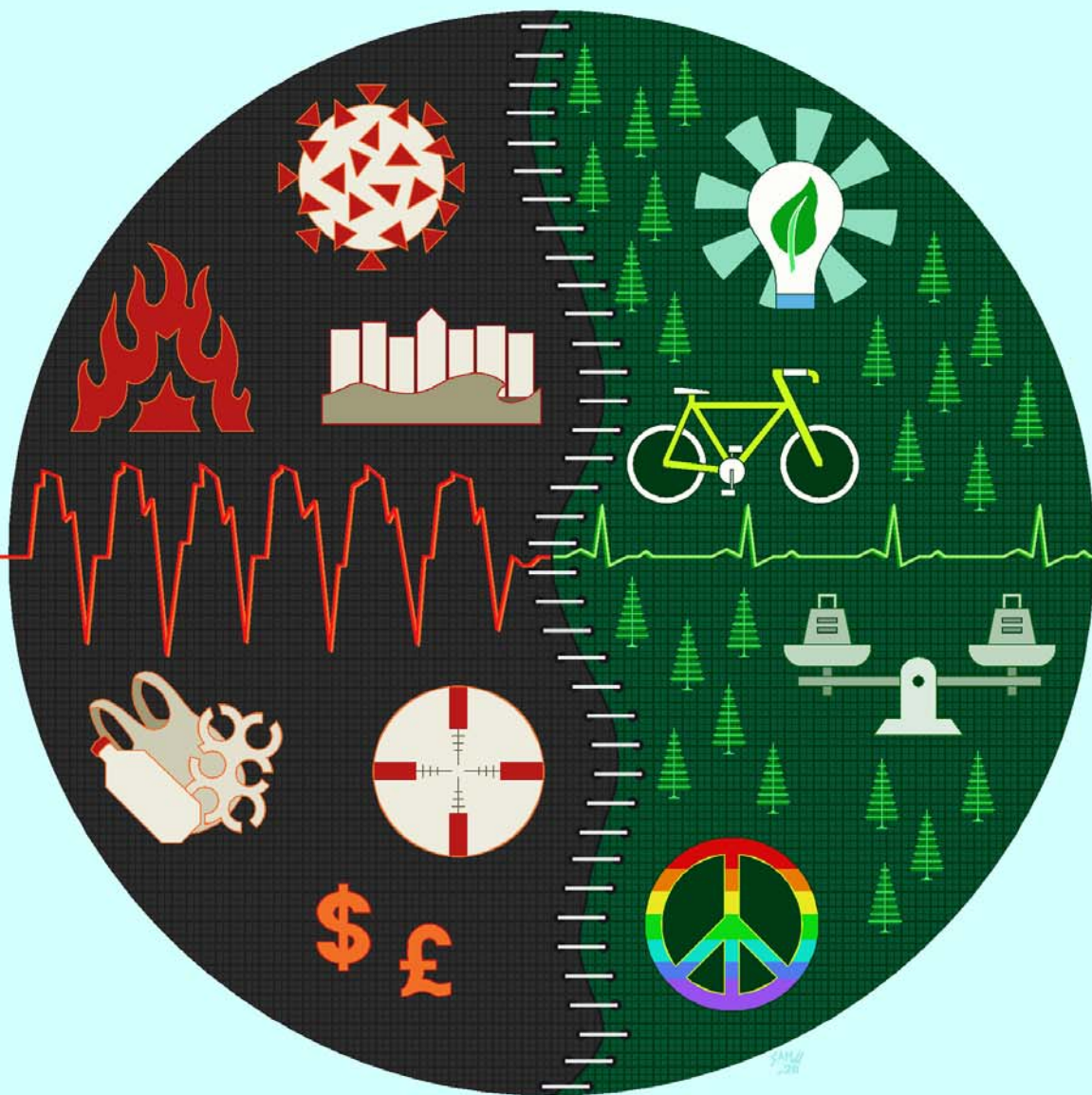


BSA

Annual Review 2020



BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
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BSA Annual Review, 2020

President's Report

This may be both the hardest and the easiest annual report that a BSA President has faced writing, at least for some time. Looking back over the past year is dizzying. Perhaps more so as I sit in my office at the University of Bristol for the first time since mid-March 2020 (on 28 July 2021). Everything is just as I left it and yet so much has changed outside this room. In this space, the 'time before' is visceral and all that has happened between then and now comes crashing into view. It is hard to make sense of. And at the same time there is so much to say!

From the outset, it was clear that sociological research would be critical for making sense of the pandemic. And so it has been. From medical sociology to digital sociology, across the sociologies of work and organisations, race and racism, families and relationships, markets and economics (for example), sociologists have shown how the workings of the pandemic have been filtered through social practices, social inequalities and the operations of power. Responding with impressive speed to the first lockdown, the BSA organised a livestream panel on sociologies of Covid in lieu of its annual conference in April 2020. And throughout 2020 (and into 2021) the BSA study groups have been active in co-organising events to coordinate and discuss research on Covid, as well as more broadly. Moving the whole conference fully online in April 2021 was a massive undertaking but defied expectations, with 745 registered participants embracing the theme 're-making the future' with a remarkable range of papers, plenaries and keynotes – attesting to the appetite and relevance of sociological research for future-making, followed up with a current call for contributions to a Special Issue of the BSA journal *Sociology* on Sociologies of the Future and the Future of Sociology.

Sociology is central to thinking about and making futures. Yet over the past year we have seen a series of moves to undermine sociology research and teaching, both at home and internationally, at school and university level. This calls on us all to demonstrate the value and importance of our discipline in whatever way we can, and resist these moves to shut us down which – at best – represent short-sighted failures to see the value of sociology, or – at worst – represent deliberate moves to undermine critical thinking about the social challenges that face the world in the 'bounce forward' from Covid. Addressing these challenges through narrow solutionist perspectives that strip out the social complexity is clearly insufficient. It is up to us, as sociologists, to demonstrate the power of our analysis. There is no doubt that this will be more powerful if we act collectively through the BSA.

Please, get involved, make the case, help make the future for sociology!

– Susan Halford



BSA Charitable Objectives

The advancement of public education by the promotion and diffusion of the knowledge of sociology by lectures, publications, the promotion and publication of research and the encouragement of contact between workers in all relevant fields of enquiry.

Our Three Strategic Priorities

1. Promote sociology

We will seek to promote the contribution and value of sociology by:

- Enhancing the status and understanding of sociology through wider public and media engagement.
- Developing partnerships with policymakers and non-governmental organisations involved in shaping society who could help us bring sociology to the decision-making table.
- Building alliances with organisations who share our passion for sociology whose supporters could help us promote the discipline.
- Gathering and promoting examples of where sociology is making or could make a positive difference

2. Support sociologists

We will seek to nurture a strong and vibrant community of sociologists who feel connected to us and to each other by:

- Promoting BSA membership as being an essential feature of identifying as a UK sociologist.
- Creating new relationship options to increase the number of people associated with sociology and the BSA.
- Developing better ways for members to connect with each other and supporting a strong sense of community.
- Increasing diversity within the BSA and the discipline, including working to implement the recommendations of the BSA report on Race and Ethnicity in British sociology.
- Fostering positive interactions between members and the BSA.

3. Sustain the British Sociological Association

We will seek to sustain the charity through responsible use of resources by:

- Protecting our current income streams and exploring new funding opportunities.
- Supporting the wellbeing and investing in the care and development of our staff and volunteers.
- Making operational savings where feasible.

Four Areas Identified for Special Attention

Members: Supporting members through the changes that they are experiencing, especially the impact and aftermath of the pandemic, e.g. providing more listening and sharing opportunities, and conducting an in-depth survey about membership needs and benefits, including the addition of external review of the website e.g. by teachers.

Schools: Creating new resources including videos and carrying out a survey of teachers to find out how we can support them best.

Equity: Implementing the recommendations of the BSA Report on Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology

Climate emergency: Exploring and implementing new ways of working which will better for the environment.

Publications

Despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, our publications work has continued to progress and we include heartfelt appreciation to our editors and peer reviewers who continued to give generously of their time and expertise to fellow colleagues and authors via the BSA journals in a challenging year.

There were several new appointments in 2020: Catherine Pope and Jason Arday joined as Publications Directors and BSA Trustees. New Editorial Teams joined SRO (Kahryn Hughes, Anna Tarrant, Angharad Beckett, Greg Hollin, Jason Hughes, Katy Wright, Lucie Middlemiss). WES welcomed nine new editors (Michael Brooks, Clare Butler, Rory Donnelly, Donald Hislop, Andy Hodder, Jo Ingold, Angela Knox, Paul Sissons, Joana Vassilopoulou). Christopher Thorpe joined as a new Editor for *Cultural Sociology* (we thank Lisa McCormick who finished her term on this journal). We also welcomed several new editorial and associate board members.

The largest strategic publishing decision facing us in 2020 continued to be the shift to open access. In February 2020 we met to understand the impact of Open Access Sales Deals (also often referred to as Transformative Agreements or 'Read and Publish') on the BSA journals and we have contributed to a number of consultations about open access policies (including the UKRI consultation). We continue to be concerned about the sustainability of new publishing models for sociology as a discipline, but have participated in shifts to increase open access this year as this appeared to be the best option for authors, readers and the Association in the short term.

