

BSSH Chair's Report 2021

Following on from our online conference last year, we sought feedback from members as to their views about future conferences as we slowly emerge (hopefully) from the pandemic. Though most of those who took part enjoyed the 2020 virtual conference, there was a definite desire amongst members to reunite face-to-face as soon as it was possible to do so, and we therefore made the decision earlier this year to go ahead with an in-person conference at St Mary's in August. We appreciate that this will prevent some of you from joining us at the conference, but rest assured we are giving serious thought to the possibility of future hybrid or purely online conferences, which will allow more members to participate.

On that note, I am delighted that we were able to launch our BSSH seminar (in conjunction with the Institute of Historical Research) in January, holding all our sessions via Zoom. Huge thanks should go to my seminar co-convenor Geoff Levett for his hard work in making this possible. Attendances have been very good, and we intend to continue with a hybrid model, making it possible for people to attend either in person in London or via Zoom, according to preference.

It is also fitting that in a year when online activity became more important than ever before, we launched our new website. The URL is the same – www.sportinhistory.org – but it has had something of a makeover! Our Web Officer Lisa Taylor is an absolute star and spent many hours working on this behind the scenes, curating content and negotiating various issues. The Society owe her an enormous debt of gratitude for this work.

Back in September, we co-opted two new Inclusivity and Diversity Representatives onto the Board – Lydia Furse and Adam Burns. It is important that work to make our Society and the discipline of sports history more inclusive and diverse is not siloed off, but at the same time the Board felt that having Trustees with a specific remit in this area would allow us to make important progress. I thank Lydia and Adam for their hard work to date, which has included a members' survey to both ascertain the needs of our current members and identify areas where we need to focus our diversification efforts.

We were also delighted to finally launch our new Community History Award in January this year. The Award, which is worth £2,000, aims to help an individual or a community group undertake original primary research into the history of sporting activities within BME communities within the UK. My thanks go to Gary James, who stepped down from the Board during the year but set up the initial framework for this new award; as well as to Adam Burns, who has overseen the first round of applications and the judging process. The outcome will be announced during the conference. It is exciting to think that the Society can help support ground-breaking research in this area.

We continue to try to offer support for our members wherever possible, especially those early in their careers or those without institutional support. Back in September we agreed to offer all our grants (PGR & ECR research grants, small events funding and conference panel grants) on a rolling basis, and removed the limit on the total number of awards that can be made, which means that all applications can now be considered on merit.

We have also set up a new Covid-19 Special Research Grant, which aims to help support researchers with smaller, one-off awards at a time when research is still uncertain and difficult. Members can apply for up to £200 to help support travel to archives / libraries as and when they open, but also access to e-books or other online resources. We have already been able to support several members in this way. The fund is still open, and we are especially keen to receive applications from members who are unemployed, do not have a permanent contract and / or do not receive financial support from their institutions.

Another recent initiative, our EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) Award, is thriving in its second year, largely thanks to the efforts of Katie Taylor. Despite all the disruption to further education wrought by the pandemic, we received an increased number of applications this year. We are looking forward to welcoming the inaugural winner to present at the Twickenham conference.

Katie has also led our engagement with PGR and ECR members brilliantly over the past year, and has introduced several new initiatives, including a regular writing group. Make sure to join our “BSSH Postgraduate Students and Early Career Researchers” Facebook group if you fall into either category and have not already done so.

On a related note, we were excited to launch a new partnership earlier this year with the online Sport & Leisure History magazine *Playing Pasts*. We have a new BSSH section on their website – do check it out [here](#) – and we are particularly encouraging postgraduates and ECR members to submit articles to help raise their profile. Please contact Katie if you are interested in doing so. *Playing Pasts* is a terrific publication with an average monthly readership of 30,000 and we are very happy to be working with them.

