

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**ASSH Biennial Meeting
5 July 2003
Australian Catholic University**

The Australian Society for Sports History has undergone great change over the past decade since the Society was incorporated. The publications of ASSH have had a higher profile through the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles (AAFLA) website. The activities of the Society are more widely disseminated through the website set up by Tara Magdalinski. There are two email networks in Sydney and Melbourne and three ASSH branches in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and more are in the offing. ASSH has established new partnerships including one with the Australian Historical Association (ASSH is now an institutional member of the AHA). There has also been substantial new income streams through bequests, donations and from the AAFLA. In 2003 the Copyright Agency Limited will make a first payment of approximately \$10,500, for the use of journal articles in student course packs.

A second change is that ASSH has been affected by the climate of the times and has had to take out public liability insurance both for the 2003 conference and the society more generally. Alas, this also means that no football match could be listed on the 2003 conference program and it looks like one of the Society's traditions from 1979 will become mislaid and marginalised.

A third change is that more value is placed on ASSH as an institution and its resources. Two Sydney universities bid for the right to stage the 2003 conference when there was a formal process of bid decision-making. Plans and budgets of the two bidding universities were inspected by the ASSH 2003 organising committee.

A central task of the Executive Committee from 2001 to 2003 was to establish ASSH on a more professional basis, to develop written policies and procedures to ensure continuity, consistency and transparency in all activities of the society. In the past ASSH relied on the memory of long-standing officers, such as John Deane, who was an exemplary repository of ASSH's collective memory. It is now time for a society as complex and diverse as ASSH to commit policies to paper and to make greater effort to ensure continuity.

The Executive has tackled a number of important policy areas in the past two years.

Restructure of the Publications Committee A most important change related to the Publications Committee: how the Publications Officer/Editor is selected, the definition of tasks and the tenure of office. A public process was initiated in which nominations were called for and supporting documents requested. Similarly, the tasks of other members of the Publications

Committee have been set down and these positions were advertised in the *Bulletin*. This provides the opportunity for new expressions of interest and for the Editor to appoint an appropriate team. It also lines up the term of all the officers in the Publications Committee. When Rob's term ends in four years, the process will begin again for all positions. Special thanks are due to the former Editor, John O'Hara, who completed his second term in December 2002 for a record period of seven years. John and Angela also played an important role in a necessary constitutional change, the deletion of Clause 8 (2), which removed an anomaly in the Society's operations. I wish to congratulate, Rob Hess, who was installed as the new editor on 1 January 2003 for four years. I also wish to express my thanks to an excellent publications team: Tara who edited the *Bulletin*, Murray, the reviews editor and Daryl who was ASSH studies editor but has now resigned from this post.

The relationship between the ASSH Executive and the conference committee The relationship between the ASSH Executive and the conference committee is a particularly important one which Dwight Zakus has pursued with enthusiasm. This involves issues both of money and intellectual property. There are a number of issues that need to be further resolved. Who covers conference debts and who benefits from any profits? Who is entitled to publish a conference book or even conference papers on a CD? When and how should conference hosts be selected? The Executive believes that there should be a timetable and process by which institutions apply for the right to host a future ASSH Conference. The Executive also believes that there should be a memorandum of agreement between ASSH Executive and host conference body setting out the respective rights and obligations.

Additional conferences The Executive has decided to have an ASSH presence in conferences organised in even years. In 2004 ASSH will organise some panels at the Australian Historical Association conference at Newcastle in July. Rob Hess has agreed to act as liaison person for ASSH members wishing to present papers at Newcastle. In 2006 ASSH will have a similar relationship with the Commonwealth Games conference in Melbourne.

Bequests and donations An important uncompleted task is to sensitively establish and document the operations of such donations to the Society: notably the Tom Brock Bequest and the money donated by Max Howell for the biennial Max and Reet Howell lecture. The relationship between the Tom Brock Bequest Committee and the ASSH Executive needs to be further advanced. There should also be consideration whether some additions should be made to the constitution to cover such funds and their proper use.

Fellow of ASSH The Executive decided to replace the previous awards of life memberships and of service with the award of Fellow of ASSH, since the latter was considered more prestigious and was permitted under the constitution. Procedures have been established for the election of Fellows at

future biennial meetings. Because of time limitations nominations for Fellows in 2003 were made only by Executive members. However, in future any member of ASSH will have the opportunity to nominate a Fellow, which will be considered by a Nomination Committee and then voted on by the Executive. Further details of this process will be published in the next *Bulletin*.

New Zealand relationship The relationship between sports history scholars of Australia and New Zealand is a matter of ongoing interest. A meeting will be held at this conference to explore whether a more formal link, such as what exists with ANZALS, or a more informal relationship is preferred. This issue has been progressed by Doug Booth.

Website The ASSH website has become increasingly important for publicising Society activities and was an important factor in the promotion of the ASSH 2003 conference. I wish to thank Tara for her prompt and professional work in the maintenance of the website.

Finances The Society is in a very healthy financial position. In addition to the annual AAFLA license fee for the digitisation of 'Sporting Traditions', ASSH will be shortly be paid over \$10,500 under the Copyright Agency License system.

One issue that arises from this is how best to spend the money. ASSH already funds keynote lectures, provides conference assistance for postgraduate students and supports various prizes. It was agreed that Society income should be used to directly benefit members and a sub-committee of Kristine Toohey, Daryl Adair and Imke Fischer, considered how the income of the Society might be better used in terms of education, promotion, publicity and prizes. Members will be asked for feedback on a range of proposals, including increasing support for postgraduate students, publishing a new index for *Sporting Traditions* and distributing the publications of the Society to libraries.

I wish to thank all members of the Executive for their support and continuing collaborative endeavour particularly those most involved in day-to-day operations, Angela Burroughs and Imke Fischer.

Richard Cashman
5 July 2003