Notwithstanding the challenges noted above, our publishing arm continues to be vibrant and productive. The Impact Factors for SOC (3.068) and WES (3.171) increased, and SRO (1.163) and *Cultural Sociology* (1.24) remained steady. Our journals published a number of special issues/content and hosted online debates throughout the year, including a session on Nationalism's Futures and the WES debate on Industrial Relations of Mental Health.

We congratulated the winners of the SAGE Prizes for Innovation and/or Excellence, awarded to authors of papers in each of our four journals, and welcomed new titles to both the 21st Century Standpoints and Sociological Futures book series.
– Jason Arday, Stevi Jackson, Catherine Pope, Richard Waller, Publications Directors

The BSA currently publishes a variety of academic books and journals. We thank the many people who contribute their time to these publications, including editors, board members, peer reviewers and our publishing partners: SAGE, Policy Press and Routledge.

Cultural Sociology (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 1.224
 Board Members: 29 Editorial Board members,
 29 International Advisory Board members
 Issues per year: 4 – March, June, September, December

Sociological Research Online (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 1.163
 Board members: 36 Editorial Board members,
 22 Associate Board Members
 Issues per year: 4 – March, June, September, December

Sociology (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 3.068
 Board members: 30 Editorial Board members, 30 Associate Board members, 15 International Board members
 Advisory Board members
 Issues per year: 6 – Feb, April, June, August, October, December

Work, Employment and Society (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 3.171
 Board members: 31 Editorial Board members, 35 Associate Board members, 28 International Board members
 Advisory Board members
 Issues per year: 6 – February, April, June, August, October, December

Sociological Futures Book Series (Routledge)

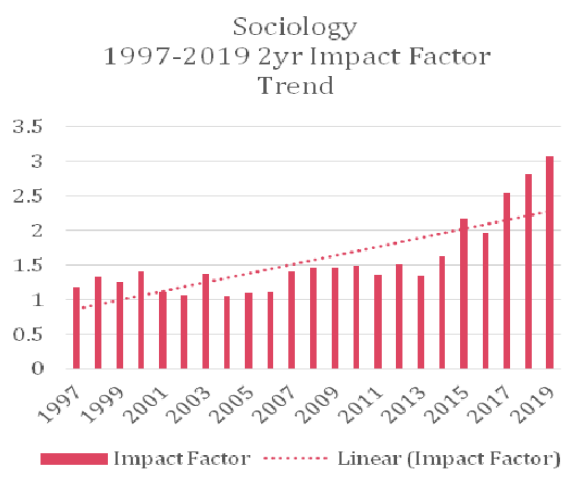
Volumes published in 2020:

- *Social Research and Disability: Developing Inclusive Research Spaces for Disabled Researchers*, Edited By Ciaran Burke and Bronagh Byrne

21st Century Standpoints Book Series (Policy Press)

Volumes published in 2019:

- *Cars* by Yunis Alam



Impact factors 1997-2019 for Sociology and Work, Employment and Society journals



Public Engagement

As the public face of sociology in Britain, the BSA engages in a number of activities to promote the discipline beyond academia and showcase the value of BSA membership. There has arguably never been a more important time for sociologists to be active in the public domain. The BSA responded to Sir Patrick Vallance's request for details of impactful Covid-19 research by collating evidence of the wide-ranging contributions being made by sociologists from all across the country. More than this, our website pulls together all the opportunities and resources that can help colleagues maximise the impact of their research in these uncertain times.

We were delighted to learn that sociology is now the sixth most popular A-level in the UK: the 8% increase in entries compared to last year means that almost 40,000 students are experiencing the benefits of a sociological education. As such, during the last year the BSA has increased the level of support offered to sociology teachers. We have commissioned classroom resources such as short videos by academics that showcase their research, and we would be delighted to work with other colleagues who would like to contribute to this series! Our annual A-level competition attracted a record level of entries, with students inspired to reflect on what it meant to be part of the 'Corona Generation'. The essays, which often drew on primary research, showcased how sociology can help young people make sense of the pandemic.

To better understand the teacher perspective, an online questionnaire was designed by Dr Sarah Cant to elicit sociology teachers' views of the A-level and to better understand how the BSA could support school-based delivery. The survey garnered passionate interest: during the three weeks that the survey was open, 416 teachers responded, providing extraordinarily detailed answers to the open-ended questions. Reports have been written for the three main awarding bodies (AQA, OCR, WJEC) and the results have been reported back to teachers and at the OCR forum. The BSA will be offering a teacher conference on November 2021 to enable a 'big conversation' about the curriculum at A-level and, drawing on the findings of the BSA's Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology Report, will support teachers in their teaching of racism and inequality.

The BSA President, Professor Susan Halford, supported by trustees, has been very active in defending and supporting sociology. The BSA has stood in solidarity with colleagues under threat of redundancy and has written to universities and governments to raise concerns when there have been moves to reduce or remove sociology from school or university education. During this last year, the BSA has issued a new public statement about freedom of speech, condemned the racist murder of George Floyd, reaffirmed our own commitment to tackling racism within sociology, and has responded to the sociological flaws in the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report.

Domestic Violence – Video Resources for A-level Sociology

The BSA sought to support sociology teachers and students during the pandemic by creating video resources. The first video we published, on domestic violence, was created by emeritus researchers Rebecca Dobash and Russell Dobash. This 20-minute video now has over 600 views and we have a growing playlist of videos for teachers and students. See:

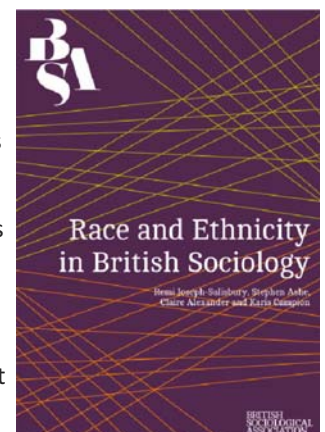
BSA Video Resources for Sociology Teachers

A list of public engagement activities

Academy of Social Sciences	Submitted case studies on the value of learned societies
Academy of Social Sciences	Represented BSA at learned society meetings and provided society-to-society support
A-level	Circulated a survey of teacher needs to guide future BSA support of sociology teachers
A-level	Produced video resources for school teachers
British Academy	Represented sociology on the BA Strategic Forum
British Academy	Submitted evidence to a report provided to the government on societal impacts of Covid-19
BSA	Published the Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology report
BSA	Held the 'Sociology On and Beyond the Covid-19 Crisis' symposium
BSA	Circulated the Track and Trace member survey on impact of Covid-19 on sociology in higher education
Government	Co-signatory on New Deal for Higher Education letter
Government	Provided evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Diversity and Inclusion
Government	Letter calling for action to stop violent clampdown on peaceful protests in India
The Guardian	Fielded speaker for Upside series (Graham Crow)
Public statement	On the death of George Floyd
Public statement	Peaceful protest (Hong Kong)
Public statement	The impact on the discipline of planned University of East London redundancies
REF 21	Submission of further panel nominations
The Times	<i>Sociology</i> journal article Black Lives Matter press coverage (18.6.20)
University of East London	Letters to VC on redundancies

BSA Report on Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology

This report is the result of funded work by the BSA. It provides important insights about the inequalities that exist in the teaching of British sociology and makes recommendations that should be considered by all sociologists, as well as by the Association. The BSA will carry out work to adopt and implement the recommendations on which it can take direct action, and will bring the report to the attention of other bodies who need to take action.



Communications

The BSA has a strong online presence through a variety of channels. A lot of time and effort (both staff and members) goes into ensuring that the voice of sociology is heard.

Everyday Society and BSA public statements

Visits to our Everyday Society grew based on previous years, seeing particularly high activity during the early months of the pandemic and lockdown in the UK. Not surprisingly, many of the most popular posts were Covid-related.

Top 5 most read blog pieces

- 1.Sociology and the Social Sciences in the Covid-19 Crisis, Susan Halford
- 2.CoronaDiaries: Documenting the everyday lived experiences of a global pandemic, Mike Ward
- 3.BSA Statement on Strike Action, BSA
- 4.Importantly Update: BSA Annual Conference 2021, BSA
- 5.'Led by the Science': Changing the Role of Experts from Brexit to Covid-19, Louise Ryan

Statements published on Everyday Society in 2020

January 2020 - BSA Condemns Crackdown on Peaceful Student Protest in India

February 2020 - BSA Statement on Strike Action

June 2020 - BSA Condemns Racist Murder of George Floyd and BSA Condemns China's Threats to the Rule of Law in Hong Kong

November 2020 - BSA President writes to UEL regarding The Future of Sociology and President writes again to UEL

Media Coverage

In 2020 the Media Consultant, Tony Trueman, issued four press releases (12 in 2019) and took around 25 enquiries from the media. The lack of BSA conferences because of the pandemic reduced media activity.

