



The British Society of Russian Philately

2018 Annual General Meeting of the Society held online

1. Confirmation of minutes of the previous AGM and
2. The Secretary/Treasurer's Report 2017-2018(both attached)
(Proposed by Lenard Tiller and seconded by Edward Klempka)
3. Re-election of Society Officers and Committee Members

There were no new nominations, re-elected were the following:

1. President – Lenard Tiller
2. Secretary/Treasurer/Journal Production/Website admin
- Caroline Lee
3. Journal Editor - Edward Klempka
4. Editorial board 1 – Philip Robinson
5. Editorial board 2 – Ron Tufft
6. Committee member 1 - Kevin Holdridge (Webmaster)
7. Committee member 2 - Terry Page (London annual meeting)
8. Committee member 3 - Jackie Simpson
9. Committee member 4 – Neil Ritchie
10. N America Rep - David Skipton*

*David Skipton has agreed to stand as BSRP North American Representative.

4. Any other business

1. Edward Klempka Editor, BJRP) has proposed the following:

a) An increase in the BSRP annual subscription from £21 to £25,

"I am a member of some philatelic societies. The membership there, including magazines, is on average at 40-50€. I believe that an increase in the contribution to this level is acceptable, especially since publications such as Mr. Klempka's are included." Andreas Bliersbach

"I think increasing the annual sub. to £25 is a good idea! This is still a good deal for foreign members getting a hardcopy." John D Myke

"[I] feel comfortable with the current level of £21." Philip Matthews

"...the annual subscription is extremely good value, especially considering the high quality of the Journal. So, I would have no problem supporting an increase in the subscription. Even £30.00 is not too much! £25 is a bargain." John Merrill

"If we were to make the annual subscription £30 but allow a £5 reduction if paid before, say, 28 February (or any other proposed date) we are likely to get prompt payment from most members. This is the case with another organisation I belong to (private road residents association). Always there were a few late payers but since introducing this policy a few years ago there has been 100% compliance." Terry Page

Votes in favour of an increase from Jim Fitzgerald, Terry Page, Hans Grigoleit, Philip Robinson, Victor Wasilov, Ron Tufft, Matthew Kahane, Barry Danard, Jim Ramsden and Peter Williams.

OUTCOME

The majority of participating members have voted in favour of an increase in annual subscriptions from £21 to £25, effective from 2019 which has been proposed by Edward Klempka and seconded by Lenard Tiller.

In addition to the BJRP 108 due for publication in November 2018, all members will receive a complementary 360-page book on Foreign Armies in Russian Civil War. A book on Georgia is 70% complete and will be distributed FOC in the following year.

b) the introduction of ways for members to support the Society through a Donations Program set up to receive

i) monetary gifts (gifts of cash, tribute gift in honour/memory, pledge gift over time or recurring monthly gift)

ii) in-kind donations (gifts of stamps, postal history, philatelic literature and supplies)

ii) Legacy/Planned Giving opportunities (simplest form of planned giving, a bequest is a gift made through your Will that will take effect when your estate is settled. Gifts of securities and life insurance are also relatively simple planned giving opportunities).

"This is of no benefit to foreign members if the result is to get a tax receipt for their contribution. As far as I know the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) does not recognize contributions given outside

Canada. This may be good for GB members, but not me.” John D Myke

“It makes sense to have a donations system in place if anyone wants to do that, so I support all the options.” John Merrill

“1b ii) there is a risk of duplication of items and a large amount of low valued items. While duplicated books or items could be sold to members, this would be an additional task for someone to take on” Peter Williams

“I think [every other] suggestion is down to the individual.” Ron Tufft

“Donating stamps, etc, to the Society is a novel thought for me. I should imagine that I am not the only elderly member who has no beneficiary who is interested in philately.” Jim Ramsden

Those in favour of the introduction of a Donations Program are: Andreas Bliersbach, Jim Fitzharris, Terry Page, Hans Grigoleit, Philip Robinson, John Merrill, Victor Wasilov, Barry Danard and Lenard Tiller.

OUTCOME

Majority of votes in favour. A Donations page giving details of ways to give will be added to the BSRP website for information and as Ron Tufft has commented, the suggestion is down to the individual. Proposed by Edward Klempka and seconded by Philip Robinson.

2. This item was raised at the last AGM. London meeting host Terry Page has proposed that guest presenters consider making available information (text and images) on their presentation to be displayed either on the BSRP website or included as an article in the annual journal for the benefit of all members, the majority of which are unable to attend due to location.

After little progress on this item at the last London meeting, and much discussion, it has been proposed that the best way forward would be the video recording of the day’s presentations to be uploaded to the BSRP website.

a) What do you think of this proposal? and

b) is there a member with own equipment, willing to put themselves forward to undertake this duty?