Plans continue apace for our 40th anniversary in 2022. After your suggestions at last year’s virtual AGM, a sub-committee was set up to work on this celebration, and my thanks go to Conor Heffernan, Dil Porter, Malcolm Maclean, Lydia Furse and Katie Taylor for their work on this. There are many exciting initiatives in the pipeline, including oral history interviews with long-standing BSSH members and a special issue of *Sport in History* reflecting on the past, present and future of the Society. We hope that many of you will be able to join us for a special 40th anniversary conference in Leicester in 2022, being hosted (fittingly) by De Montfort

University, and where we hope to display material from the BSSH archives.

Last but not least, I would like to express my thanks to Matt McDowell, who is stepping down from the Board of Trustees after the conference. Matt has given many years of service to the Society, including as Chair, and we will be sorry to lose him.

I look forward to catching up with many of you in Twickenham for what will be, for many of us, our first chance to attend an in-person conference since the pandemic began. I also hope to see others of you “virtually” via Zoom for the AGM.

Raf Nicholson - BSSH Chair
9 August 2021

Treasurer's report for BSSH AGM, August 2021

This report presents a **Financial Statement for the 12 month period ended on 30 June 2021**, including a balance sheet showing the Society's net assets and reserves at that date.

Balance sheet at 30 June 2021

The Society's financial position is strong with net assets of £88,048, made up of the Birley bequest of £20,000 and operating reserves of £68,048. This takes account of the surplus of £8,571 for the year, an increase of £5,082. The trustees are committed to reducing the reserves steadily in the medium term, by increasing disbursements in the form of awards, research grants and support for events related to the Society's interest areas. The trustees will welcome suitable applications: information is available on the Society's website and from any trustee.

Income and expenditure account

The account shows the impact of lockdown on the Society's activities. Though income remained strong, costs were substantially reduced, due mainly to our use of Zoom for all meetings, including the conference

Publishing income remains strong due to the continuing success of the Society's journal, *Sport in History*, and the increased sponsorship provided under the publishing contract signed in 2018. The trustees are grateful to Taylor & Francis for their continued support and sponsorship.

Membership income, which grew significantly in 2019 and held steady in 2020, showed a slight reduction for 2021. The trustees hope to see growth in membership in the next few years, particularly from postgraduate students. With this in mind, the trustees are holding membership fees at the same level that has applied for over a decade and which represents exceptional value for money. Lifetime membership is also available.

Although the trustees increased the number and size of grants and awards approved this year, **disbursements** showed a reduction on the previous year. The absence of a physical conference removed the attendance bursaries for the year. In addition, the lockdown delayed some sponsored events and research work, but this should produce a higher spend in the coming year. The trustees have been flexible in allowing

recipients to roll over their grants to next year. In the meantime however, until normality returns our reserves are increasing rather than reducing as planned.

Pearse Reynolds.

Treasurer

Statement of income and costs for the year ending 30 June 2021

	2020/21	2019/20
	£	£
<u>Income</u>		
Subscriptions	5,245	5,401
Publication (Sport in History)	10,575	10,425
Other income	<u>0</u>	<u>706</u>
Total income	<u>15,820</u>	<u>16,532</u>
 <u>Costs</u>		
Awards and related costs	800	1,336
Event sponsorships and representation	500	1,481
Research grants and bursaries	1,669	2,160
Journal distribution	2,782	4,320
Editorial expenses (Sport in History)	367	1,687
 Executive expenses	0	1,089
Other costs (Admin., IT, legal, Finance)	<u>1,131</u>	<u>970</u>
Total costs	<u>7,249</u>	<u>13,043</u>

<u>Surplus/(deficit) for year</u>	<u>8,571</u>	<u>3,489</u>
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Balance Sheet at 30 June 2021

	£	£
<u>Assets</u>		
Cash at bank and on deposit at 30 June 2021	89,565	
Debtors	<u>4,352</u>	93,917
Less Creditors		<u>5,869</u>
Net assets		<u>88,048</u>
 <u>Balanced by Reserves</u>		
Sir Derek Birley bequest		20,000
Note		
Operating reserves brought forward	79,477	
Surplus for year ended 30 June 2021	<u>8,571</u>	<u>68,048</u>
Total Reserves		<u>88,048</u>

Note: The Sir Derek Birley bequest is ring-fenced to provide a designated reserve for the Society's awards