Directly as a result of our press releases, the BSA was mentioned in the following media:

Media type	Number in 2020	2019
National newspapers and websites	4	12
National radio	0	1
International media online	3	9
Specialist media online	8	22
Local radio	0	0
Local media websites	0	0
Magazines	0	0
Total	15	44

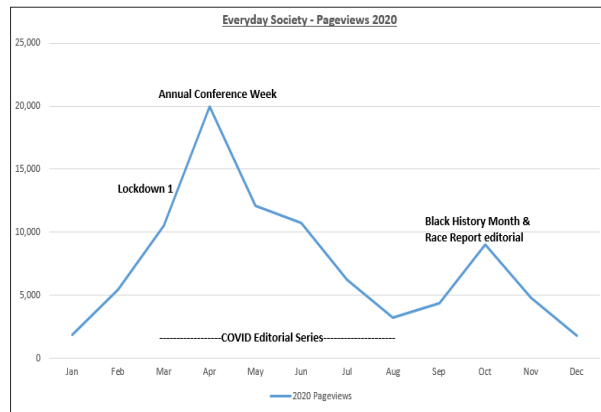
The national media included the *Guardian*, *Times* and *Metro*. Press releases can be read on the BSA website Media Centre.

Network

In 2020, Tony edited three issues of *Network* with a total of 140 pages. He wrote or edited in-depth pieces on the following:

- survey of jobs during lockdown
- the challenge of Brexit
- the BSA's report into race and ethnicity in British Sociology
- a tribute to David Morgan
- PhD students' experiences

Members can read all past issues of *Network* by signing into the BSA members' area. *Network* moved to online publication this year in response to the pandemic. The first issue of the year was in the traditional paper format but subsequent issues moved online as the BSA considered cost savings, green issues, pandemic-related postal delays and online publication options.



Britsoc.co.uk

This year saw page views reaching over 513,000 during the course of the year – a 29% decrease in traffic from last year. It's likely the decrease in traffic was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent reduction in activities. The most popular pages in 2020 were the Origins of Sociology, followed by our Events and Ethics Guidelines for sociology researchers.

Discover Sociology

There were 133,837 visits to our dedicated website supporting sociology school teachers in 2020, averaging 2,574 each week.

YouTube and Vimeo

The pandemic year created a significantly greater video resource of sociology. Many of the BSA events were recorded and posted on our Vimeo or YouTube channels. Through the BSA, sociologists posted over 25 videos on every topic of sociological enquiry.

Top 5 most watched YouTube videos from 2020

1. Sociology On and Beyond the COVID-19 Crisis
2. 'Then and Now' Domestic Violence Sociology A-level
3. Grace Davie – Believing without Belonging (Sociology of Religion Teacher Resources)
4. The Life and Work of Erving Goffman: A Conversation with Peter Lunt
5. The Industrial Relations of Mental Health: WES Virtual Debate

Watch BSA videos on Vimeo

Watch BSA videos on YouTube

Podcasts: 5

Twitter followers: 26,000



Professor Sue Scott's YouTube video

Events

Within BSA activity, the Covid-19 pandemic had, arguably, the greatest impact on the events programme. The first major change to the events diary in 2020 was the cancellation of the face-to-face annual conference, which was due to take place at Aston University in April. We regretfully cancelled the event before the formal announcement of the first lockdown occurred, as the direction of the pandemic was apparent and we felt a duty of care to our delegates, members and staff. We wanted to make an unambiguous decision with safety foremost and there was a need to send a clear message to our members and delegates. The progression of events showed that this was the right decision and we had full member support for the cancellation. The decision was not without financial implications for the Association, and we have to continue to be careful in how we plan ahead for the return of face-to-face meetings – although they will be very welcome indeed. Very quickly the staff began to explore the possibility of moving at least some event activity online, primarily via the possibilities enabled by Zoom – we quickly became very familiar with the instruction to ‘unmute’.

To mark the date when the Annual Conference should have taken place, Honorary Vice President Sue Scott led the organisation of a free webinar that was ‘attended’ by 260 participants and helped us recognise the potential to use virtual spaces as a vehicle for ensuring members remained connected and supported. Speakers Bridget Anderson, Nik Brown, Ipek Demir, Danny Dorling and Susan Halford, chaired by Sue Scott, discussed the emerging reactions to and implications of the pandemic, including the role of migrant workers, hospital architecture, underlying demographic trends, the use of technology and the failure of the West to react quickly enough. The video of this event is available on the BSA YouTube channel and marks a very important moment in our history.

We held 57 events in 2020, a small number in person before March, with the others moving into virtual spaces, supported by the hard work of the events team and the event organisers. Unfortunately, 10 events did have to be cancelled, while a further 12 were postponed.

Study groups embraced virtual routes for retaining their activities and connections and provided clear examples of how we could expand the presence of virtual opportunities in what we do – including beyond the pandemic. ECR and PGF regional events that had been due to take place in 2020 were rolled over to take place in 2021 – primarily virtually. HaPS had a very successful virtual meeting on 1 December with 42 participants. The Disability Study Group ran a series of six webinars in the summer, with an emphasis on making them as accessible as possible. The Postcolonial and Decolonial Transformations study group also ran eight webinars,

while the Violence against Women study group ran 12 webinars. Other groups who ran successful events in 2020 include Auto-Biography, the Mental Health study group and the Education study group. Many of these sessions are reporting higher delegate attendance than would have been the case had the events been face-to-face. What virtual can enable, in terms of participation for those who would not have been able to join in the ‘normal’ way, is important to retain going forward.

The number of online events supported by BSA members in 2020 was larger than the number of face-to-face events held in 2019, and the latter half of 2020 saw a significant rise in the number of study groups holding virtual events and bringing sociologists together.

Transforming large conference formats into virtual events presented a significant challenge in 2020. The BSA programme of smaller events was very successful. The annual MedSoc Conference ran as a free virtual three-day conference and had 172 registered delegates, a drop of 40% from the previous year. The WES conference chose to postpone their event, due to take place in Cardiff, to 2021 in the hopes of change to the pandemic circumstances.

As planning for large annual conferences occurs far in advance, 2020 saw the trustees grappling with difficult decisions for the 2021 conference in a possibly virtual environment: possible restrictions for the spring; the financial balance of costs and delegate charges in a pandemic reality; the technological requirements for a large online conference; the format of the sessions and the presentations. Trustees and staff had to undertake in-depth research in order to make decisions for the 2021 Annual Conference, announcing in the autumn of 2020 that we would hold an online event. Those reading this review will know how it went but at the close of 2020 the Association was still in a very uncertain situation with our fingers crossed for a good conference.

– *Aminu Musa Audu, Mark Doidge, Janice McLaughlin, Chrissie Rogers, Membership Trustees*



BSA Youth study group online event

Membership

For our members, 2020 was a year of upheaval, uncertainty, isolation and, for some, personal loss. As the year began, the indications were there that the UK would become part of the Covid-19 pandemic, but that it remained the dominant force in our work and personal lives across the year and into 2021 was, perhaps mistakenly, unforeseen. The pandemic shaped the work of the BSA in many ways. With the possibilities for face-to-face meetings and events severely curtailed and associated work on hold, all but three members of staff were furloughed for a time. We extended renewal timeframes in recognition of the exceptional circumstances and introduced rolling membership. Our membership number for 2020 ended at 2,002, still notably lower than the peak in 2017 of 2,749. Retention rates stood at 60.7%, which indicates that the majority of members continue to see a value in being part of the BSA, but that work is needed to continue to ensure we offer services of value to membership that are in keeping with the differing needs of members and for the varied fee levels we charge. We had identified in our annual strategic review in 2019 the need to review what we provide for members, particularly for constituencies such as early career researchers

and sociologists working outside higher education contexts, including sociology teachers. Some initial work has been done in this area, for example, obtaining better data on why people join, with people highlighting professional development, as well as data on why members leave. The plans we had begun to develop to create a working group (which goes beyond trustees) to look at this issue had to be put on hold due to the challenges faced by the staff in the office and also the work pressures trustees themselves were experiencing. Nevertheless, we recognise the absolute need to return to this work and retain it as a strategic priority even as we continue to live with the effects of the pandemic. Positively, core aspects of membership activity continued across the year and are discussed further in the Events section above. Our partnership with Heads and Professors of Sociology (HaPS) continues and the new Chair, Tom Hall, is keen to ensure HaPS and BSA work together to support the challenges Sociology Units face in a higher education context increasingly focused on STEM subjects as a value for money. Study groups – totalling 55 in 2020 – remain at the heart of the BSA and are needed more than ever to provide collegiate, if virtual, spaces for members trying to cope with the pandemic and its impact on research, teaching and the broader higher education climate.

