

BSLS Pre-AGM Materials

1. Announcements
2. Officers' Reports and Reports on BSLS Projects
3. Minutes from 2023 AGM
4. Minutes from 2023 Autumn EC Meeting

Announcements

- At the 2024 AGM we will be looking to fill **vacancies** in the following Executive Committee roles: Chair, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Member at Large, and Overseas Representative (North America). Please send queries to the current Chair, Jenni Halpin, at jennihalpin@gmail.com; please send nominations both to the current Chair and to the Treasurer, Laura Ludtke, at bsls.treasurer@gmail.com.
- To streamline the BSLS's time in the joint AGM at this year's conference, reports and minutes are being pre-circulated; most will not also be reviewed in the meeting, though discussion, as always, is welcomed.

Officers' Reports

Chair's Report (Jenni Halpin)

The big work of the year has been planning further revisions to our funding schemes, to eliminate various points of friction for the committee in our reviewing and for potential applicants in determining which funding stream is the most appropriate to their circumstances. Relatedly, Laura has created a restricted fund to supply the hardship grants for attending our conference, and Jordan has activated a donation option on our website for contributions to this fund.

Conference plans for upcoming years continue apace; I'm very much looking forward to Lancaster under Sharon's leadership next year and to Strathclyde under Jordan's in 2026.

And I refer you with deepest gratitude to the reports of my fellow EC members (below), as their contributions to our society have been of inestimable value.

Treasurer's Report (Laura Ludtke)

British Society for Literature and Science, Financial Year 2023

For the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Receipts and payments accounts			Previous year (2022)
	Unreserved funds	Reserved funds	Total funds	
Membership fees (waged and unwaged)	£ 3,396.94	£ -	£ 3,396.94	£ 3,276.42
Annual conference fees (waged and unwaged)	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 12,737.00
Refund from conference venue		£ 2,304.62	£ 2,304.62	£ 110.40

Annual conference banquet funds	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,195.54
Donations to PGR fund	£ -	£ 20.00	£ 20.00	£
Income from publishers	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 245.00
Sub total	£ 3,396.94	£ 2,324.62	£ 5,721.56	£ 17,564.36
Hardship fund	£ -	£ 1,054.74	£ 1,054.74	
HSBC Account (as of 31 Dec 2022)	£ 18,016.55	£ -	£ 18,016.55	£ 17,267.28
PayPal Account (as of 31 Dec 2022)	£ 510.51	£ -	£ 510.51	£ 194.08
Sub total	£ 18,527.06	£ 1,054.74	£ 19,581.80	£ 17,267.28
Total receipts	£ 21,924.00	£ 3,379.36	£ 25,303.36	£ 34,831.64
Winter Symposium costs (2022)	£ 110.00	£ -	£ 110.00	£ 150.00
Duplicated membership fees refunded	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 11.00
Annual conference (2022), various				£ 12,573.97
Charge for cheque	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 5.40
Support for English Shared Futures conference participants	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 299.64
Small Grants payments	£ 1,344.46	£ -	£ 1,344.46	£ 702.99
Vimeo subscription to April 2023	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 226.80
Hardship funding for Annual Conference (2023)		£ 800.00	£ 800.00	
PGR Bursaries for Annual Conference (2023)	£ 240.00	£ -	£ 240.00	
PGR/ECR Grants payments	£ 1,145.86	£ -	£ 1,145.86	£ 372.14
ECR symposium gift to organisers	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 59.10
Winter Symposium costs (2023)	£ 768.18	£ -	£ 768.18	£ 110.00
ECR symposium bursary (2022)	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 102.50
ECR symposium bursary paid in error (2022)	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 50.00
Annual Book Prize award	£ 150.00	£ -	£ 150.00	£ 153.00

HSBC charges	£ 60.40	£ -	£ 60.40	£ 52.80
Paypal fees	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 10.00
Sub total	£ 3,818.90	£ 800.00	£ 4,618.90	£ 14,879.34
Net of receipts/(payments)	£ 18,105.10	£ 2,579.36	£ 20,684.46	£ 19,952.30

Membership Secretary's Report (Emily Alder)

On 25 March 2024, we had 81 current paying members (55 standard, 26 reduced). These figures do not take into account conference delegates who have paid membership with their registration fee.

For comparison, previous years' figures in the AGM report were

2023	129
2022	119
2021	178
2020	153
2019	144
2019	177

Reviews Editor's Report (Sharon Ruston)

Since taking over as Reviews Editor at the April 2023 conference (up to 25 March 2024):

- 33 reviews have been published on the BSLS website;
- 39 have been commissioned for submission in the next few months.

Harriet Newnes is helping in the role, particularly with putting the reviews on the website.

We have:

- Created (and keep updating) a list of publisher contacts;
- Created a new spreadsheet with all the information on it for submission of reviews;
- Informed publishers and tweeted links for reviews when they are published.