"A publication of the lectures and essays in our journal would be a great gain but would be at the expense of other contributions in our writing. Perhaps you could publish a print on this meeting including the presentations? Or is this too expensive? Of course, the video version is cheaper. Even if I cannot be there personally, I could be part of it." Andreas Bliersbach

"2a - A good idea, but I fear that prospective displayers may be put off by having to do this. 2b - Maybe this should be explored for volunteers in the future." Lenard Tiller

"I am neutral to be honest - I would have accepted the text and images posted on the website." Jim Fitzharris

"I propose that all presenters at the meeting provide scans of all items shown plus (optional) a brief description, minimum is the title of the presentation. This will help to build up over the years a topic related database. -Video recordings are too long and show occasionally only "collective thinking", no action." Hans Grigoleit

Personally, I would prefer a hard copy of a presentation rather than a video. I like to keep the Journal and it's easier to refer back to paper! John Merrill

"Great idea, it will also help justify the increase in the membership fee for international members. The journal is great but missing out on the meetings and presentations is half of what the membership fee is supposed to cover.*" Victor Wasilov

[*Note from Treasurer: 80% of membership fee for international members (Zone 1 and 2) goes towards the printing cost of the BJRP (£12.50 each) and packaging and postage (Average cost £7.00)]

"Absolutely, I for one have never attended the Union Jack club - not that I choose not to but it's not possible for me." Ron Tufft

"I fully agree that one should try to video-record presentations and upload them to the website. We have just done this for another, non-philatelic, association of which I am a member and it was a success." Matthew Kahane

"This sounds like a great idea, but getting someone to actually do it, is another thing." John D Myke

"I would be interested in seeing the guest displays in the Journal." Philip Matthews

"A good idea to enable displays to be more widely disseminated. I wonder if a video would show the detail that many items require to appreciate them?" Peter Williams

"Photography would be much less of a challenge than seems to be suggested. Most mobile phone cameras nowadays have extremely high resolution, so it would be simple to get very reasonable photos of frames without resorting to professional photography. It would even be feasible to video record presentations that way and those could easily be added to the website." Kevin Holdridge (webmaster)

This comment from meeting host Terry Page "We have discussed this at previous meetings and everyone agreed it would be a good idea. Nobody however has volunteered to do the work! The best I can do is to ask those doing displays to make scans, write up the display and submit it for the website. I am however not in a position to "twist any arms" as I want to encourage members to bring displays to the meeting and don't want them to be put off by the realisation that additional work is required. Nevertheless, in the past I have been able to persuade some participants to write a journal article where the quality of a particular display warranted it. I'm afraid we have to make allowances for the demographics of the society and the (between 12 and 20) members who attend the annual meeting. Most are well into retirement age and hardly at the cutting edge of technology, to say the least."

Philip Robinson, Edward Klempka, Jim Ramsden, Carsten Alsleben and Barry Danard are in agreement with the proposal to video the presentations uploaded to the BSRP website.

OUTCOME

Lots of opinions/suggestions on this item but most telling are the comments of the meeting host Terry Page who outlines the failure (and valid reasons why), of last year's AGM proposal - that guest presenters consider making available information (text and images) on their presentation to be displayed either on the BSRP website or in the journal. However, it is encouraging to note from Matthew Kahane's comment, his personal experience of the success of video-recording the presentations.

The majority are in favour of the video-recording of the London meeting presentations. Proposed by Caroline Lee, seconded by Terry Page.

The Society is now looking for a member who has the equipment and is prepared to video the day's proceedings. Travel expenses

would be covered and includes a free lunch! If this is something you might be interested in doing, please contact the meeting host Terry Page on terry.page1@btinternet.com.

3. The BSRP Constitution item 6. FINANCE b) states

"Annual subscriptions are payable in advance and shall become due on the 1 January each year. Members joining after the commencement of the year must pay the full subscription rate applicable to the calendar year in which they join."

Over the years it has become the practice to renew memberships on the anniversary of the joining date (month), or

pay on receipt of a reminder, usually just prior to the production and posting of the complimentary BJRP towards the end of the year, and on occasion

not pay at all by year end (lapsed member) having received the journal and any other complimentary books at the expense of the Society.

Are members in agreement that subscriptions should be paid according to the Constitution and every effort to achieve this will be made with a 12-month period of grace from January 2019?

"Due to the daily obligations, the payment of the annual contribution, not with malicious intent, can be forgotten. I have a reminder to pay the contribution, if necessary also several times important." Andreas Bliersbach

"Perhaps have a grace period, say by Apr. 1, ... After that "purge" (a nice Stalinist term) them from the membership list. If people can't pay by that time they can't be that interested in being a member..."

The Rossica society went through this ... a few years ago when I helped with the voting for the executive. We had an out-of-date member list. People no longer members, still on the list, deceased members also & those who had not paid dues in years still receiving a Journal! To have the treasurer & membership secretary constantly reminding members to pay their dues is a waste of time. We have finally cleaned up our list such that reflects the true state of membership." John D Myke

"I feel that members ought to pay their subscriptions in accordance with the Constitution, allowing a 12-month period of grace as suggested." Philip Robinson

"Subscriptions should be paid, but an email reminder wouldn't go amiss! I have a lot of memberships and might miss one that needs renewing! Of course, they should be paid in accordance with the constitution, if that's not suitable the members can always vote to change the constitution!" John Merrill

"I think a yearly date for payment is ideal, but not Jan.1st. Why not on the date of the Bolshevik revolution - memorable to our members I would think." Ron Tufft

"It should be paid in early January (although I suspect it will still be necessary to send reminders to some members)." Matthew Kahane

"I feel that January 1st each year is not a good cut-off date, as, speaking for myself at any rate, my pocketbook is not yet recovered from the excesses of Christmas giving. If a fixed date is needed, perhaps one later in the year?" Jim Ramsden

"I agree with Item 6 as it stands. Some societies levy a surcharge for late payers if payment is not received within one month of the due date." Peter Williams

Those in agreement with this proposal are Lenard Tiller, Edward Klempka, Jim Fitzharris, Terry Page, Hans Grigoleit, Victor Waslov and Barry Danard.

