



From the ASSH *Bulletin*, No. 54, August 2011

President's Memo

19 August 2011

One of my first actions after being elected as the thirteenth president of the Australian Society for Sports History (ASSH) at the biennial meeting held in July 2011 at Tweed Heads, New South Wales, was to express gratitude to members of the Executive Board who had been responsible for the operations of the Society over the last two years. With an Executive spread over several countries, the task of running a national organisation is not easy, and it was appropriate that those serving on the Board were acknowledged for fulfilling their duties on behalf of the membership. I also extended my appreciation to Tara Magdalinski, who was standing down after six years at the helm as president, and my thanks to Geoff Kohe, who had acted as the postgraduate student representative on the Executive for two years. The meeting closed with recognition of the contribution of past presidents in attendance (namely Colin Tatz, Richard Cashman and J. Neville Turner) and I stated how honoured I was to be elected to serve the Society in this capacity. Fittingly, Tara was later privileged with an ASSH Service Award at the closing dinner of the conference.

The newly elected Board, which will remain in office until July 2013, is set out in the table below. As explained in Appendix B, a Publications Officer is still to be appointed to the Board, and I invite formal expressions of interest from any members who might want to serve as the postgraduate student representative on the Executive. In both cases, expressions of interest should be submitted to the Secretary, Claire Parker, by **5.00 pm on 16 September 2011**. Please note that other responsibilities for Executive members are still being negotiated, and the important role of Membership and Claims Officer still needs to be filled. This latter position may be filled by someone who is not formally a member of the Executive, and interested persons should contact me directly if they wish to receive further information about the role.

My intention is to provide ASSH members with up-to-date information about the operations of the Executive and the Society via the *Bulletin*, an enhanced website and group emails. I also encourage members with any concerns to make contact with the Executive member responsible for the relevant portfolio. A manifesto outlining other proposed changes to the operations of the Executive and the Society is set out in Appendix A, and feedback on the 'Ten Point Plan' is most welcome.

Name	Roles/Responsibilities	Email Address
Rob Hess	President	Robert.Hess@vu.edu.au
Claire Parker	Secretary	aparke20@une.edu.au
Matthew Klugman	Treasurer	Matthew.Klugman@vu.edu.au
Douglas Booth	General Member, Honours and Awards	doug.booth@otago.ac.nz
Tara Magdalinski	General Member	tara.magdalinski@gmail.com
Gary Osmond	General Member, Memberships and Claims (Interim)	gosmond@hms.uq.edu.au
Murray Phillips	General Member, Conference Liaison	m.phillips@uq.edu.au
Matthew Stephen	General Member, Archives and Museums Liaison Officer	mfstephen62@gmail.com
Tony Ward	General Member, Chapter Liaison	tonyward@bigpond.net.au

Finally, in line with a decision of the previous Executive Board, this will be the last hard copy version of the ASSH *Bulletin* automatically distributed to all members. When members renew their subscription to the Society for the next financial year, they will be given the option of receiving the *Bulletin* as a pdf or in hard copy format. It is therefore important that the Membership and Claims Officer is updated with the current contact details of members.

Regards and best wishes,

Rob Hess
President, ASSH

PS. Members will now be aware that a dynamic new logo has made its 'debut' for the Society. This new 'branding' will be progressively rolled out in other ASSH publications, including the website. Thanks to Level Playing Field Graphic Design for their excellent advice and service in this area.

APPENDIX A

A Ten Point Plan for Reinvigorating the Australian Society for Sports History and its Executive

Rob Hess

Draft 3: Circulated to the Membership of ASSH

Preamble

On my election as President of the Australian Society for Sports History (ASSH) at the annual meeting on 6 July 2011, I foreshadowed a Ten Point Plan for reinvigorating the Society and its Executive. I had already compiled a plan in draft form, but I revisited the original draft in the light of anecdotal comments and observations on the operations of the Society made by delegates during the course of the 'Sporting Traditions XVIII' conference. A formal draft of the Ten Point Plan was then circulated to the Executive and discussed via email in the period 1-4 August 2011. While discussion was inconclusive (although occasionally contentious) regarding some items, partly due to time constraints and the medium of communication, the Ten Point Plan had the desired effect of generating debate about the aims, operation, structure and direction of the Society. The third draft of the plan, circulated to members by means of the ASSH *Bulletin* and via a group email, includes my addition of proposed specific actions attached to each of the ten points, and endeavours to engage the wider membership in this on-going Executive debate. The next meeting of the Executive will be held via email early in October 2011. I encourage members to discuss aspects of the Ten Point Plan among ASSH colleagues and state chapters, with the view to providing me (or other Executive members) with feedback prior to our next 'virtual' meeting, where the third draft of the Ten Point Plan and the proposed actions will be a major agenda item.