We regularly:

- Send Jenni a list of books for the BSLS newsletter, seeking reviewers (these are also promoted on Twitter/X, asking for reviewers)
- Revise the 'books to be reviewed' list on the BSLS website.

Things to think about for the future:

- We are not proactive in asking for books to review or for reviewers, thus the use of the flyers with QR code at this conference asking for books for review and reviewers;
- Author should not feel worried about contacting book review editors, and I have even been asking them to suggest people who I could ask to review

Communications Officer's Report (Jordan Kistler)

In September 2023, the executive committee voted to spend £250 for a website consultant. This was due to some ongoing problems with the website, including a temporary loss of access to the site in August 2023. The consultant made several suggestions and the executive committee has agreed that we should move the website to a commercial hosting platform such as Go Daddy or Krystal (it is currently hosted by the University of Bristol). This will ensure continuity of access even as the university affiliation of the communications officer changes every few years. The society has also agreed to provide funds to pay a doctoral student or other ECR to implement suggested changes that will improve the overall functionality of the website, and especially the book reviews section.

The associated costs of these changes are approximately £100/year for commercial hosting services and approximately £300-400 for someone to implement the suggested changes to the overall design/usability of the site.

The society currently relies on the website and X/Twitter account to disseminate information, such as CFPs. While the number of followers the society has on X remains healthy (2,923), there is a sense that fewer people are seeing relevant information. It might be worth exploring how best to reach our members.

Member at Large's Report (Sara Cole): Small Grants Scheme

I am pleased to report that in the past year we received fifteen applications to the Small Grants Scheme and made six awards, totalling £1991. Three awards were made for travel and accommodation for archival research, and three for support for an academic event. We ask for reports on these projects for the BSLS Newsletter when they are completed. The high number of applications and a small but steady stream of enquiries about the scheme show that we are on the radar for people doing work in our field.

The Small Grants Scheme was revised in 2021 to accommodate a wider range of activities, including individual research trips and associated childcare costs in addition to literature and science events and collaborative enterprises. A further revision is in process, to create two separate funding streams for grants in these areas: support for putting on events (Small Grants Scheme) and support for expenses for research activities (BSLS Research Grant).

I would like to encourage everyone to have a look at the funding page on the BSLS website for the latest news and to consider applying for support from us for your literature and science projects and events.

Member at Large's Report (Louise Benson James): Winter Symposium 2023 Report

We advertised the call for organisers of the Winter Symposium in June 2023, with the call closing at the end of July. We received three proposals from teams applying to run the Symposium, and after reviewing

them, selected the proposal for 'Imagining Queer Ecologies', run by a team of three researchers based at the University of Oxford.

The event, which was run online in December 2023, was a huge success. The BSLs allotted 750 pounds for the event, an increase from previous years when we had offered 500. This was used to pay honorariums for plenary speakers and for a creative workshop on drawing lichen patterns (which was a fantastic, original, creative way to open the workshop).

The report from the organisers is below.

Symposium Report

'Imagining Queer Ecologies' was a one-day, online symposium, co-organised by Drs Laura E. Ludtke (she/her), Joshua Phillips (he/him), and Martina Astrid Rodda (they/them) and co-hosted by the Faculty of English at the University of Oxford and the British Society for Literature and Science (BSLS), that took place in December 2023. With over 200 registered attendees from five continents and presenters from around the world, the symposium foregrounded the diverse and often collaborative work of researchers from around the world and brought together postgraduate and early career researchers (PGR/ECR) working at the intersection of literary studies, queer studies, and the environmental humanities.

'Imagining Queer Ecologies' fostered conversations about a wide range of topics relevant to queer ecology across the field of literature and science, medicine, and technology. It also extended Gold's invitation to reconsider 'nature as nature' to imagining ways of relating to, engaging with, knowing, and representing the environment that do not reproduce the established anthropocentric, technocapitalist, petrocultural, heteronormative, cisgender, ableist, colonial models. For this reason, the symposium began with 'Creating Lichen Patterns', a doodle workshop devised and led by Immy Smith (visual artist & head of pencil hoarding) and Dr Maria Christodoulou (biostatistician & keeper of random numbers), exploring how the non-binary nature of lichen symbiotic communities helps us to challenge what we think we know, and to see beyond artificially imposed categories and relationships. While the roundtable, featuring Drs Lara Choksey and Sneha Krishnan as well as the indigenous Trinidadians and Tobagonians storyteller and filmmaker Tracy Assing, addressed the intersectional concerns of anticolonialism and queer ecology, parallel panel sessions explored relationships between gender and fluids, queerness and literary form, and posed important questions about the 'campness' of meat and the status of ecology in trans-ethics of care. Overall, the symposium featured by work over thirty postgraduate, early career, and precarious researchers, educators, and creative practitioners.

