returned with fresh tea and Adrian piped up, “Do you know what he’s just said? He said he couldn’t understand a single bloody word you’ve been saying!!!”

I stuffed as many ham sandwiches as I could into my mouth to avoid talking for as long as humanly possible...

Now, you might be surprised to hear, that despite all of this, I quite liked Adrian.

And apart from the torture, death slides, stitch ups and blinding shirts... I will really miss him.

Reading: Absolute Beginners, by David Bowie

read by Tricia Heffernan

I've nothing much to offer
There's nothing much to take
I'm an absolute beginner
But I'm absolutely sane
As long as we're together
The rest can go to hell
I absolutely love you
But we're absolute beginners
With eyes completely open
But nervous all the same
If our love song
Could fly over mountains
Could laugh at the ocean
Just like the films
There's no reason
To feel all the hard times
To lay down the hard lines
It's absolutely true

Nothing much could happen
Nothing we can't shake
Oh, we're absolute beginners
With nothing much at stake
As long as you're still smiling
There's nothing more I need
I absolutely love you
But we're absolute beginners
But if my love is your love
We're certain to succeed
If our love song
Could fly over mountains
Sail over heartaches
Just like the films
If there's reason
To feel all the hard times
To lay down the hard lines
It's absolutely true



Many thoughts would have been stirred for you just now and each of you will have your own special memories of Adrian and the way he touched your life. We are going to pause here for a moment of reflection for you to recall those memories. This time will be accompanied by another of Adrian's favourite songs, Dance Away by Roxy Music.

A Moment of Reflection

Accompanied by Dance Away, Roxy Music

And now as we prepare to say our final farewells to Adrian, I ask those of you who would like to, to join me in the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom,
The power and the Glory,
Forever and Ever.
Amen.

Farewell & Committal

Accompanied by Make You Feel My Love (Instrumental)

And so, we come to that most difficult time, where you must say your farewells to Adrian's, fun, vibrant and comforting physical presence. It's time to release him from this world with our love, our thanks and our blessings.

Adrian, although you have left us too soon, what a wonderful life you lived during your time with us and what an impact you have made on so many people.

There's no doubt today that at the end of your time here you've left behind so many hearts that are aching, you've left so many tears of pain and grief, but my goodness you've left behind so many warm memories and an amazing legacy of love, laughter and positivity for your family and friends.

So now with love and thanks, we commit all those memories to be locked away in our hearts.

Adrian, we thank you for your caring and kindness, we thank you for your friendship; for the time and effort you put into our lives; for your love and care and for your kind and humble heart.

May your journey be gentle, and may you travel without fear, may your soul take the face of everyone here as a companion for your journey.

May your own beliefs and dreams be fulfilled.

Farewell Adrian, Rest in Peace

Closing words

You were privileged to know Adrian. That simple fact is something to remember with joy. It follows that the realisation of his hopes and dreams now rests upon you, not as a burden... but rather as a challenge or stimulus in your own lives. The search to fulfil those dreams will be his best memorial.

The song chosen for as you exit the chapel today, is Beautiful Day by U2.

First, I'd like to share these words from Bono, lead singer of the band...

“Wherever you see darkness,
there is an extraordinary opportunity
for the light to burn brighter”.

Keep Adrian's light shining brightly by talking about him, listening to some of his favourite music and continuing to do the things you enjoyed with him.

Leave today with a smile, knowing that Adrian still lives on in your memories and, though no longer a visible part of your lives, he will always remain a part of your family, or of your circle, through the influence he has had on you and the special part he has played in your lives.

Music for exit:

Music: Beautiful Day
by U2