1. Membership

ASSH has suffered a slow decline in membership numbers over the last ten years (from a high of 226 in 2006/07) to the point where membership is declining at the rate of about 5% per annum, with total membership now at its lowest ebb over the past decade. This trend is not sustainable. I believe the Society should set an ambitious target of doubling its membership over the next five years and should put in place strategies and incentives to achieve that objective, including boosting the role and function of state-based chapters. Several of the suggestions I make below are made with the view to increasing the membership and the profile of the Society [See the Membership and Claims report compiled by Gary Osmond, and circulated at the ASSH Annual Meeting on 6 July 2011. I thank Gary for compiling the report and for his dogged attempts to retain and recruit members over many years, despite the prevailing negative trend].

ACTION 1a: The ASSH Executive directs the Membership and Claims Officer, in consultation with the Chapter Liaison Officer and the Postgraduate Student Representative, to implement membership targets for the next five years, and put in place strategies and incentives to achieve such targets, including boosting the role and function of state-based chapters.

2. Governance

I propose that the Society should change its constitution so as to operate on an annual basis, with annual elections (by postal ballot) and annual awards and prizes, but with a biennial conference. This will enable the Society to operate under something akin to the North American Society for Sports History (NASSH) model, with a President-elect, current President and Past President to help guarantee continuity and transparent succession, as well as serving to profile our achievements on an annual rather than a biennial basis. Of the Executive members, only Presidents (as indicated above) would be expected to serve an effective term of three years. All other terms of office would be for one year. Annual postal ballots would be conducted by an appointed Electoral Officer and would serve to enfranchise all members, not just those who attend conferences. Annual awards and prizes would generate much needed publicity for the Society and would, especially in the case of the book award, significantly reduce the potential time-lag between the publication of books and the announcement of awards. In this context, an annual award for the best Honours thesis should be re-introduced. Aspects of the Society's governance could also be re-visited in the light of a recent strategic plan released by the British Society for Sport History (BSSH) [See Malcolm MacLean, 'Strategic Developments: Report to BSSH AGM, September 2010', pdf circulated to BSSH members, 26 August 2010].

ACTION 2a: After canvassing opinion on different models of governance, the ASSH Executive, under the direction of the President, will, if necessary, recommend constitutional reform, subject to a vote by the membership.

ACTION 2b: Notwithstanding Action 2a, the ASSH Executive will also canvas opinion on the operation of its current system of honours and awards, with a view to clarifying the criteria and the operations associated with its Honours and Awards.

ACTION 2c: Notwithstanding Action 2b, the ASSH Executive directs the Honours and Awards Officer to investigate arrangements for the presentation of ASSH honours and awards on an annual basis.

ACTION 2d: Notwithstanding Action 2b, the ASSH Executive directs the Honours and Awards Officer to re-introduce the annual award for the best Honours thesis.

3. Conferences

The Society should have a more strategic approach to conferences. In line with this intent, ASSH should use its biennial conferences and its streams at the biennial Australian Historical Association (AHA) conferences to help boost its membership in each state and territory in Australia and New Zealand. There needs to be a transparent cycle of locations (perhaps alternating between large and small cities), and the Executive should endeavour to ensure that conferences are affordable wherever possible. Something to consider is that presenters at conferences must be members for the relevant financial year, as they must be with other Societies, such as NASSH. By embracing the AHA we also become more visible in the academy. Three ASSH streams at the last three AHA conferences have been relatively successful, and suitable arrangements should be put in place for future AHA conferences in Adelaide (9-13 July 2012) and Brisbane (2014). As a general observation, isolated, and/or expensive, ASSH conferences tend to result in a downturn in ASSH memberships. Larger, less expensive, conferences tend to result in surges in ASSH membership.

ACTION 3a: The ASSH Executive directs the Conference Liaison Officer to develop a more strategic approach to its conference scheduling, and to seek to implement changes that will increase attendances at both its biennial conferences and in ASSH ‘streams’ at other conferences, especially the biennial AHA conference.

4. Subsidies

The Executive should actively encourage students to attend not only ASSH conferences, but also conferences of the AHA and similar NZ organizations. Subsidies for conferences where there is an identifiable ASSH ‘stream’ (as confirmed by the Executive) should be offered on an annual, rather than biennial, basis. Such subsidies should be widely publicized as one of the benefits of being an ASSH member, especially on the website, in the *ASSH Bulletin*, and at meetings of ASSH chapters.