Members can explore a blog about the symposium hosted by the Faculty of English at the University of Oxford: <https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/article/imagining-queer-ecologies>.

BSLS Book Prize Report (Laura Ludtke)

We received nominations for 29 monographs for the 2023 BSLs Book Prize from a wide range of publishers, including many familiar British university and trade presses: Bloomsbury Academic, Cambridge University Press, Edinburgh University Press, Oxford University Press, Palgrave, Peter Lang, Routledge, and University of Wales Press as well as a range of American presses: Harvard University Press, Lexington Books (Rowman & Littlefield), Open Book Publishers, Princeton University Press,

University of Michigan Press, University of Minnesota Press, University of Pennsylvania Press, University of Virginia Press, and Yale University Press.

Although nominations for two edited collections were received, it was decided that these would be considered alongside nominations received in 2024 for the newly established edited collections prize category.

The longlist was divided amongst longlist readers Louise Benson James, Sara Cole, Jenni Halpin, Sharon Ruston, and Laura Ludtke (chair), who were in agreement in observing that the field of nominated titles was exceptionally strong this year. Following the recommendations of the longlist readers, four titles have been shortlisted for consideration by a judging committee comprising Barri J. Gold, Jordan Kistler, Jenni Halpin, and Laura Ludtke (chair). The shortlisted titles are as follows:

- Marie Allit, *Medical Caregiving Narratives of the First World War: Geographies of Care* (Edinburgh University Press):
- Melissa Bailes, *Regenerating Romanticism: Botany, Sensibility, and Originality in British Literature, 1750–1830* (University of Virginia Press):
- Amelia DeFalco, *Curious Kin in Fictions of Posthuman Care* (Oxford University Press):
- Heather A. Love, *Cybernetic Aesthetics: Modernist Networks of Information and Data* (Cambridge University Press):

The winner of the 2023 BSLS Book Prize will be announced at the conference dinner on Thursday 11 April 2024.

Newsletter Report (Jenni Halpin)

We have had significant difficulties with the mailing function of the website this year; members who have not received their newsletter by the middle of February, May, August, or November should check the website or contact me.

The newsletters themselves continue to be a cornucopia of literature and science doings; please keep sending things to me for inclusion. We do require membership for publication, and deadlines are the last Friday of January, April, July, and October.

Minutes from 2023 AGM (14 April 2023, Lindsay Stewart Lecture Theatre, Edinburgh, UK)
(prepared by Laura Ludtke)

1. *Minutes of the 2022 AGM and 2022 Executive Committee meetings (5 September)*

The Minutes of the 2022 AGM and 2022 Executive Committee meetings are available to download via the Teams channel for Lindsay Stewart room.

Note: The Secretary notes that 7 members of the Executive Committee are in attendance in addition to 46 regular members of BSLS.

Minutes approved.

2. *Matters Arising*

BSLS Anti-Harassment Policy

With thanks to Sara Cole, Ros Powell, Laura Ludtke, and Jenni Halpin for their work on devising this policy.

The BSLS is committed to creating an hospitable setting for scholarly discourse, and a culture of kindness where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. This includes providing an environment free from bullying and harassment. Our anti-harassment policy applies to all events and meetings held under the auspices of the BSLS and to all participants, regardless of individuals' membership status. It applies to events held in-person, remotely, or in hybrid formats. It also applies to activities such as email, letter, or social media posts.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, where that conduct violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct. Harassment can include, but is not limited to: verbal harassment, threats, intimidation; using offensive spoken, written, visual, or bodily language related to, but not limited to protected characteristics; sexual misconduct, unwanted sexual attention, inappropriate physical contact including, but not limited to non-consensual touching with any part of the body or an object; stalking, unwanted online communication, and the creation of new accounts to harass persons encountered through BSLS events and meetings; and physical or verbal abuse and bullying. (Protected characteristics are: sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age.) Bullying or harassment need not be limited to protected characteristics to be opposed by the BSLS.

This requirement for a hospitable environment does not infringe upon scholarly engagement with potentially offensive material or with discriminatory language or practices. However, such engagement must be proportionate and relevant, and the tone and language of the presentation should be conducted with care to avoid harm to the audience.

Someone who experiences or witnesses harassment might feel able to raise the matter with the person who is creating the problem. In this case an informal discussion might help the person to understand the effect of their behaviour and change it. In other instances, persons who experience or witness harassment should seek out any members of the BSLS executive committee or the organiser(s) of the event, and they will deal with the matter in consultation with the Chair. Contact information is available on the BSLS website (bsls.ac.uk) and/or the event webpage. The executive committee and event organiser(s) will listen and take your concerns seriously with every effort at confidentiality.

Harassment will not be tolerated at the BSLS. The BSLS Chair and/or the lead organiser(s) of the event may impose any sanction they deem appropriate to deal with harassment, ranging from a warning to expulsion without refund from an event, or future bans on attendance at BSLS events and/or membership of the organisation.