Events List 2020

Date	Event
24 January	Postgraduate Forum Regional Event: Facilitating Holistic Wellbeing in the Research Process
05 February	South-Coast Medical Sociology Study Group: Creating Health and Wellbeing through Creative Endeavour(s)
08 April	Violence Against Women Study Group: Institutional Responses to Staff Sexual Misconduct in Higher Education - Webinar
20 April	Violence Against Women Study Group: Misogyny-Domestic Abuse-Parental Alienation - Webinar
20 April	Creating Solidarity as Early Career Researchers: Strategies for Making Life Liveable in the Academy: BSA Pre-Conference Day 2020
23 April	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up - Webinar
24 April	Webinar - Covid-19 - Sociology Symposium of Manchester
04 May	Violence Against Women Study Group: Using Crime Scripts to examine Child Sexual Exploitation Cases – Webinar
18 May	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar - 'We do not Consent to Die': Stop This Sadistic 'Defence' by Misogynists
21 May	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up – Webinar Glasgow Caledonian University
01 June	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Queering Narratives of Domestic Violence and Abuse
04 June	Youth Study Group Seminar Series Event: Youth Work and Socially Engaged Arts Practice: Pre- and Post- COVID-19
11 June	Disability Study Group Webinar: Disability and Health Inequalities in Times of Covid-19
11 June	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up - Webinar
15 June	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: FGM, 'Honour'-based Violence and Social Media Activism
25 June	Disability Study Group Webinar 1: Recognising Disabled People?
29 June	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Early Discursive Themes From Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation Serious Case Reviews
02 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 2: Education
09 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 3: Intersectional Inequalities, part 1
13 July	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Victim Blame and Sexual Violence - How Agencies Blame Women
15 July	Digital Sociology Study Group Book Launch: 'Designing the Social: Unpacking Social Media Design and Identity'
16 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 4: Disabled Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic
22 July	Postgraduate Forum Regional Event - Spelunking 2020: Games, Cultures, Societies Webinar
23 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 5: Intersectional Inequalities, Part 2
27 July	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Sex Work and Intimate Partner Violence
11 August	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar - Researcher Positionality I: Standpoint and 'Neutrality'
18 August	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: Ethics of Researching the Far Right
25 August	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
01 September	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
03 September	Postgraduate Forum Regional Event - Youth Transitions: Past, Present and Future Workshop
04 September	Sports Study Group: Virtual Postgraduate Forum
08 September	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
10 September	Medical Sociology Study Group Annual Conference 2020
15 September	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
17 September	Alcohol Studies Study Group Virtual Workshop: Alcohol Transitions: Past, Present and Post- Pandemic
21 September	Violence Against Women Study Group: Better the Devil you Know? Examining the Promises and Pitfalls of 'Clare's Law'
23 September	Sport Study Group Teaching and Research Workshop 'The Purpose of the Sociology of Sport: Challenges and Opportunities'
24 September	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up
01 October	Auto/Biography Study Group Seminar / Reading Group
08 October	Work, Employment and Society Journal-hosted Webinar: The Industrial Relations of Mental Health
19 October	Violence Against Women Study Group: Developing an Intersectionality Statement for the Study Group
22 October	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: Reconfiguring the Empire at Home
05 November	Auto/Biography Study Group Seminar / Reading Group 'Lockdown Moments: Doing Auto/Biography'
16 November	Violence Against Women Study Group: The Contentious Relationship Between Sex Workers and Researchers
19 November	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: W.E.B Du Bois, Racialized Modernity, and the Global Colour Line
26 November	Families and Relationships Study Group Autumn Webinar: Decolonising Families and Relationships
01 December	Heads and Professors of Sociology December Event
02 December	Social Theory Study Group Webinar - The Life and Work of Zygmunt Bauman: Izabela Wagner and Jack Palmer in Conversation
03 December	Death, Dying and Bereavement Study Group Virtual Symposium: Transitions and Transformations
03 December	Digital Study Group Online Event: Sex and Social Media, with Harry Dyer
04 December	Auto/Biography Study Group Christmas Conference 2020: Auto/Biography and Community
08 December	Digital Sociology Study Group: Media Distortions with Elinor Carmiand Community
09 December	Early Career Forum: Designing and Undertaking Participatory Research: Practical Issues, Successes and Challenges
10 December	Emotions Study Group Webinar: The Conflicted History of an Emotion
10 December	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: Decolonising Climate Discourse
10 December	Social Theory Study Group Webinar - The Life and Work of Erving Goffman: A Conversation with Peter Lunt

Constitution

The British Sociological Association (BSA) is an incorporated Association and is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee and Not Having a Share Capital under company registration number 3890729. The Association holds charitable status under registration number 1080235. As a charity, the Association controls a trading subsidiary: BSA Publications Limited. BSA Publications Limited publishes sociological works on behalf of the parent body, the British Sociological Association. The activities of the BSA are overseen by an elected Board of Trustees which is made up of ordinary members of the Association. The elected members of the Board are the legal Trustees of the Association. Current activities in any given year are driven and directed by the Board of Trustees and supported by an Advisory Forum which represents members across a broad range of constituencies. The Board of Trustees is also supported by a dedicated team of staff based at the Association's registered offices in Durham.

Registered office: Chancery Court, Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW; **Registered Charity Number:** 1080235; **VAT Registration Number:** 734 1722 50; **Tel:** 0191 383 0839; **E-mail:** enquiries@britsoc.org.uk **Website:** www.britsoc.co.uk

Prizes

The BSA publicly recognises the outstanding contributions that individual members and sociologists make to the discipline in a number of ways, including through award schemes. In 2020 the following awards were conferred:

Distinguished Service to British Sociology Award:
Professor Liz Stanley

National A-Level Sociology Competition:
Georgia Hanna, Kendrick School, Reading

Phil Strong Memorial Prize:
Thomas Wadsworth, Goldsmiths, University of London

BSA Philip Abrams Memorial Prize:
Anna Bull - *Class, Control and Classical Music*, awarded jointly with Owen Abbott - *The Self, Relational Sociology and Morality in Practice*

SAGE Prizes for Innovation and/or Excellence:
Sarah Neal et al, *Community and Conviviality? Informal Social Life in Multicultural Places*, 53(1), 69 *Sociology*

Felix Lang Bourdieu, Latour and Rasha Abbas
The Uses of Actor-Network Theory for Studying the Field(s) of Cultural Production in the Middle East and North Africa
Vol 13, Issue 4, 2019 *Cultural Sociology*

Michael Donnelly, Alex Baratta, Sol Gamsu
A sociolinguistic perspective on accent and social mobility in the UK teaching profession Vol 24, Issue 4, 2019
Sociological Research Online

Jenna Pandeli, Michael Marinetto, Jean Jenkins
Captive in Cycles of Invisibility? Prisoners' Work for the Private Sector, 33(4), 596 *Work, Employment and Society*

Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness Book Prize:

Ruth Holliday, Meredith Jones and David Bell,
Beautyscapes: Mapping Cosmetic Surgery Tourism
Manchester University Press, 2017

This prize is offered by our fellow Association the Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness (FSHI). Because of the historic closeness of our Medsoc study group and the FSHI, the BSA offers staff support for this prize.

Finance

The three principal sources of income for the Association are membership subscriptions, annual conference registration fees, and publication royalties. The Association is also now generating rental income from tenants occupying the ground floor of the offices in Durham. This income is used to meet a range of expenditures connected to the provision of services to members and support for the wider promotion of sociology. Staff salaries at the BSA office are the principal financial outlay (the position of Trustee is voluntary and carries no stipend).

The year-end consolidated financial statements for the Association in 2020 show a surplus of £315,218 against a surplus budget of £1,001. This result is mainly attributable to the increase in value of investments (£80,904), the financial treatment of part of the Durham building as an investment property (£105,000), government grants relating to the Covid-19 furlough scheme and business support (£47,771) and savings on events and activities, as these were unable to take place due to the pandemic. The Association holds unrestricted reserves of £1,173,230, sufficient to enable the running down of the Association over a period of one year should members vote to discontinue the Association or it prove no longer (financially or otherwise) viable. Additional reserves are maintained as designated funds for BSA study groups (£185,402) and property funds (£1,093,639).

Auditors Haines Watts were re-appointed for year-end 31 December 2020. They have continued to monitor and enhance financial controls within the Association.

– Dr Chris Yuill, Treasurer

Risk Management

Trustees review the Association's objectives and identify the major risks (within and beyond the Association's direct control) to which the charity may be exposed on an annual basis. For the financial year under consideration, a review was undertaken in November 2019, with discussion around a range of risks facing the Association. As well as meeting the requirements of charity law, the review provides an excellent basis for forward planning. Long-, medium- and short-term risks identified included the following:

- IT infrastructure including cyber-security;
- overseeing the output of contractors with regards to IT, journals and media;
- reputation due to social media and press coverage;
- publishing industry developments in relation to journals, particularly the introduction of Plan S and increased open access publishing with anticipated income reduction;
- changes in higher education policy and funding;
- diversity within the BSA;
- website functionality;
- General Data Protection Regulation changes;
- socio/political climate;
- conference attendance and financial impact.