OUTCOME

Going with the majority vote the proposal will be adopted. Reminders will be sent out the last week of December and it is hoped that members will comply, however, further reminders will be sent in June and again in September (if necessary). Proposed by Caroline Lee and seconded by Ron Tufft

Included here is an additional SUGGESTIONS item, as received in your AGM email responses:

4. Suggestions

"1. To be able to contact the members of the society, a mail list is certainly useful. 2. Also, a list of collection areas can be helpful to find like-minded. I occupy myself with POWs of middle-Powers soldiers in Russia and postal censorship in the WWI and look forward to any contact with collectors of the same area." Andreas Bliersbach

Response from Secretary/Treasurer: 1. Data protection laws prohibit the Society from sharing personal details of members,

unless specific permission is given. 2. The BSRP website (<https://www.bsrp.org/forums/forum/bsrp-discussion-forum/>) has a member's forum specifically for members to be able to interact with each other. The facility is there, but members have failed to make good use of it – so far.

“Why not re-introduce the exchange package, stamp donations made by members and circulated - any cash sale made being for the society in whole. If no-one steps up, I'll offer to organise and control this. It may be difficult given my location, but the postal situation is okay and secure. I would propose anonymous donations, compiled into a smallish ledger and circulated maybe twice a year. Postage fee to be paid for by receiver when moved on, stamps taken paid directly into BSRP account.” Ron Tufft

Ron's suggestion is currently being considered by the Society Officers and Committee member Neil Ritchie has offered his online administrative assistance.

“1. Website. Very little input, useful only for back issues and reference of same. Logging on seems futile as little gets added or updated, therefore it becomes frustratingly a waste of time doing so. 2. My idea would be to cease printing journals etc and merely let contributors of articles have them entered onto the website as and when written. This way, costs would be saved, and articles would appear all year-round making logging BSRP.org possibly interesting rather than disappointing. 3. Other things could be introduced, for example ' How Did All This Start for Me?' - members writing in to state why their interest in Russian Philately, I'm sure we all have a differing story to tell.” Ron Tufft

“The website is largely used for the reasons suggested, back issue reference, etc. etc. But to suggest doing away with the printed journal will be the death of the society. It's the one thing that unites us. The journal accepts articles from those who wish to write, they are put into a few formats, this allows a member to receive whichever format he/she desires & much information on a number of Russian area topics is delivered to the member. The member can then decide which articles or topics they wish to read. If we already have very few members accessing the website, for whatever reasons, are members going to check it regularly for articles? I don't really think authors are going to waste their time writing an article knowing that very few members are going to be reading it on the website. On the other hand, a journal with a captive readership is a little more incentive to write.

As for the free access to the BSRP website, that is a non-starter for me. I have been a dues paying for over 35 years, meaning I & a

whole host of other members have financed the production of the BSRP journal. So, now we are going to let anyone who wishes, to have total access to our website & library of past journals, for free? If this should happen, why, as an overseas member would I feel compelled to pay for membership when I can get the journal & all past information gratis?

Let's say this all comes to pass, no journal produced & articles periodically put on the website, if at all. Access to the BSRP website becomes free to anyone & overseas members cease to pay dues, what will the members resident in the UK pay for membership dues & for what? This doesn't sound like a viable model for a society to me. This puts the BSRP in the "relegation" zone. (I happen to follow Arsenal.)" John D Myke

Response from Secretary/Treasurer: Thanks for your suggestions Ron and your response John. We have had most of these suggestions come up in the past, but there is no reason not to revisit them.

1. Having to have a password to log onto the website was queried by Edward Klempka in 2012, who also proposed that all areas of the website be available to the public. Both suggestions were voted down. I will suggest to the President this item be taken up by the Society Officers (including the webmaster) and Committee members for further discussion.

2. Uploading the journal to the website rather than have a hard copy has been put forward for discussion on several occasions. Each time it has been decided that the majority of members prefer a hard copy. Recent communication with all members has once again resulted in the majority preferring a hard copy of the journal.

3. As mention previously, the website is only as good as the members who contribute/participate, such as in forum discussions. Committee members will be approached to take on the task of 'revitalising' the website and we will await their suggestions. If any members would like to take an active role on the BSRP website, please get in touch with the secretary on secretary@bsrp.org. Your ideas and participation are always welcome.

Thank you everyone who participated in this year's online AGM.

6 October 2018