If you have a question about this policy please raise it with the Chair

3. Chair's Business (Jenni Halpin)

Chair's Report

This year we continued my agenda of developing an archive to hold institutional memory and provide suggestions about what practices have been helpful in the past. There is now an updated template for agreements between the BSLS and our conference organizers as well as a supplement explaining some of our standard practices as suggestions. On Laura Ludtke's suggestion we have developed a policy against harassment. Sara Cole has put in quite a lot of effort getting started on a set of suggestions about hybrid or remote access.

Given current economic constraints and the fund raised in spring 2020, we have trialled a hardship grant for our own conference and intend to review how it went and continue the practice.

The English Association is hosting and clerking an online meeting of learned societies as a follow-on to the connections arising from English: Shared Futures, which we've twice sent representation to. I'll be attending the virtual meeting this spring.

Approval of informational documentation for prospective conference organisers

Two documents are up for approval: the first is a memorandum of understanding; the second is guidance based on past experience to support future organisers in their work

4. Officers' Reports

a. Secretary (Laura Ludtke)

Minutes for meetings have been updated and uploaded to the BSLS Google Drive.

b. Treasurer (Ros Powell)

2022 Accounts

Total 31st Dec 2021: £17,461.37

Total 31st December 2022: £19,581.80

The PGR fund (collected in 2020) remains at £1054.75 [see general points below]

Major income:

Income from the 2022 conference in Manchester: £13,998.10.

Membership (£25 full/£10 reduced with slight variation for PayPal membership, which is charged £1 more): £3,311.04

Major outgoings:

Outgoings for the 2022 conference in Manchester were £13,251.57. This excludes £425 for which we have yet to be invoiced by the Anthony Burgess Foundation, so the profit from the conference is likely to be £321.

Grant expenditure: £1,075.13

Book prize and honoraria/travel for keynotes: £707.85

Travel for English Shared Futures participants: £334.34

Vimeo subscription (to April 2023): £226.80

Bursaries for the ECR conference: £100

General Points:

I would like to document my thanks to Michael Whitworth for continuing to act as an accountant since April 2022 by receiving bank statements, writing cheques, and conducting a couple of other in-person bank matters. This has been necessary due to complications with transferring the HSBC account.

Grant applications and expenditure is picking up again after relatively few applications in 2020 and 2021.

Whilst this report covers the calendar year 2022, it's worth noting that £800 from the PG Fund is being used to support eight delegates' attendance at the 2023 conference.

c. Communications Officer (Jordan Kistler)

Website

Calendar feature recommended by Jenni Halpin is already being appreciated. JK invites further proposals to improve the website.

Vimeo

The BSLS maintained a paid Vimeo account in 2022, although engagement was non-existence in the previous year, so the Executive Committee has allowed the subscription to lapse. We will revisit opening a subscription should the need arise.

Twitter

Twitter followers and engagement are increasing. JK invites further submissions for material and events to promote on social media.

d. Membership Secretary (Emily Alder)

The following information covers the 2023 membership year.

As of 11 April 2023, we have 129 current paying members of which 83 are standard, and 46 reduced.

The figure is higher than last year in 2022 (119), but still smaller than at the same date in 2021 (178 [...])

A recent trickle of members renewing from January to April. Many members have joined specifically to attend the conference. This year, many members decided to use the option to purchase or renew their membership as a part of their registration. Registration fees will be extracted from Edinburgh Napier at a future date. The institution's research centre does not want to make a profit from the conference.

e. Book Reviews Editor (Franziska Kohlt)

In stepping down from the role after four years, FK notes the period of the pandemic has included significant changes in how publishers handle the review process, including an increase in digital-copy-only access. FK will be available to advise the next Reviews Editor and has produced some documentation describing the reviews process, which may be useful for the Newsletter or the website. FK recommends including reviews beyond just books.

f. Members at Large: Chisomo Kalinga, Sara Cike, and Rachel Murray (Early Career Member at Large); includes reporting on Small Grants and PGR & ECR Conference Fund and on 2022 Winter Symposium

The Small Grants Scheme (Sara Cole)

As reported last year, The Small Grants Scheme was revised in April 2021 to accommodate a wider range of activities, including individual research trips and associated childcare costs in addition to literature and science events and collaborative enterprises. We have four deadlines each year: 1 March, 1 June, 1 September, and 1 December, tied to the newsletter schedule.

I am happy to report that in the past year we received six applications and made four awards, totalling £1400. Three awards were made for travel and accommodation for archival research, and one for support for an academic workshop. We look forward to reading about these projects in the BSLs Newsletter when they are completed. In addition we have a small but steady stream of enquiries about the scheme which shows that we are on the radar for people doing work in our field.

