

Editorial

BIAS Journal has appeared in March each year since 1968 and we are pleased to continue the tradition with number 31. Again, this is a 'bumper' issue as we have increased the page-count to accommodate as much good material as we could. As BIAS 31 is the seventh and last issue to be overseen by the current editor, it seems appropriate to take a little of this precious space to review the role of the journal in the society and to invite the BIAS members to comment on the shape of future issues.

The constitution of BIAS does not mention a journal as such. However, the first four of the society's six specific objectives suggest a role for such a publication. Those objectives are to:

- a) promote research into the IA of the region;
- b) carry out and encourage field work of the highest possible standard;
- c) carry out and encourage research on documentary material relating to the region;
- d) publish the results of research in the best possible way.

Winter lectures, site visits and BIAS Bulletins all contribute to this agenda but the Journal is by far the biggest item in the BIAS budget and the major point of contact with BIAS members who live away from the Bath-Bristol region. We need to consider two questions:

- 1) is an annual journal the best use of the society's resources in achieving its objectives?
- it) if the answer is 'yes', then is the traditional format appropriate?

Issue 31 might be described as a 'traditional' BIAS Journal, it features a range of articles on recent work in IA and the history of technology within our region. One of the most significant developments in IA since BIAS was formed is the contribution of professionals to recording and conservation. We are pleased to include, for the second year, an article based upon the emergency recording work of the National Monuments Record of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. Sheila Ely has provided a timely record on one of the region's last surviving country maltings, prior to its conversion into housing. Martin Bryan-Brown's article on local transport history was encouraged by attendance at extra-mural lectures and interest in his family history. Our article on Congresbury's long-gone iron Industry is one outcome of Gillian Bedingfield's completion of a MA course in local history, whilst Joe Bettey's piece on Graffm Prankard complements this with the wider context of international trade in which this local concern operated. BIAS Journal 17 featured the late John Mosse's plans for the Firefly project. Ken Gibbs has provided a timely update on progress and BIAS President Angus Buchanan has recorded his appreciation of John's contribution to BIAS and to the emergence of the study of industrial archaeology. Harry Dommatt has made a number of contributions to the journal on the history of glass and coal in Nailsea over the years and here provides fresh evidence for an ear-

lier start to glass-making in the village. Last but not least, we include the winning entry from the second BIAS Brunel prize competition. This prize is a major initiative of the society to encourage fresh work of the sort envisaged in BIAS constitution. Details of the next competition appear below. It is unfortunate that we did not have space for the third and final part of Alan Hardiman's study of the servicing of the houses of Bath and an archaeological report on tramway remains discovered during the laying of the Pucklechurch to Seabank gas pipeline. It is also disappointing that we were unable to obtain a report on recent recording work at the important Canons Marsh gasworks site in Bristol's 'Harbourside' development site. There has been no shortage of material for the *Journal*!

How well does such a journal meet the needs of the society? Possible alternatives might include publication of a series of monographs and/or up-to-date gazetteers for the region or its new 'unitary' local authorities. Your editor will be pleased to receive comments on this issue and the Journal in general and to pass these on to BIAS Committee. It is vital that members' views are taken into account.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to record the editor's thanks for the efforts of his colleagues over the past seven years. The making of BIAS journal is a team effort and the help and support of Mike Chapman, Joan Day and Owen Ward in various ways has been vital, as has the support of our president and the chair of the society. A special mention is due to Paul Stephens who has spent many hours in applying his desk-top publishing and professional skills in computing to the production process.

Mike Bone