

RA (Nick) Nicholls

SunInfo is sad to have to report that former Trustee and meticulous Treasurer of the British Sundial Society, Nick Nicholls died on the 2nd October 2018 aged 92.

Nick was a Civil Engineer by training who brought the welcome discipline of an engineer to the management of the young and developing Society. He was BSS Member No. 47 and he joined the other founding members as the first formally defined Treasurer. He also contributed much in the founding years when the Society struggled to advertise itself and somehow managed to fund and publish the first Bulletins. These were the years before the internet when information about basic dialling was very scarce. The early Bulletins were vital to recruit solitary diallists from their isolation and those who wanted to learn more about sundials.

As the Society developed Nick took on two important responsibilities with enthusiasm. He strongly supported the *BSS Sundial Design Award Scheme* which aimed to encourage designs of both standard and innovative sundials in various classes. The Sundial Design Awards continued for many years with some modifications to have an important and stimulating effect. Nick also co-operated with the newly formed North American Sundial Society (NASS) led then and now by Fred Sawyer to devise a joint membership scheme with discounts in order to grow the membership of both Societies at this early critical stage for both. This is the basis of today's close links of friendship and common interest between the two Societies, part of Nick's legacy.

Nick's early interest in Construction Projects, particularly the Thames Barrier, led to his professional career as a civil engineer. Nick worked on many projects but there is one which will be of interest to many motorists. In the early 1960s he worked on the construction of the M1 motorway in the Midlands. The Project had run into soil stability problems due to the geology at Watford Gap. By chance, as a student, Nick had studied the new science of Soil Mechanics as it was then called. It was relatively unknown in practical civil engineering so he was able guide the senior engineers to the solution. Later he was invited to present a paper to the Institution of Civil Engineers on Practical solutions for Unstable Terrain. After his retirement he surprised most of his former colleagues by enrolling for and completing, a mathematics degree with the Open University!

Nick was always supportive of the BSS and NASS and maintained his interest in their development after he retired from 'active duty'. I remember staying overnight at their ancient cottage in Hound Street, Sherborne and spending a cheerful day with Nick and Pam visiting local sundials particularly the P&G Helio-chronometer at Dillington. Many of us will miss his cheerful Christmas cards despite his almost undecipherable handwriting! His last card dryly reported. "Well, at least I am on four wheels again....!" (Referring to his mobility aid). A lovely man with an equally lovely, dry sense of humour, Nick will indeed be remembered with affection but sorely missed.