I would like to encourage everyone to have a look at the Small Grants page on the BSLs website and to consider applying for support from us for your literature and science projects and events.

Awards made in 2022/23:

Merrilees Roberts, Queen Mary University, for archival research on the blush in the long nineteenth century.

Richard Fallon, University of Birmingham, for a workshop called 'The Literary Twilight Zone, Nonfictional Fiction, 1820–1920'.

Anne-Marie Beller, Loughborough University for archival research on the relationship between mid-Victorian novelists and psychiatrists.

Clare O’Callaghan, Loughborough University, for archival research into Anne Bronte’s medical treatments for TB, particularly her use of ‘health tourism’ via a trip to Scarborough.

PGR and ECR Conference Fund (Rachel Murray)

There were four applications for the BSLS PGR/ECR conference funding this year, three of which were successful. This is an improvement on last year and is likely linked to the return to in-person academic events over the past 12 months.

We also trialled an expansion of our funding scheme to support PGRs/ECRs without institutional support and/or other sources of funding available to them to attend the BSLS conference. We received 15 applications as part of this expanded funded scheme, and we were able to offer funding awards of £100 to 8 of them. We made the decision based on the following criteria: 1) those who we felt were most likely to benefit from attending the conference in terms of gaining experience of presenting their work, and 2) those who had not received funding from us before. For next year, I suggest that our selection criteria be stipulated in the extended funding call for the sake of transparency.

Executive Committee Note: This marks the end of RM’s term and she is happy to continue if needed, but is happy to handover as needed.

The chair reminded the committee of the need to review and revise as needed the specific criteria for conference grants so that we can be supported in making the difficult decisions. We agreed we would spend a certain amount at the beginning of the year (£1,200) to be dispersed in the December funding round with the remaining going to the conference hardship fund. This should be reviewed annually. The chair noted that there is £300 remaining also from the 2020 PG fund. We can review the amount as needed within the executive committee in the December round. The ECR Member at Large asked whether there was a rationale to the one pot, one scheme. The Membership Secretary observed that having one funding source and scheme offered needed flexibility. The Chair proposed the amount of £1,200 for 2023 and the members in attendance agreed.

2022 Winter Symposium (Rachel Murray)

There was one proposal for the BSLS Winter Symposium this year, ‘The Subterranean Anthropocene: *Excavation, Extracting, Uncovering from Classical to Contemporary Literature.*’ It was co-organised by Emily Rowe (KCL), Joan Passey (Bristol), and Billie Gavurin (Bristol) and was hosted virtually on the 12th of November 2022. It was a great success!

Will Tattersdill asked about future symposium plans, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

Sharon Ruston asked whether we could not give more for the PGR/ECR BSLS Conference fund given the need. Martin Willis asked about redescribing the fund as a ‘development’ or ‘post-Covid recovery’ fund. Michael Whitworth asked about fundraising from the membership for this purpose, as the Virginia Woolf Society has done

so this year. John Holmes proposed that members could opt to pay a higher rate (i.e., a sponsorship membership).

g. Overseas Representative, Europe: Liliane Campos

i. *Upcoming conferences:*

- SLSAeu conference “**Models, Metaphors and Simulations: Epistemic Transformations in Literature, Science and the Arts**”. Erlangen (Germany), 18-21 May 2023
- « **The Agency of Plants in the Literature and the Arts of the French- and English-Speaking Worlds (19th c. – 21st c.)** ». Université Paris Cité, LARCA & Catholic University of Paris, 15-16 June 2023
- “**Theatre About Science**”. Coimbra, 9-11/11/2023
- “**Taboo – Transgression - Transcendence in Art & Science**”. 27-29 September 2023, Malta Society of Arts, Valletta

ii. *Calls for contributions*

- Special issue of *American Imago* “**Comics on the Couch: Graphic Medicine and Psychoanalysis**”. Deadline: September 15, 2023. Contact: Vera Camden. vcamden@kent.edu
- Conference “**Logic and Modern Literature**”, University of Lausanne, September 14-15, 2023. Deadline: April 16, 2023
- Symposium “**Microscopic Imaginaries in Contemporary Literature (20th-21st centuries)**”, Paris, Sorbonne Nouvelle, 24/11/2023. Deadline: May 31st, 2023. <https://biocriticism.hypotheses.org>
- Open call for contributions to the **open access journal Arts & Sciences** (in French or English). <https://www.openscience.fr/Arts-et-sciences>

iii. *Online resources and events*

- The **Biohumanities** programme (Fondation Maisons des Sciences de l’Homme, Paris) is posting video recordings of its conferences online at <https://www.canal-u.tv/chaines/fmsh/nos-programmes-2002-2021/programmes-thematiques/biohumanities>
- The **BioCriticism** webinar (Fridays, 1pm BST) welcomes BSLS participants: the programme is online at <https://biocriticism.hypotheses.org/>

iv. *Contact*

Please get in touch with Liliane Campos (liliane.campos@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr) if you have any questions related to European events, collaborations or mobility.