More details of the BSA risk register are available on request and are included in the Annual Accounts as part of the Annual Report of the Trustees of the Association. – Dr Chris Yuill, Treasurer



Philip Abrams prize winners: Anna Bull and Owen Abbott

Acknowledgements

The BSA thanks all those who gave generously of their time and expertise during the 2020 calendar year, serving in many important roles vital to ensure the smooth running of the Association and its many activities.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dr Jason Arday	Publications Director	Dr Catherine Pope	Publications Director
Dr Aminu Musa Audu	Membership Services Director	Professor Chrissie Rogers	Membership Services Director
Dr John Bone	Chair	Professor Louise Ryan	Vice Chair
Dr Sarah Cant	Public Engagement Director	Professor Michael Savage	Public Engagement Director
Dr Mark Doidge	Membership Services Director	Dr Richard Waller	Publications Director
Professor Stevi Jackson	Publications Director	Dr Chris Yuill	Treasurer
Professor Janice McLaughlin	Membership Services Director		

ADVISORY FORUM

The Advisory Forum is made up of representatives from many constituencies of the BSA. Where the representatives are not named elsewhere in the Annual Review, we have thanked them here: Activism in Sociology Representative; Chair; Chief Executive; Company Secretary; *Cultural Sociology* Journal Editors; Early Career Forum Representative; HAPS Chairs, Prof John Solomos (to 1/12/20), Professor Thomas Hall (from 1/12/20); Honorary Vice President (Prof John Scott); MedSoc Representative; Membership Services Directors; Postgraduate Forum Representatives; President (Prof Susan Halford); Public Engagement Directors; Publications Directors; Publications & Membership Manager; *Sociological Research Online* Journal Editors; Sociologists Outside Academia Representatives; *Sociology* Journal Editors; Study Group Representatives (Dr Julie Parsons); Treasurer; Vice Chair; *Work, Employment and Society* Journal Editors.

HONORARY VICE PRESIDENTS

Martin Albrow; Sara Arber; Michèle Barrett; John Brewer; Robert Burgess; Joan Busfield; John Eldridge; John Holmwood; Lynn Jamieson; David Morgan RIP; Geoff Payne; Jennifer Platt; John Scott; Sue Scott (all professors).

STAFF MEMBERS

Sophie Belfield, Publications & Social Media Coordinator; Liz Brown, Membership Development Officer; Sandria Charalambous, Events Officer; Kerry Collins, Company Secretary; Alison Danforth, Publications Manager; Elaine Forester, Events Coordinator; Lyndsey Henry, Events Coordinator; Margaret Luke, PA to the Chief Executive; Gillian Mason, Finance Officer; Judith Mudd, Chief Executive; Jackie Murphy, Administration Assistant; Donna Willis, Digital Content Officer.

STUDY GROUP CONVENORS

Ageing, Body and Society: Wendy Martin, Julia Twigg; **Animal Human:** Rhoda Wilkie; **Auto/Biography:** Anne Chappell, Carly Stewart; **Bourdieu:** Jessica Abrahams, Ciaran Burke, Nicola Ingram, Steph Lacey, Amy Stich, Aina Tarabini, Derron Wallace; **Childhood Studies:** Liam Berriman; **Cities:** Emma Jackson, Kirsteen Paton; **Citizenship:** Mastoureh Fathi; **Climate Change:** Catherine Butler; Emmet Fox, Jessica Paddock, Thomas Roberts, Kathryn Marie Wheeler; **Consumption:** Emma Casey, Irmak Karademir Hazir, Adrian Leguina, Thomas Thurnell-Read; **Deconstructing Donation:** Laura Machin; **Diaspora, Migration and Transnationalism:** Julie Botticello, Paul Dudman, Rachel Humphris, Polina Manolova; **Digital:** Mark Carrigan, Cristina Costa, Huw Davies, Kate Orton-Johnson, Michael Saker, Christopher Till; **Disability:** Dieuwertje Dyi Huijg, Sara Ryan, Alison Wilde, Sarah Woodin; **Emotions:** Lisa Kalayji, Fiona McQueen, Lisa Smyth; **Families and Relationships:** Charlotte Faircloth, Alison Lamont, Katherine Twamley, Julie Walsh; **Food:** Julie Parsons, Andrea Tonner; **Gender and Feminism:** Madeline Breeze, Grainne McMahon; **Happiness:** Laura Hyman, Alexandra Jugureanu; **Historical and Comparative Sociology:** Martin Booker; **Human Reproduction:** Kylie Baldwin, Cathy Herbrand; **Leisure and Recreation:** Alan Tomlinson, Mark Turner; **Medical Sociology:** Catherine Coveney, Sarah Hoare, Jennifer Remnant, Shadrack Mwale; **MedSoc East Midlands:** Nicky Hudson; **MedSoc Environment and Society:** Richard Compton; **MedSoc Ethnic and Religious Minorities:** Zahira Latif; **MedSoc London:** Oliver Bonnington; **MedSoc North East:** Bethany Bareham, Rebecca Patterson, Holly Standing; **MedSoc North West:** Donna Bramwell; **MedSoc Scotland:** Suzanne Grant, Shona Hilton, Sara Macdonald; **MedSoc South Coast:** Chris Allen, Jo Hope, Shadrack Mwale; **MedSoc South West:** Gayle Letherby; **MedSoc Wales:** Julie Latchem-Hastings; **MedSoc West Midlands:** Geraldine Brady; **MedSoc Yorkshire:** Paul Bissell, Christopher Till; **New Materialisms:** Pam Alldred, Fay Dennis, Nick Fox; **Postcolonial and Decolonial Transformations:** Gurminder Bhambra, Ali Meghji, Saskia Papadakis, Sara Salem, Meghan Tinsley; **Race and Ethnicity:** Narzanin Massoumi, Sweta Rajan-Rankin, Rima Saini; **Risk and Society:** Gemma Mitchell, Joanne Warner; **Science and Technology Studies:** Emily Ross, Julia Swallow, Ros Williams; **Scottish Studies:** Paul Gilfillan, Alex Law; **Social Aspects of Death, Dying and Bereavement:** Sharon Mallon, Laura Towers; **Social Network Analysis Group:** Alessio D'Angelo, Paola Tubaro; **Social Statistics:** Charlotte Brookfield, Stefanie Doebler; **Social Work:** Rosie Buckland, Rachel Hughes, Louise Isham; **Sociology of Alcohol:** Katherine Jackson, Claire Markham; **Sociology of Education:** Nicola Ingram, Jon Rainford, Michael Ward; **Sociology of Media:** Julian Matthews; **Sociology of Mental Health:** Andi Fugard, Nick Manning, Rich Moth, Ewen Speed; **Sociology of Religion:** Celine Benoit; **Sociology of Rights:** Martin Crook, Michele Grigolo, Hannah Miller, Alice Nah, Damien Short; **Sociology of Sport:** Mark Doidge, Aarti Ratna; **Sociology of the Arts:** Katherine Appleford; **Sociology, Psychoanalysis and Psychosocial:** Julian Manley, Peter Redman; **Theory:** Matt Dawson, Barry Gibson, Charles Masquelier, Lisa McCormick, Christian Morgner, Susie Scott; **Violence against Women:** Louise Livesey; **Violence and Society:** Anthony Ellis; **Visual Sociology:** Julia Everitt, Terence Heng, Helen Lomax, Daryl Martin; **Work, Employment and Economic Life:** Rachel Cohen, Jonathan Preminger, Jill Timms; **Youth:** Benjamin Hanckel, Karenza Moore, Caitlin Nunn.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP CONVENORS

Activism in Sociology: Peter Burgess, Rumana Hashem, Spyros Themelis, Tom Vickers; **Applied Sociology:** J K Tina Basi, Nick Fox; **Early Careers Forum:** Sarah Burton, Kasia Narkowicz, Carli Rowell; **Postgraduate Forum:** Ross Goldstone, Gaby Harris, Owen McGill, Emma Seddon; **HaPS:** Tom Hall, John Solomos.

BSA PUBLICATIONS CONTRIBUTORS

21st Century Standpoints Series Editors: Prof Les Back, Prof Pamela Cox, Prof Nasar Meer; **Cultural Sociology Advisory Editors:** Prof David Inglis (Advisor), Dr Lisa McCormick, Prof Nick Prior, Dr M. Angélica Thumala Olave, Dr Christopher Thorpe; **Sociological Futures Series Editors:** Prof Eileen Green, Prof John Horne, Dr Caroline Oliver, Prof Louise Ryan; **Sociological Research Online Editors:** Dr Karen Lumsden (Chair), Dr Angharad Beckett, Dr Greg Hollin, Prof Kahryn Hughes, Prof Jason Hughes, Dr Lucie Middlemiss, Dr Anna Tarrant, Dr Katie Wright; **Sociology Editors:** Prof Tim Strangleman (Chair), Dr Andy Balmer, Prof Wendy Bottero, Prof Bridget Byrne, Prof Tarani Chandola (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Dr Simin Fadaee, Dr Helen Holmes, Dr Remi Joseph-Salisbury, Dr Vanessa May (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Prof Alan Warde; **Work, Employment and Society Editors:** Prof Irena Grugulis (Chair of the Editorial Board), Dr Maria Adamson, Dr Alexandra Beauregard, Dr Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, Dr Elizabeth Cotton (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Dr Anne Daguere, Dr Alessio D'Angelo, Dr Rory Donnelly, Dr Donald Hislop, Dr Janroj Keles, Prof Eleonore Kofman (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Dr Daniela Lup, Dr Paul Sissons, Dr Ian Roper (Co-Editor-in-Chief).

EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL AND SPECIALIST ADVISORS

Acamedia, Media Consultant; DMWM, Digital Designer; Ellis Whittam, Health and Safety Advisors; Haines Watts, Auditors and VAT; Natwest, Banking; The Pensions Trust, Pensions Managers; Policy Press, Book Publisher; ProTech, CRM Provider; Renew Publishing Consultants, Strategic Publishing Consultancy; Routledge, Book Publisher; Ruffer Investments, Investment Fund Managers; SAGE Publications, Journal Publisher; TSG, IT Systems Support; The Access Group, IT Systems Support; UK Engage, Elections Services; Ward Hadaway, Legal Services; Waterstons, Website and IT Support; Yellowback Ltd, Peer Review Management for Journals.

Addressing the Challenges Ahead

As the BSA heads towards a turning point in its history, the trustees have embarked on a series of wider conversations with members, communicating about the changes and discussing how best to respond. In November they met with members of the BSA Advisory Forum (the main member representative sounding board) and study group convenors (at the heart of the Association's academic research networks) to discuss the challenges facing the BSA, what matters most to them about the Association, and how we might adapt to help secure our long-term future. A version of a paper prepared for the meeting by our CEO, Judith Mudd, is shared here for all members to read. Although fairly lengthy, the trustees are keen for members to see this level of detail so that they can better understand where the Association stands.

The BSA has entered a transition phase, which is about planning and adapting to a known future reduction in our main source of income – publications.

We have been predicting a fall in publications income since the Finch Report on open access published in 2012. We did not know exactly how much or exactly when but we have been actively monitoring and communicating with members about the coming challenges since 2012.

We now expect to see a significant drop in our publishing income from 2023. At the same time, our membership, and therefore our membership income, has been reducing.

Together, these changes in income and membership present a challenge to the Association and, although we are not in any immediate financial crisis, we will need to adapt to ensure a strong future for the BSA.

Adapting what we do will not happen overnight and it is better (for members, trustees and staff), in terms of managing the change, if we can implement changes gradually. For this reason, the trustees are beginning to take steps now to cut the Association's coat to fit its cloth.

With the action that the trustees have already taken, and assuming all other things being equal, we are projecting that the Association now has enough funds to continue operating without further change until 2030.

However, it would not be wise to do nothing more until we reach the cliff-edge. It would be better to find ways of changing what we do over the coming eight years so that we have a plan which we can implement when we need to.

A bit of history

In the beginning, we were a small group of academics drawn together by a common passion, meeting infrequently, much like some of the study groups wholly supported by volunteers. In time, wanting to do more and needing funds to do more, we became a charity (in 1951) wholly maintained by membership subscriptions.

Our programme of activities grew and with this our need for professional and administrative services and to build institutional knowledge and create continuity of support became apparent. Still, these were sustained primarily by membership subscriptions, sometimes with some income from events.

The establishment of the BSA's wholly-owned journals – first *Sociology* (1967), and later *WES* (1987) – published under the auspices of the charity's trading subsidiary, BSA Publications, added a new layer of service need, both administrative (e.g. managing the copy-editing, type-setting, proof-reading, printing, subscriptions and distribution of the journals) and professional

(e.g. managing the accounts and providing legal advice). For the first 35 years, the journals were just about self-sustaining or subsidised by the charity, i.e. membership subscriptions.

In 2002, a major change occurred in the history of the BSA, i.e. a new publishing contract was signed with SAGE.

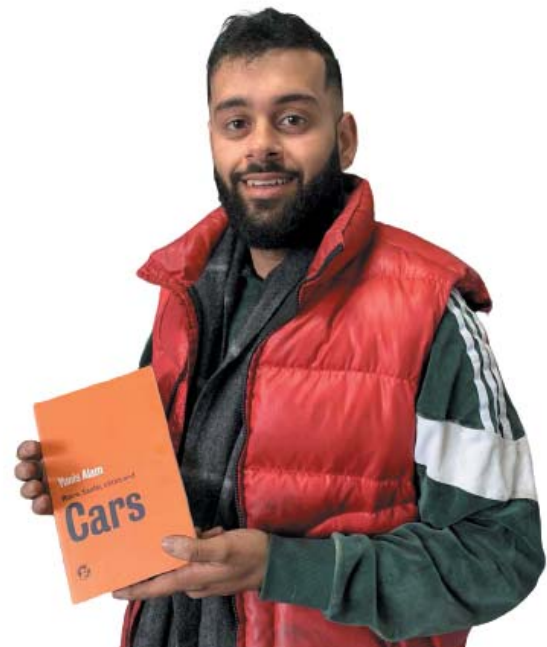
The move to SAGE was primarily about sustaining the journals (out previous publishers had told us that our journals were old and journal subscriptions could only go one way – down) i.e. we did not anticipate the kind of large surpluses that our journals ultimately made, but it changed the trajectory of the Association.

Suddenly, with significant funds being donated to the charity by its publications trading subsidiary, the Association was able to do much more, e.g. there were funds to:

- support bursaries for postgrads and early career researchers;
- maintain and increase support for prizes and awards for excellence (e.g. the BSA Philip Abrams Memorial Book Prize);
- build and maintain microsites for every study group and a new website dedicated to supporting school teachers;
- funds to ensure a sociological presence at major annual sociology events;
- support new book series;
- underwrite losses e.g. arising from events;
- support the production, editing and uploading of videos which promote sociology;
- pay for specialist support and advice (e.g. publishing, public relations);
- support small-scale research projects (e.g. the BA report on race and ethnicity in British sociology);
- support high profile public lectures (e.g. Annual Equality Lecture);
- purchase a meeting space in London for members to use; and
- purchase a permanent home for the Association in Durham.

The income created by the journals hugely exceeded our expectation and overtook by some margin member subscription income as our primary source of income.

Yunis Alam, author of *Cars*, in our 21st Century Standpoints series



What's the financial picture now?

The Association fared much better in 2020 than expected helped by:

- the severe curtailment of face-to-face meetings due to the pandemic leading to reduced expenditure, e.g. on travel;
- an unexpected windfall from our investments which performed better than most during the pandemic;
- an unexpected auditing revision to the treatments of our property in the accounts as a result of the decision to offer more of our office space to let; and
- unexpected income from the government furlough scheme.

This meant we ended the year with a consolidated surplus of £315,218, of which £185,904 relates to gains on investments.

We are also set to have weathered the storms in 2021 better than expected, helped mainly by:

- More people attending our first full virtual conference (745) – we prudently projected less because this was unknown territory;
- Additional, unexpected money coming in from our publisher (about £50,000);
- A non-return to face-to-face meetings resulting in continued reduced expenditure e.g. on travel (we predicted a blend for 2021);
- An unexpected low (virtually nil) take up of grants from our Support Fund for postgraduate and early career projects.

At the time of writing, for 2021 we are currently projecting an end-of-year surplus of about £60,000.

For 2022, we are working to a budget which is expected to give a small surplus of about £4,500.

We hold about £800,000 in investments with our advisors Ruffer and have projected cash reserves at the end of 2021 of around £300,000, making a total of about £1.1 million assets. But this includes £165,000 ring-fenced for the BSA study groups and so cannot be counted, so in effect we have £935,000.

Under good governance guidelines the BSA is required to hold one year's expenditure to enable the Association to wind down should there be a need to close the Association, i.e. £575,000.

This leaves the Association with £360,000 contingency (£935,000 minus £575,000), which is well below one year's expenditure.

Currently, we also have our two properties as assets.

Short-term, the BSA is in a secure position.

So what's the problem?

It's the longer-term that we're focused on, especially balancing recurring costs with recurring income.

A new publishing contract is currently being negotiated and we could see a reduction of about £90,000, reducing further year-on-year.

Assuming income remains roughly constant and a 2% inflation rate is applied to expenditure, if no action is taken, the BSA cash reserves would start to be depleted from 2023 and reduce to a nil balance in early 2026.

Thereafter, we would need to begin cashing in our £800,000 investments and these would be wiped out by 2030 if no alternative streams of income are found or savings achieved.

What about property assets?

The BSA owns a property in London historically used for meetings and bought as a way of diversifying assets, and a property in Durham that houses the staff and the BSA archive and which is also used for meetings.

- The London property has an estimated sale value of £400,000.
- The Durham property has an estimated value of £800,000.

We have carefully considered whether to sell or rent out more of our property.

What action have we taken so far?

The London meeting room is currently for sale on the grounds that it is now not being used enough and it is not socially responsible to have empty space in a prime location. This will generate a one-off sum which will buy us some time while we adapt. One quarter of our office space at Durham is currently let to tenants.

More space at the Durham office is currently being advertised to let. If successful, this would provide a new and recurring income stream, but there has been no interest to date.

