

Alan North, M.I.Mech.E. — An Obituary



The Society mourns the passing of one of its most loyal and active members, Alan North who died peacefully but unexpectedly in March 1987.

William Alan North was born in Leicester and made a notable contribution to its commercial life in his association with the Leicester shoe-machinery manufacturer B.U.S.M. which spanned four decades. As overseas sales manager he literally covered the world in his successful quest for new markets.

Yet his personality was far from any stereotype of a business executive. He will be remembered as a gentle and sensitive man of catholic and scholarly interests ranging from choral music, scouting, and politics to his extraordinary enthusiasm for the archaeology and culture of ancient and classical civilizations. This abiding interest took Alan and Joan North on extensive excursions to Egypt, North Africa and the Levant as well as to the southern fringes of Europe. His scholarly knowledge in these areas was constrained by his inherent sensitivity and modesty. But if solicited, I can vouch for personally the erudition and accuracy of his comments. Alan's distinguished and gallant war record as a navigator in a Pathfinder Mosquito squadron was something else he modestly kept to himself.

His untoward death in the prime of life has been an implacable loss for his widow Joan. She lovingly shared his many interests, particularly those that found fulfilment in their contribution to this Society, with Alan serving as Membership Secretary and Joan on the Social Sub-Committee for a long period of years. In memory of this contribution and her husband's passion for the Archaeology of the Roman Empire, Mrs North has generously endowed the Alan North Memorial Lecture. For us, like the Ancient Greeks, this gesture will perpetuate his memory and ensure his immortality.

Our gratitude, but above all our sympathy, goes out to Joan North at this time of acute loss and anguish.

DANIEL WILLIAMS