6. Reports on Prizes, etc.

a. *BSLS/JLS Essay Prize (Jordan Kistler)*

The BSLS/JLS Essay Prize was awarded to Louise Benson-James. The panel made a unanimous decision. Each of the four submissions were very strong. JK would like to thank Michelle Garratt, Martin Willis, and Franziska Kohlt.

Executive Committee note: JK will promote the Prize at the AGM, with particular emphasis on encouraging supervisors to solicit submissions for the 2023 Prize.

b. *Book Prize (Laura Ludtke)*

Four titles have been shortlisted this year from a strong field of contenders:

- Peter Adkins, *The Modernist Anthropocene: Nonhuman Life and Planetary Change in James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Djuna Barnes* (Edinburgh UP)
- Hannah Bower, *Middle English Medical Recipes and Literary Play, 1375-1500* (Oxford UP)
- Shweta Khilnani and Ritwick Bhattacharjee (eds), *Science Fiction in India: Parallel Worlds and Postcolonial Paradigms* (Bloomsbury Academic)
- Emilie Taylor-Pirie, *Empire Under the Microscope: Parasitology and the British Literary Imagination, 1885–1935* (Palgrave Macmillan)

The chair would like to thank the longlist readers: Sara Cole, Jenni Halpin, Jordan Kistler, Emily Alder, and Chisomo Kalinga. Many hands (or eyes, in this instance), make lighter work. The chair would also like to thank this year's judging panel: Ros Powell, Chisomo Kalinga, and John Holmes.

The winner will be announced on Friday evening at the conference dinner.

The chair would also welcome feedback on whether the Society would be open to separating out the Book Prize into separate monograph and edited collection prizes, as is done in the Modernist Studies Association. There is a rise in the number of edited collections being produced and longlist readers over the last few years have noted that it is hard to make comparisons between monographs and edited collections.

Executive Committee notes: Unanimous agreement about separating it out, but will open discussion for the membership.

General agreement about separating out the prize and some discussion about practicalities. Suggestions about offering the prize jointly in particular years. Observations that communicating messaging to publishers and members about eligibility and procedure.

c. Newsletter (Jenni Halpin)

We continue as we have done, and I'll be delighted to include news, especially reports on literature and science events organised or attended by our membership. The deadline for the spring issue is 28 April.

7. Conferences (Jenni Halpin)

a. University of Birmingham (joint with CoSciLit) 10–12 April 2024 (John Holmes)

With an optional trip to forest locations on the 13th which accounts for the different dates. Offered jointly with CoSciLit, so the crowd will be more international. John Holmes notes that one of the forests belongs to the climate change project at the University of Birmingham and the other forest will be the Ruskinland one. John Holmes notes that CoSciLit also has a PGR/ECR fund and will work with BSLS to clarify how that will take shape in due course. CoSciLit does not seek to profit from the conference.

b. Lancaster University 10-12 April 2025

Organised by Sharon Ruston.

c. University of Strathclyde, 2026

Organised by Jordan Kistler.

d. Inquiries, expressions of interest, and proposals requested for 2027

e. Winter Symposium 2023, general discussion of themes that might be of interest

The chair invites discussion: are there any themes arising from this year's conference that might motivate proposals for the next symposium. Adele Guyton proposes 'alternate histories'. Michael Whitworth proposes 'scale'. The chair reminds the meeting that she will receive any ideas or proposals for future conferences.

8. Executive Members' elections (Laura Ludtke)

The following positions were up for renewal this year:

Treasurer (outgoing: Ros Powell)
Reviews Editor (outgoing: Franziska Kohlt)
Overseas Representative, North America: currently vacant
Member at Large (outgoing: Rachel Murray)

The following nominations were received:

Treasurer: Laura Ludtke (nominated by Emily Alder & Adele Guyton)
Reviews Editor: Sharon Ruston (nominated by Ros Powell and Michael Whitworth)
Overseas Representative, North America: no nominations as of yet
Member at Large: Louise Benson James (nominated by Jim Scown & Adele Guyton)

All nominees were elected by unanimous acclamation.

9. AOB

Josie Gill asks why we need a specific North America member rather than an Overseas member. Sara Cole proposes a round of applause for the newly elected members. John Holmes proposes another round of applause for the outgoing members.

Jenni Halpin offers thanks to the entire Executive Committee, but particularly to FK and RM. She also offers thanks to EA for her work organising the conference. Much applause.

Minutes from 2023 Autumn EC Meeting (15 September 2023, Online) (prepared by Sara Cole)

Present: Jenni Halpin (Chair), Laura Ludtke (Treasurer), Emily Alder (until 13.00), Liliane Campos, Sara Cole, Louise Benson James, Jordan Kistler (from 13.10), Sharon Ruston.

