

IN MEMORIUM

It is with regret that we record the death, on 2nd September, 1990 of Les Lawrence, HonFBDS. He was aged 67.

Lecturer-in-charge of display training at Cassio College, Watford, from 1976 until his retirement in 1988, and for many years a regular and highly-respected member of the Society's Education Committee, Mr. Lawrence was awarded HonFBDS distinction in 1988 to mark an outstanding personal contribution to display education.

The following tribute to Les Lawrence is paid by Alan Springall, FBDS, a member of the BDS Executive Council and a former colleague at Cassio College:

Many people can call themselves British, but you have to be born an Englishman – Les Lawrence, 1923-1990.

Les spent his early life around the Lisson Grove area of London, and after leaving school joined a display studio where he was trained in photo-retouching.

Joining the Navy in 1942, he served largely on the destroyer HMS Westcott as a signalman. This ship spent a large part of the war on escort duty for the convoys travelling up through Arctic waters to Murmansk and Archangel to help relieve the besieged Russians.

After the war, Les joined the ranks of the retailing trade (in men's outfitting). This did not last too long, as he always claimed that he started to assume the retailer's 'humble crouch'! He left to become involved in the ticket-writing and display

department at the Popular Stores, a branch of the Co-operative Society in Wealdstone, Middlesex.

Here he progressed to become display and promotions manager at the Gade House Co-operative store, Watford. Whilst working at the store he became involved in teaching at Cassio College – initially on a part-time basis, then accepting a full-time position in 1967 as assistant lecturer on the BDS display design course.

In 1967 the opportunity arose to become lecturer in charge of the display section at the college; Les took it – and developed all the courses to a very high standard, enabling students to win honours both from the BDS and in national competitions.

With Les Lawrence, his students always came first, and before his retirement in 1988 he had been instrumental in directing the creativity of more than 1,000 young people.

In addition to his full-time employment, Les was a partner with Pearl Robinson in the 'Retail Display Service', a company which they jointly formed after leaving the Co-op to specialise in the production of expanded polystyrene sculpture and lettering. Their great variety of work over the years has included a quarter-scale veteran London bus, British Telecom's 'Busby' partaking in every conceivable activity, a 30-foot long model of the Greenwich Observatory, and even some interesting life-size silhouettes to decorate the Ann Summers shops.

So enthusiastic (and expert) did Les become that he wrote a book – *Expanded Polystyrene Craft* -- describing his techniques.

A member of the British Display Society for many years, and accorded the distinction of Honorary Fellowship in 1988, Les Lawrence had just completed his first year as an Examiner for the Society.

In retirement, his interests were many and varied; he maintained an active association with the 8th St. Marylebone Scout troop, was a committee member of the North Russia Club, exploring the possibility of erecting a permanent memorial in Scotland to those who lost their lives on the perilous Arctic convoys, and in addition to running the Retail Display Service enjoyed oil-painting, fish-keeping, and 'wearing out the Pennine Way'!

Les Lawrence, who will be much missed by all those friends, colleagues and students who had the privilege to know him and benefit from his great experience and talent throughout a very full life, was well known for his great store of anecdotes and what could be described as very patriotic views – the following would be typical:

After making it very clear, as on many occasions in the staff restaurant, that onions were definitely not the type of food that an Englishman should be eating, the Maitre d' said 'surely you have visited France at some time and enjoyed their wonderful food?' Les's immortal reply was, 'No -- but I shelled it once on D-Day'!

Les Lawrence is survived by his mother, his wife, a daughter and three grandchildren.



The late Les Lawrence, HonFBDS in characteristic pose but in an uncharacteristic situation -- he was 'anti-car'.