

John Mosse (1922-1998)

Commander John H.C. Mosse RN(Retd), a long-standing member of BIAS and a strong supporter of industrial archaeology, died peacefully at his home in Bath on 30 October, last. After distinguished wartime service with the Royal Navy, in which he served in the Arctic convoys carrying war supplies to Russia, John took up a career in architecture, becoming a lecturer at the Bristol University School of Architecture and subsequently setting up in practice on his own account in Bath.

When Neil Cossons and I were running the Extra Mural Class from which BIAS sprang in the 1960s, John made himself helpful to us in several ways. I first met him in May 1965, when we both spoke at a Conference arranged by Kenneth Hudson in Clifton. Before he came to Bristol, John had measured up and drawn the Cromford Pumping Engine on the canal near Matlock, and when I met him he had used a team of his students to do an excellent set of drawings of the Claverton Pumping House, then lying largely derelict and awaiting renovation. We greatly welcomed the architectural expertise which he made available to us, and encouraged him to make surveys of Kelston Brass Mill, the Redcliff Shot Tower, and Old Temple Meads Station.

John's name first appeared in our membership lists in BIAS *Journal* 4 in 1971, but by that time he had already given several talks to the fledgling Society, including three on techniques for surveying and drawing buildings, recorded in BIAS *Journal* 1. His

report on the Redcliff Shot Tower appeared in BIAS *Journal* 2, and that on Bristol Temple Meads in BIAS *Journal* 4. The latter had been commissioned in 1969 by Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, and the survey drawings were prepared by Martin Watts, who was then working in John Mosse's office. These contributions were of the utmost value in establishing the professionalism of BIAS in matters of local industrial archaeology, and as a result the Society owes him a great debt of gratitude.

In more recent years, John became heavily committed to the *Firefly* Project. John made regular visits to Didcot, where the engine is being built, and travelled widely to secure funds and support for the project. He spoke about this to the Society, and also to the Newcomen Society in London. It was the Subject of his second paper to that body, the first having been in 1967, when he spoke about the Albion Mills in Southwark, where James Watt had pioneered the use of steam engines for grinding corn.

John Mosse was an exceptionally kind and generous person. It was always pleasant to speak with him about industrial archaeology and about conservation news generally, as he was so well informed on these subjects. By his death the Society loses a stalwart friend, and a member who has used his practical and architectural skills to good effect in the service of industrial archaeology.

Angus Buchanan January 1999