ACTION 4a: Notwithstanding Action 3a, the ASSH Executive directs the Treasurer, Secretary, Postgraduate Student Representative and Conference Liaison Officer, to actively encourage students (by means of annual subsidies), to attend not only ASSH conferences, but also conferences of the AHA and similar NZ organizations.

5. Publications

Conferences and publications are the two pillars of the Society and both need to be tended well. However, the journal is not the Society’s only publication and there is considerable scope to upgrade both the website and the *Bulletin*, which have the potential to be at the forefront of the Society’s interface with the public. To this end, the responsibility and strategy under-pinning ASSH publications must be shared among the four respective editors (supported by the services of a web designer?) and overseen by a Publications Officer. There is also scope to consider other publishing projects, akin to the very successful *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport* and the *Oxford Companion to Australian Cricket*. I envisage, for example, a series of books examining the history of sport in each state of Australia, and perhaps in each major island of New Zealand. It is remarkable, for example, that a volume on the history of sport in Victoria does not exist, and yet it would seem an ideal project, involving both established and emerging scholars, that would help rejuvenate the state chapter as members debate the contents for the anthology and conducted new research and writing, all under the guidance of a commissioning editor. It is a model that could easily be duplicated in other states and New Zealand.

ACTION 5a: The ASSH Executive directs the Publications Officer to oversee a re-vamp of the ASSH website and the ASSH *Bulletin*.

ACTION 5b: Notwithstanding Action 5a, the ASSH Executive directs the Publications Officer to explore other publications for the Society, particularly projects that will engage a wide base of membership.

6. Engagement

All of the above should be stepping stones to a greater involvement by the Society with the world beyond academia. Central to this engagement is the Society’s media profile with the outside world, which, for whatever reason, is currently very low. The Society needs to work at building up and nurturing this relationship, particularly through the website, but also through a re-vamped *Bulletin*. There is plenty of scope, for instance, for the Society to embrace Facebook and Twitter, and for ASSH to be the first port of call for media inquiries. This is not just for the purpose of basking in the media spotlight, but the collective membership of the Society has something that the outside world does not often have, and that is scholarly expertise. To this end, the Society needs to develop an effective expertise guide, perhaps grouped by sport or theme, so that the collective expertise of the membership is more recognizable and more easily located in cyber-space, again helping to raise the profile of ASSH outside of academia. A section of the website should also be devoted to ‘ASSH Members in the News’, so that media commentary made by members is shared more widely. The website also needs to be more user-friendly in terms of members being able to take out subscriptions and make payments electronically. Systems such as Pay-Pal need to be investigated.

ACTION 6a: The ASSH Executive directs the Publications Officer to explore means by which the media profile of the Society can be raised, and by which the Society can become more media-friendly.

ACTION 6b: Notwithstanding Action 6a, the ASSH Executive directs the Publications Officer, in consultation with the website editor, to implement an electronic expertise guide, and to devise a means of tracking media commentary by members of ASSH.

ACTION 6c: The ASSH Executive directs the Publications Officer, in consultation with the website editor, the Treasurer, and the Membership and Claims Officer, to explore means by which the website can become more user-friendly in terms of members being able to take out subscriptions and make payments electronically.

7. Networking (Part A)

There is also scope for engagement in another realm. The Society should be building and fostering closer ties with what might be broadly termed the heritage or museum sector. This has happened sporadically in the past, but now might be the time to formalize some of the relationships that ASSH has with institutions such as the Melbourne Cricket Club Library, the National Sports Museum, PowerHouse Museum, the Bradman Museum, and so on. The recent keynote addresses at ‘Sporting Traditions XVIII’ by Kevin Moore from the National Football Museum are examples of how fruitful such dialogues and relationships might become.

ACTION 7a: The ASSH Executive directs the Archive and Museum Liaison Officer to investigate ways and means of building and fostering closer ties with what might be broadly termed the heritage or museum sector.

8. Networking (Part B)

The Society should also aim to foster closer relations with other sport history societies, especially BSSH and NASSH, but also similar organizations in China, Europe and South America, even just in terms of information exchange. The idea of perhaps arranging a free or discounted exchange of journals with other societies has been mooted in the past. It is also worth noting that under the editorship of Murray Phillips the keynote addresses from ‘Sporting Traditions XVIII’ are likely to be published in the *Journal of Sport History*.

ACTION 8a: The ASSH Executive directs the President to investigate ways and means of fostering closer relations with other sport history societies, especially BSSH and NASSH, but also similar organizations in China, Europe and South America.