Moving *Network*, our members' magazine, online has allowed us to see how many members are prepared to read a screen-only version: only 267 people clicked the link to the summer issue. The BSA is reviewing whether to move *Network* back to print production, given that most people read the paper copy when it is sent to them personally.

A series of small cost-cutting measures are being implemented in the office, e.g. not renewing our franking machine contract and changing our leased line providers, to provide recurring savings on expenditure.

The last three staff leavers have not been replaced.



Judith Mudd (left) and Kerry Collins (right) at the BSA office

With the proceeds from the sale of Imperial Wharf, the depletion of cash reserves will be delayed from 2023 until mid-2026. Other income generation and cost saving ideas are being considered including:

- Running training events (either exclusive to members or charged with differential rates for members and non-members);
- Increasing video publishing (either making BSA video content exclusive to members to help increase membership or developing the professionalism of our video output and promotion; also, seeking licensing opportunities and possible advertising revenue);
- Extending sponsorship opportunities to include non-traditional sponsors, i.e. organisations other than publishers such as software providers;
- Offering proof-reading or captioning services;
- Reducing activities which place a high demand on resource and have little take-up or create no direct financial return. This is a difficult question because so many things that fit this category might be highly valued and losing them might have a disproportionately negative impact e.g. public statements, letters and consultation responses; eNews; Everyday Society; Discover Sociology; *Network*; PAM Prize;
- Condensing our peripheral publications and websites e.g. *Network*, eNews and Discover Sociology (what do members actually want/read?);
- Stopping sending paper journals to members (we have agreed this will happen when our new journals publishing contract starts in 2023);
- Making face-to-face meetings the exception.

Feature continued overleaf ▶

◀ From previous page

The hidden work of the Association

An important consideration is that much of what the Association does to support the discipline is hidden or not acknowledged but has great value to sociologists and the discipline.

Significant resource is directed towards the promotion and defence of sociology through our press and public engagement work.

From a place of non-entity as far as the media were concerned, sociology now has increasing presence. We cannot claim that is all down to our work but in 2009 we contracted a professional media consultant and since then around 1,800 articles have resulted from our press releases, an average of 150 a year.

Coverage is becoming harder to achieve with newspapers cutting back on staff. Despite this, we did get 10 national news items from this year's conference, including *The Guardian* home page, *The Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror*. Even with this reduced press interest we generally have more national coverage than the British Society of Criminology and Social Policy Association, and are similar to the Political Studies Association. Getting media coverage takes skill and persistence.

Our public engagement work is very important to the future of the discipline e.g. supporting school teachers, challenging proposed cutbacks to sociology staff in universities, and questioning public policy and statements which would have negative impacts on society.

Notably, there is a difference between what's done to support sociology locally, i.e. within universities, and what the BSA does.

What's done locally, at an individual university or school level is necessarily self-focused and self-promoting because of the competitive nature of universities.

In contrast, as the subject association for sociology in Britain, the BSA only has one interest and that's sociology, regardless of where it's taking place.

The BSA's neutral status, independent of any university, is terribly important: it means that interested parties can be sure that we speak without bias.

We are internationally recognised as the pre-eminent learned professional society for sociological teaching, learning and research in Britain (this is how The British Library refers to us) and we are often asked for our advice or to contribute to important consultations.

A recent example is the major part the BSA played in the British Academy's response to the government (Patrick Vallance) on the medium- and long-term impacts of Covid-19 on society (based on the responses we got through an open call to sociologists).

You can read the British Academy's report on their website. The contribution of the BSA / sociology / sociologists is referenced on page 14 – we are one of only two learned societies to be directly referenced in the report.

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3238/COVID-decade-understanding-long-term-societal-impacts-COVID-19.pdf>

Other organisations that contact us because of our standing and our unbiased, holistic view of sociology include:

- The A-level exam boards – we currently meet regularly with them and work with them to provide support and resources for school teachers.
- Department for Education - our work with them has included saving GCSE sociology from disbandment.
- REF – each cycle they rely on us to act as official neutral conduit for sociology panel nominations. They cannot approach individual universities, for obvious reasons.

Organisations seeking to work with us know that we have an inclusive understanding of sociology with special interest groups and study groups which speak to the breadth and complexity of sociology.

We are the anchor for the discipline of sociology, unfettered by the push and pull of university policy and priority, vested only in

one thing i.e. sociology.

If sociology loses the BSA, we lose our central point of contact and with that our national identity and that weakens us as a discipline, feeding directly into the hands of those in political spheres who'd rather see sociology disappear.

Without the BSA, sociology GCSE would have ended (we fought successfully to save it), and there would be no neutral subject association to act as conduit for REF.

Sociology would miss the BSA if it disappeared!

What kind of charity are we?

We could say that we started out as the kind of charity that only received funds (to sustain a limited amount of activity).

Over time, especially in the 20 years from 2002–2022 and as a result of significant funding increases arising from our journals, we became the kind of charity that both received funds AND gave out funds in the form of Support Fund grants and prize money. We have changed from a charity run by volunteers only receiving funding to a charity with paid staff both receiving and giving money.

However, the ability to be a charity that both receives funding and gives funding depends on income exceeding costs.

Why do we need staff?

The BSA is a charity and a company limited by guarantee supporting a relatively complex annual programme of activity including: 60+ study groups, 50-60 events, including a large association conference attended by 600-800 people, four journals, four prizes, a support fund, two websites supporting those teaching and studying at pre- and post-tertiary levels, and a programme of public engagement and subject promotion activities. It is also a membership association with about 2,000 members.

Running an operation of this scale requires significant and skilled administrative support.

Each year, the staff answer thousands of calls and emails from members, authors, editors, study group and stream convenors, the media, suppliers and external bodies. The staff take care of all manner of administrative and professional activities including: administering the legal reporting requirements and duties of the

Professor Kalwant Bhopal, left, giving the BSA-British Library Equality Lecture



charity and the company, GDPR, specialist advice on publishing, book-keeping, vat returns, management accounts, annual financial returns, payroll, HR, pension; maintaining the membership data system, promoting membership, processing renewals and responding to enquiries; monitoring and generating social media content (mostly Twitter) for the BSA and individual journals; managing contracts for research (e.g. recent EDI projects) and suppliers (e.g. press officer, auditors, solicitors, publishers, health & safety); providing administrative support for the Board of trustees, the Board's sub-committees, the journal editorial boards; monitoring and reporting on the impact of policy and regulatory changes e.g. open access, charity and financial; maintaining and refreshing our two websites (BSA and Discover Sociology); generating and soliciting content for Everyday Society, *Network* and eNews; promoting and managing the administrative side of our conferences and events from online platform builds to venue arrangements, abstract submission processing, delegate bookings and on-site trouble shooting; producing detailed analysis of BSA and other activity to inform BSA strategy; writing press releases and working with the media to secure coverage; providing administrative and writing support for public engagement activities, such as public statements and responses to high level consultations e.g. Patrick Vallance report on the social impacts of Covid-19.

Could we reduce staff number to save on cost?

Currently the BSA has a team of 11 staff.

The staff exist to support the work of the charity. They are wholly dedicated to the project that is sociology. Their livelihoods depend on the success of sociology. The BSA is not an add-on to other projects or jobs that they do.

With the BSA offices in Durham, staff are recruited locally on non-university contracts. Salaries are benchmarked with similar jobs in the non-profit sector and in the north east of England. Since this area is one of the lowest paid in the country, staffing costs are lower than, for example, if the office was based in London.

Staffing costs are annually reviewed by the trustees, with external benchmarking carried out every five years and the staffing

complement kept as lean as possible. Nevertheless, in the context of reducing income, two posts at the office which recently became vacant have not been filled which, combined with another not filled earlier, has provided some saving on recurring staff costs.

Any further natural attrition in staffing levels could allow for shifts in emphases of tasks.

The team has already been reduced by about 21% from 14 to 11.

Without scaling back activities, there is little room to further reduce the number of staff at present.

Why be a member of the BSA?

Members need reasons to join and stay in membership and we are increasingly offering everything to members and non-members with no differential.

We are carefully considering the need for member benefits e.g. exclusive content, early access to content, and preferential rates to events, asking ourselves whether it is right that so much of the BSA content is freely available to non-members.

Preferential rates for members is a very important matter because our legal status with HMRC requires that members of the association receive preferential rates for the activities or services that we offer.

We have to evidence this and one of the key ways that we do is through our events.

Where a charge is being made for BSA events, members need to be offered lower rates than non-members.

With the move to more online events, there is reluctance to charge anything for attendance and, if non-BSA members attend (which mostly they do), this means that there is no differential between members and non-members.

Navigating being both a charity and a membership organisation is a perennial challenge, i.e. how best to balance the need for public benefit with the need for income to support the public benefit work we do.

Whatever happens, members and membership are at our heart: this is where the knowledge of sociology that we want to promote lies and we need more sociologists to join to help us to this better.

Coming up with strong reasons beyond utilitarian ones is a challenge and we have been working on this with a view to changing our messaging around membership.

*Some reasons to be a member of the BSA are at the end of this article.

What about membership income?