Apologies: Chisomo Kalinga.

Assigning minute-taker for the meeting. Sara Cole agreed to take the minutes for this meeting.

Minutes of the 2023 AGM. Agreed: to review over the next month and advise Chair of any amendments. **Action:** All.

Chair's Business (Jenni Halpin)

- **Report:** attended online meeting of learned societies convened by the English Association, the Institute for English Studies, and University English; more than 20 societies were represented; annual meetings are projected for the group; notes from the meeting are appended to the agenda for the present meeting. **Action:** Chair has tentatively committed her successor to attend next year. Meeting is online, around 90 minutes.
- **Small Grants and PGR/ECR Grants**
 - The expansion of both to include funding research travel creates a context for PGR/ECR to decide whether to select the smaller or the larger of the two options; discuss.
 - Should we add an explicit limit on the number of times an individual can apply for and/or receive funding from the BSLS?
 - Do we need a formal definition of “ECR” and/or to redefine the funding as for PGRs, ECRs, and others precariously employed?
 - **Discussed and agreed the following:**
 - to add more clarity on application criteria on who can apply and what they can apply for.
 - To add precarity to the qualification criteria.
 - To consider reconstituting the scheme as three funds: eg, research travel fund, - running an event - attending conferences.
 - To continue this discussion on email between now and the end of the year. Chair to write a proposal. Implement April 2024. Announce at the conference. Implementation of new scheme to be June 2024.
 - To minimise the number of ‘rules’ around the process to maintain flexibility.
- **PGR/ECR Grants & Hardship Funding for BSLS 2024**
 - We set £1200 for the year (March, June, September, December 2023 grants plus hardship funding for 2024 conference; one £300 grant awarded so far)
 - Membership is interested in donating to increase available funds for the hardship component; **Discussed:** ideas for how this could work, what the channel might be. Options include: A donate button on the website; annual standing order; an additional membership option ‘membership plus’; add to basket at conference registration time. There is an issue around institutions refusing to fund memberships as part of conference fee reimbursement so this might have to be separate from conference fee.

- Action:** Treasurer to look at feasible options for membership plus or other ways of moving forward.
- Emily and Jerome have both suggested that conference surpluses could well be directed to the hardship funding. **Discussed and agreed.**
 - Affirmation of variations for 2024 TBD by chair as part of cooperating in a three-societies' conference. **Discussed the context:** our 2024 conference is joint with two other societies and all have different ways of including membership fee with conference fee. **Agreed:** to delegate the matter to the Chair in conjunction with the Chairs of the other two societies, accepting that this might result in lower membership fee income for the year.
 - **Small Grants: discussed:** whether we should implement an annual cap or per-round cap on how much we award under this fund (seven applications in the June 2023 round alone) see above. **Agreed:** to keep a watching brief and bring mindfulness not rules to the process.
 - **The 2024 AGM** will have to be very efficient.
 - Please plan to submit written reports two weeks ahead of the conference so that Jordan can post them on the website along with the minutes to this meeting and to 2023's AGM. **Agreed.**
 - The "in the meeting" part of our reports will need to focus on discussion and action items rather than information items.
 - Annual statement that all charities need to submit to be included in the conference papers. **Agreed:** that the Treasurer's report should be cover the year to Dec 31st rather than our own financial year.
 - Given the plans for the conference (current draft 10 a.m. start on Wednesday 10 April) an exec meeting on campus before the start seems unviable. **Discussed options:** the day before, or online a day or two earlier. **Agreed:** tentatively plan a meeting for the evening before to get together to dress rehearse the AGM and discuss the agenda items. Also to have an email discussion in advance since not all Executive Committee members will be available in person before the conference begins.
 - **Executive elections at 2024 AGM**
 - To confirm: we have vacancies in Secretary and in Overseas Representative (North America); the terms of office of Chair (Jenni Halpin), Membership Secretary (Emily Alder), and one Member at Large (Chisomo Kalinga) end in April.
 - A plan: nominations normally go to the chair and the secretary (and, if made by the chair or the secretary, to one other member of the executive committee); Jenni Halpin will not be standing for a second term as chair and will therefore be able to take any nominations as usual; who will be the second member? **Agreed:** Nominations to go to Chair; Treasurer to act as the second nomination taker. **Action All:** to think about people we can encourage to take leadership roles and suggest they seek nomination.
 - Draft Remote Engagement Guidance document was substantially improved by Sara last fall and I dropped the ball; I'd like to add this to the advice documents we make available to conference organisers; it's below; send updates by end October and I'll refer it to Jordan then for posting with the others **Action All:** to review it and send amendments to Chair.
4. **Officers' Reports**
- **Treasurer** (Laura Ludtke). See report below.