9. Teaching

The Society is now adept at recognizing and lauding the published works of its members. The recent ‘Sporting Traditions XVIII’ conference session on ‘Teaching Sport History’ proposed extending that recognition to the realm of teaching, with annual awards (akin to the ASSH book award) made to individuals, groups or even institutions that have advanced the teaching of sport history in the most innovative fashion. Ideally, such awards would not be limited to the tertiary sector, but would also cover the secondary sector.

ACTION 9a: The ASSH Executive directs the Honours and Awards Officer to investigate ways and means of initiating a category of annual awards related to the teaching of sports history.

10. Communication

The Executive should be at the forefront of fostering better and more frequent communication between Executive members, between the Executive and members, and between the Executive and state chapters. To this end, the Society’s website and email list should be used more regularly and more effectively. Members should automatically be added to the Society’s group email list when memberships are renewed each year, rather than having to ‘opt in’ to the email list as they currently do. Given that Executive members meet face-to-face so infrequently, biennial conferences should also be used as Executive retreats, where an extra day could be set aside for Executive members to debate and set new strategic directions for the Society. Executive members also need to make every effort to be in attendance at other conferences where there is an identifiable ASSH ‘stream’, and where practicable, to either arrange or attend meetings of ASSH state chapters.

ACTION 10a: The ASSH Executive directs the Membership and Claims Officer, in consultation with the website editor, to oversee arrangements that will ensure all ASSH members are automatically added to the Society’s email list.

ACTION 10b: The ASSH Executive directs the President to investigate the notion of holding a retreat day for the ASSH Executive at biennial conferences of the Society.

APPENDIX B

Call for Expressions of Interest: Publications Committee

Election and Selection of Members of the Publications Committee

Members of the Publications Committee are either elected or selected according to the schedule reproduced below (as extracted from the 'ASSH Publications Manual: Policies and Protocols' [2007]). It should be noted that the terms of office of all those currently serving on the Publications Committee have now expired, although a call for expressions of interest in these positions was not issued prior to the July 2011 annual meeting, as required. To rectify this situation, the Executive has agreed to issue a call for expressions of interest for all positions. In summary, the status of the positions is as follows:

Publications Officer – Chair of the Publications Committee

The two year term of Rob Hess expired at the end of June 2009. Applications for this position are invited.

Editor, *Sporting Traditions*

Current editor Lionel Frost accepted a two year extension of his term in 2009 and his term expired at the end of June 2011. Lionel will be applying for another two year term, but other applications are welcome.

Reviews Editor, *Sporting Traditions*

Current reviews editor Rob Hess accepted a two year extension of his term in 2009 and his term expired at the end of June 2011. Rob will be applying for another two year term, but other applications are welcome.

Editor, *ASSH Bulletin*

Current *ASSH Bulletin*, Rachel Winterton, filled a casual vacancy for this position. Her term expired at the end of June 2011. Applications for this position are invited.

Editor, *ASSH Electronic (including ASSH website)*

Current editor, *ASSH Electronic*, Tara Magdalinski accepted a two year extension of her term in 2009 and her term expired at the end of June 2011. Tara will be applying for another two year term, but other applications are welcome.

The procedure for filling vacancies on the Publications Committee is outlined in the following extract, taken from the 'ASSH Publications Manual: Policies and Procedures': 'Members of the Society who wish to nominate themselves for vacancies on the Publications Committee are required to submit a two-page application outlining relevant qualifications and experience in respect to the duties described in the relevant position descriptions, which can be found online at www.sportshistory.org [and are outlined below]

Applications should be sent as Word attachments by receipted email to aparke20@une.edu.au or by post to Claire Parker, c/- University of New England, School of Education, Armidale, NSW 2351. The deadline for receipt of applications is 5.00 pm on **Friday, 16 September 2011**.

Extracted from the 'ASSH Publications Manual: Policies and Protocols' [2007]

- i) At least fourteen days prior to the Annual Meeting at which office bearers of the Society are elected, the Secretary shall arrange to advertise (in various ASSH publications) forthcoming vacancies for the Publications Committee. Potential applicants must be members of the Society and will be required to submit to the Secretary a two-page application outlining relevant qualifications and experience in respect to the duties specified in Appendix One (Applications can be received up until a date and time specified by the Secretary).
- ii) The outgoing Board prior to the Annual Meeting will then consider applications for the position of Publications Officer. The Board will then appoint a Publications Officer who will serve as an Appointed Director for a period of two years (Note: This appointment should then be endorsed by the newly-elected Board at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting).
- iii) The Publications Officer then has the responsibility of assessing applications and selecting other members of the Publications Committee, who will serve a term of two years (renewable for a further period of two years).
- iv) The Board must formally endorse all selections made by the Publications Officer, and the Publications Officer is not permitted to serve concurrently as an elected Board member during his or her term of office.