Association membership peaked in 2017 at 2,749. Since then membership (and therefore membership income) has been falling.

In 2020 we ended the year with just over 2,000 members.

From 2018 to 2020, our membership income reduced by £58,000.

We have been looking closely at the possible reasons for this and observing how engagement with the BSA has been changing in recent years.

The fall in membership appears to have coincided with dramatic growth in online access to and interest in our work.

We had 125,000 unique visitors (from all around the world) to our website in 2020 and we currently have over 27,000 Twitter followers.

Given that our membership is now about 2,000 and, at the last count, there were known to be less than 3,900 sociologists working in academia, we are evidently reaching a lot more people beyond our usual community.

We are successful in our charitable aim of advancing public education by the promotion and diffusion of the knowledge of sociology.

Feature continued overleaf ▶

in 2018, with the event Chair, Professor Louise Ryan



◀ From previous page

However, as more and more of our resources become freely available online and easily accessed via our websites, there is less incentive to be a member, which could be a key reason that membership numbers have reduced.

Analysis of attendees at our events in 2020 shows that, on average, around 60% were non-members.

With membership numbers falling there is less income to pay for the administrative support that underpins the work of the Association, including the cost of maintaining our websites and refreshment and development of online resources.

Currently, membership fees do not cover the cost of membership activities and support. All membership subscriptions are subsidised by journals income.

The current cost per member (calculated by taking the cost of everything the Association does which is not directly paid for by other means e.g. conference fees) is over £200.

£200 is more than any of our membership category rates, i.e. at present, all membership subscriptions are subsidised by income from our journals, sometimes by conference income, and sometimes by investment gains.

To help balance the books after 2030, either the current subsidy for membership will need to be generated elsewhere and/or fees will need to increase and/or administrative support/ activities will have to reduce.

How about income from conferences and events?

This is a misunderstood and contentious area.

Most BSA events do not set out to make a surplus and events are a relatively low source of income for the BSA.

Other learned societies are known to be much more reliant on event surplus income, in some cases it is their main source of income.

People often assume that the BSA conferences always make a sizeable surplus but this is not the case. Our annual conference has made surpluses some years but other years it has made a loss or broken even.

We can never say exactly how many people will attend our annual conference nor what the split of full member/ concessionary member/non-member will be, which means we never know precisely whether a conference will make a loss, break even or make a surplus.

Our approach is to budget prudently i.e. to assume attendance will be roughly the same as it was last year or the last time we were at a particular venue, for example.

Our last conference (2021) was a completely new adventure for us, being our first fully virtual conference. More paying delegates (605) attended than we anticipated and the conference made a deficit of about £6,000.

The budget for our next conference (2022), which is also fully virtual, is based on our experience in 2021 but (as above) we can never predict exactly what the outcome will be. We received 515 abstract submissions, of which a number will withdraw (our experience is about 100 people withdraw each year). If 100 withdraw that leaves us with 415 presenters and we would need 180 non-presenters to take us back up to break even or small surplus.

Unless the fees were increased, the annual conference is unlikely to ever be a guaranteed, recurring, annual source of income.

Larger BSA events are fully costed and charged because they involve significant technical and administrative support.

One area that has been under consideration is how to make

smaller study groups self-financing such that the cost of administrative support for them is covered, for example by their event fees.

Larger study group conferences, like the Medical Sociology conference, already has full cost clarity and the cost of BSA support is accounted for and directly paid for out of the funds in the study group's designated fund.

However, we have about 60 study groups, all of which are supported by the BSA. They all carry the valuable imprimatur of the BSA, are provided with a microsite presence on the BSA website, and are part of the bigger Association.

Additional support for study groups varies but is more often than not concerned with events which can include promotion/ marketing on our website and on social media, budgeting and payment processing system support, event platform provision and technical support, editing and uploading of event videos to BSA YouTube, legal advice and crisis intervention.

Where smaller groups make use of BSA staff support for events and don't charge fees to cover the administrative costs, this means that support is subsidised by income from journals and membership i.e. the wider Association is paying to support the many individual pockets of activity.

This might be fine, but with income reducing, the level of funding available from the wider Association to cover administrative and technical staff costs will also reduce.

The redistribution of income in support of other activities needs to be transparent and fair and more visibility will help us plan for the future.

We have been trialling the introduction of small charges for administrative support, calculated on an individual event basis which is then accounted for by internal accounting adjustment*. Some groups seem happy with this, others are not.

We are also considering other ways in which new funding could be achieved for smaller events, e.g. by increasing the Annual Conference fee to include an element "To help support our smaller study groups and research networks" or adding a specific additional sum to study group event fees and saying "This fee helps to support the administrative support of our study group".

If internal accounting adjustments are not acceptable and we want to continue offering support, we will need to find other sources of income to cover our administrative support costs when our reserves run out.

*Accounting adjustments do not generate income: they provide clarity on where costs are actually incurred, move money from ring-fenced designated funds to free reserves, where they can be allocated in the accounts against staff costs, and demonstrate to auditors how these costs are paid for.

We are also asking ourselves how can we turn the dramatic growth in non-member online engagement into income that will help sustain the Association long-term?

A Youth Study Group online event held during the year



The meeting on 5 November, attended by 46 people and involving plenary discussions and smaller breakout rooms was an opportunity to begin to work through the challenges in a forum full of key representatives from the Association.

The trustees also want to hear from the wider membership. Please send your comments or suggestions to Judith.mudd@britsoc.org.uk

In the next issue of *Network*, we will report on further developments.

In the meantime, there are two things that members can do to help raise the profile of the Association:

- Highlight the fact that you are a member of the BSA on your institutional profile/email signature e.g. Proud to be a member of the British Sociological Association – helping to protect the future of sociology.
- Talk to your colleagues about BSA membership and encourage anyone who isn't a member to consider joining to help ensure a strong future for the BSA.

* Below are some of the reasons for joining that you could discuss with your colleagues.

Reasons to join: to support sociology

Sociologists understand the power of association.

The BSA needs people who care about sociology to become members to support its work on behalf of the discipline.

The BSA is a wholly independent educational charity which operates without support from government or funding bodies.

Much of what the Association does to support the discipline is hidden/not acknowledged but has great value to sociologists and the discipline.

The BSA promotes and defends sociology through its press and public engagement work, e.g. supporting school teachers, challenging proposed cutbacks to sociology staff in universities, and questioning public policy and statements which would have negative impacts on society.

The BSA's neutral status, independent of any university, is terribly important and needs to be preserved because it means that interested parties can be sure that the BSA speak without bias.

The BSA is internationally recognised as the pre-eminent learned professional society for sociological teaching, learning and research in Britain and is often asked for advice or to contribute to important consultations.

A recent example is the major part the BSA played in the British Academy's response to the government (Patrick Vallance) on the medium- and long-term impacts of Covid-19 on society (based on the responses we got through an open call to sociologists). <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3238/COVID-decade-understanding-long-term-societal-impacts-COVID-19.pdf> (see page 14 for BSA acknowledgement).

Organisations seeking to work with the BSA know that the Association has an inclusive understanding of sociology with special interest groups and study groups which speak to the breadth and complexity of sociology.

The BSA is the anchor for the discipline of sociology, unfettered by the push and pull of university policy and priority, vested only in one thing i.e. sociology.

If sociology loses the BSA, sociology loses its central point of contact and with that its national identity and that weakens sociology as a discipline, feeding directly into the hands of those who'd rather see sociology disappear.

Without the BSA, sociology GCSE would have ended (we successfully fought to save it), and there would be no neutral subject association to act as conduit for REF.

Sociology would miss the BSA if it disappeared!

Reasons to join: to support professional development

Professional development is the No.1 reason members give as their reason for joining the BSA.

Being a member of the Association is a signal of commitment to the discipline, but membership also opens doors, including access to profile-raising, career-enhancing, member-only prizes, such as the BSA Philip Abrams and member-only roles within the Association such as study group convenorship, journal editorship and trusteeship, which enhance professional development.

By joining the BSA, sociologists (at whatever stage of their career and wherever they are) can:

Influence the discipline

- Voting rights on the future of the Association
- Input into consultations about the Association and the discipline

Stay informed

- BSA publications publish leading edge research, *Sociology*, *WES*, *SRO*, *Cultural Sociology*
- BSA Everyday Society
- BSA websites
- BSA eNews



Remi Joseph-Salisbury, 2019 winner of the BSA Philip Abrams prize

Support the future

- Support for teachers and students through promotional materials, teaching resources, Young Sociologist of the Year competition
- Support for PG researchers and early career researchers

Develop professional networks

- Conferences and events
- Study groups and special interest groups

Access to information and support

- Full text journal articles (over 60 journals, over 45,900 articles)
- E-books (over 1,000 e-books in SAGE knowledge)
- *Network Magazine*
- Audio/podcasts
- Videos
- Jobs board

Be supported

- Funding opportunities – BSA Support Fund (grants of up to £1,000 to support postgraduates and early career researchers)
- Prizes (£1,000 for the best first sole-authored book on sociology by an early career author)
- Awards
- Discounted conference fees
- Mentoring web ■