- **Discussion and comments:**
- Treasurer confirmed that in future all bank statements will be stored in our Google drive.
- Treasurer confirmed that an annual income and expenditure report will be presented to the AGM.
- Restricted fund for hardship funding. Treasurer confirmed that this is possible by adding another column in the ledger with a note on what it is for. **Agreed:** to set up the fund. **Agreed:** that it will begin with the surplus from the 2023 Edinburgh conference, plus the £245 left over from the 2020 collection to reimburse people who couldn't get to that conference. Hardship fund is ringfenced for providing assistance for people attending our annual conference.
- Treasurer needs a second UK signatory for the bank account. Sharon Ruston volunteered. **All agreed.**
- **Membership Secretary** (Emily Alder) reported: as of 14th September 2023 we have 154 current paying members (compared to 129 in April) of which 92 and standard and 72 reduced. The figure is a little lower than but still comparable with the same date in recent years: 2022 (163), 2021 (178), 2020 (153), 2019 (144), 2018 (177).
- **Communications Officer** (Jordan Kistler) See report in appendix below.
 - Website has been down for a period recently which has revealed other issues around our website, its structure, functionality and management.
 - Website is currently hosted at Bristol University for historic reasons, and our contract is up for renewal in April 2024.
 - **Discussed:** commissioning a comprehensive review of the website, all aspects, to make it easier to use and more robust. JK is not an IT specialist and the website seems to be overloaded and difficult to manage. Options include: finding an expert from within BSLS or outside (nb the advantage of a professional rather than an enthusiastic amateur but there are cost implications); find out what other societies do; other ideas to JK.
 - **Agreed:** JK to find a consultant to do a preliminary investigation and report and to negotiate a contract for this up to £500 subject to Executive Committee agreement.
 - **Also agreed:** that in future the role description for Communications Officer includes a requirement for an appropriate level of technical expertise.
- **Members at Large** (Chisomo Kalinga, Sara Cole, Louise Benson James). See below for individual reports.
- **Overseas Representative, Europe** (Liliane Campos) Nothing new to report, all working well.
- **Reviews (Sharon Ruston)** See report in appendix below
 - Discussed Sharon's report. **Agreed:** that Harriet Newnes should be invited to continue her work with Sharon, at £17/hour for tech support and editing the reviews. 10 week blocks to be reviewed in April 2024. Harriet to invoice Treasurer at time intervals to suit her. This support will enable Sharon to tackle the big projects eg the book list on the website.

5. **Project Reports** (if not covered above)
 - **Winter Symposium 2023** (Emily Alder and Louise Benson James). There were three applications and the Queer Ecologies project was selected. Symposium will take place on Friday 1 December. Deadline for abstracts is 13th October. CFP is on the website. Chair offered BSLS email capacity to help with the marketing.
 - **Small Grants** (Sara Cole) Discussed above and see report below.
 - **PGR/ECR Funding** (Liliane Campos). 2 applicants this round, agreed to give £300 to Gibson and up to £200 (depending on actuals) to Feelan who has secured alternative accommodation at a lower cost. £400 left for the next round. Treasurer requested that all grant applicants use the BSLS Treasurer email account.
 - **BSLS/JLS Essay Prize** (Jordan Kistler) Will put the call out soon, with deadline.
 - **Newsletter** (Jenni Halpin) deadline end October for next edition.
 - Continues to happen; big thanks to Liliane for being my eagle-eyed proofreader
6. **Book Prize**
 - Forming this year's committee (a chair, a decision-making committee, and additional persons to contribute to reading the longlist). **Discussed and agreed:**
 - LL to be Chair again this year.
 - Composition of this year's long and short list committee: as many as possible please. Will also contact previous winners for assistance. Email LL with what we would like to do.
 - Developing communications to publishers and members: increasing visibility of the prize and clarity about procedures. **Discussed and agreed:**
 - Sharon's connections with publishers with help by LL and JH to get the books out early in the new year.
 - Implementing the Edited Collection prize. Discussed and agreed:
 - New Edited Collections prize to start with collections published in 2023. To be reviewed concurrent with the monographs in a separate pool. Option of no award.
7. **Conferences** (Jenni Halpin)
 - 2024: Birmingham (John Holmes; three societies together).
 - Plans are proceeding well. Details will be on our website soon. Membership fees question, see Chair's business above. Box checking in the registration process and the fund split between the 2 socs that collect membership fees that way. **Agreed.**
 - 2025: Lancaster (Sharon Ruston).
 - Briefly discussed the financials: need to add something for tech support.
 - Confirmed in response to a question that there is no attendance cap, numbers are approximate and there for planning purposes.
 - **Action All:** Sharon is looking for ideas for plenary speaker ideas. Please send suggestions to her.
 - 2026: Strathclyde (Jordan Kistler) 20th anniversary of the conference, the first one was at Glasgow University all agreed that an event there would be a good idea.
8. **AOB.** There was no other business and the meeting closed at 14.00.