- v) While it is preferable that all six positions on the Publications Committee be filled separately, the Publications Officer has the authority to appoint applicants who may assume simultaneous responsibilities for preferably no more than two of the other positions.
- vi) Should casual vacancies occur during the stipulated term of office, it is the responsibility of the Publications Officer to advertise such vacancies and make any necessary appointments (which must then be endorsed by the Board).

Appendix 1: Structure of the ASSH Publications Committee

1. Publications Officer - Chair of Publications Committee

Appointment

- As explained ... above, 'Election and Selection of Members of the Publications Committee', the Publications Officer is appointed by the Executive Board to serve as an Appointed Director on the ASSH Board for a term of two years (Note: The Publications Officer may not concurrently serve in any other position on the ASSH Board)

Tasks

- Oversees all aspects of ASSH publications, including the seeking of any necessary legal advice, and liaising with the Treasurer re production and sales budgets for all ASSH publications
- Coordinates the tasks, duties and responsibilities of other members of the ASSH Publications Committee in order to ensure consistency in the quality and design of ASSH publications
- Develops and maintains policies in respect to ASSH Publications and the operations of the ASSH Publications Committee. This includes updating of the ASSH Style Guide in consultation with the *Sporting Traditions* and *ASSH Studies* Editors
- Promotes sales of ASSH publications to the membership of the Society and to the wider community
- Maintains the master file and back catalogue of all printed ASSH publications and conducts audits and stocktakes when necessary
- Ensures maintenance of ISBNs and ISSNs for all ASSH publications, in both print and electronic format
- Ensures legal deposit copies of all ASSH publications are lodged with appropriate authorities
- Solicits and maintains contracts for the electronic publication of any ASSH publications
- Coordinates and, where necessary, delegates the distribution of ASSH publications at the direction of the ASSH Sales Coordinator/Treasurer and the ASSH Membership Coordinator

2. Sporting Traditions Editor

Appointment

- As explained ... above, 'Election and Selection of Members of the Publications Committee', the *Sporting Traditions* Editor is appointed by the Publications Officer for a term of two years, renewable for a further two years

Tasks

- Responsible for producing, and maintaining the scholarly reputation of, the flagship journal of the Society, including any special issues that may be commissioned
- Receives and reviews original manuscripts before submitting them to a peer-review process
- Maintains and coordinates the membership and involvement of the *Sporting Traditions* Editorial Board
- Receives edited reviews and review essays from the Reviews Editor
- Liaises with the Publications Officer over matter of content, style and design

Production

- Oversees the outsourcing of the design and layout of *Sporting Traditions*
- Organises printing of *Sporting Traditions*
- At the direction of the Publications Officer, arranges distribution of *Sporting Traditions*
- Ensures that *Sporting Traditions* is produced in a timely manner

Administrative

- Ensures that costs associated with design, printing and distribution of *Sporting Traditions* are invoiced back to the Treasurer via the Publications Officer
- Ensures excess copies of each volume of the journal are returned to the Publications Officer

3. ASSH Studies Editor

[This position has been discontinued]

4. Reviews Editor, *Sporting Traditions*

Appointment

- As explained ... above, 'Election and Selection of Members of the Publications Committee', the Reviews Editor for *Sporting Traditions* is appointed by the Publications Officer for a term of two years, renewable for a further two years

Tasks

- Liaises with publishers and authors re submission of material for distribution to reviewers
- Establishes and publishes guidelines for reviewers and solicits reviews from the sports history fraternity for publication in *Sporting Traditions*
- Arranges review symposiums/review essays for publication in *Sporting Traditions*
- Maintains a list of current and pending reviews in order to ensure necessary contact with reviewers and the timely management and submission of reviews

Production

- Arranges for electronic scans of covers of books to be reviewed to be forwarded to the *Sporting Traditions* Editor
- Liaises with the *Sporting Traditions* Editor to ensure the timely submission of reviews for publication in *Sporting Traditions*

5. ASSH Bulletin Editor

Appointment

- As explained ... above, 'Election and Selection of Members of the Publications Committee', the *ASSH Bulletin* Editor is appointed by the Publications Officer for a term of two years, renewable for a further two years

Tasks

- Receives and reviews submissions
- Solicits articles, book and conference reviews from members
- Solicits other content that may be of interest to members
- Collates information on conferences, forthcoming books and other topics that may be of interest to members
- Sources material from publishers' websites, discussion lists, Bulletin Boards and other relevant locations
- Receives minutes of meetings and other materials from the Executive to circulate to members
- Liaises with ASSH chapters about publicity for their activities