

## BSS Membership Survey – Sept 2011

Dear fellow member,

If together we are to take the Society successfully into the future it is essential I fully understand your opinions and aspirations. Might I therefore invite you to spare the time to complete this questionnaire?

Many questions are simple factual ones: Some seek comment, and I hope you will feel able to respond to them honestly and completely. Should you feel more comfortable doing so anonymously that is fine. In any case returns will be held in confidence by the Secretary and destroyed after their collective results have been fed back to the membership.

One of our great strengths as a Society is that we are run on an entirely voluntary basis. It is also one of our biggest on-going challenges! Retirements need to be replaced. But we need to do so more flexibly and imaginatively than hitherto, 'back-filling' in advance by introducing new blood to assist and help within a team structure, not to assume immediate responsibility. In that spirit some questions are posed which I hope will receive a positive response.

May I thank you in advance for your co-operation?

Yours,

*Frank H. King*

Frank King  
Chairman

Please return to:

Mr C Williams at [chkwilliams@googlemail.com](mailto:chkwilliams@googlemail.com)

## **A. Personal Details**

Name (Optional) **Patrick**

How long have you been a member of the Society? **1994**

Where do you live? **Hertfordshire**

Age **Over 21**

What is (or, if retired, what was) your principle occupation and your specialist skills/qualifications? **General Manager Scientific Instruments and IT Consultancy**

What other societies are you a member of?

Do you have regular access to the internet? **Yes**

What are the benefits you derive from membership of the Society?

**Interest in BSS Codes: ABCDIKM**

## **B. Use of the Society**

How many of the last five spring conferences have you attended? **Five**

How many of the last five Newbury meetings have you attended? **One**

How many sundial safaris have you attended in the last five years? **One**

Have you ever participated in a sundial photograph competition? **Yes as Organiser**

How often do you use the BSS website? **Monthly**

## **C. Improvement and Change**

Is there a new direction or emphasis that you would like to see the Society take?

**Yes**

What change would you most like to see?

More recognition of and involvement in our increasing overseas membership perhaps even to organise events for them specifically. Try to develop an increasing attendance at our events from overseas members.

Encourage new members to attend our events

Please comment on each of the following including improvements you would like to see:-

The Bulletin.

Excellent as it is. Perhaps include some sundial trails from time to time, perhaps have a few 'How it's done' articles by dialling artisans.

The Newsletter.

Much less management speak. Enhance our friendly image. Move to a format that permits images and not just text. These days a B&W or colour newsletter as attractive as *'The Recorder'* can be put together in the same time. Consider some NASS like conundrums

The BSS Website.

Above all ensure that **ALL** Council Members take ownership of and make timely updates to, those parts for which they are responsible. Then concentrate on using the web site to encourage people to **join** the society. We simply cannot afford professional web design or even maintenance so we do need to introduce page design which does not need a webmaster to update everything. Have a Facebook presence – possibly Twitter too though that might need to be managed.

The programme of events (noting any that might be introduced or discontinued).

Explore the idea of having occasional meetings of the Newbury type (though maybe longer where they can be associated with a holiday element) in other parts of the UK – particularly like Scotland, NI, the IOM and the CI

The Society's communication with its membership.

Set up a password protected Members' Page on the website where all current information, leaflets (eg the recorders etc) can be placed, where two way

communication can be encouraged, ideas explored and summaries of past events etc can be kept.

Need to be careful not to over ask for input since this becomes particularly irritating (as this questionnaire has already done it seems!)

The design, management and use of the fixed dial and mass dial registers.

Keep the present use of a relational database since this is crucial to maintaining our current 'MIDAS accreditation and archive compliance' and our ability to obtain eventual free storage at the Borthwick in York. Develop further the existing plans for interactive display of non vulnerable dials on the society web site. Combine these on the website with selected sundial trails. Use the information in the databases to produce interesting monographs – eg on the frequency and concentrations by locality of certain mottoes or the frequency and relationship with makers of horizontal dial scale orientation. Lots of statistical information is there but has never really been publicised.

The management and running of the Society.

Re-establish a policy to identify those who could temporarily stand in roles in the event of death or illness of an incumbent council member. Do not assign time limits to council membership. Develop a pack to give to new Trustees (the CC has guidance on this) . Open up certain council jobs to reduce time needed to do some roles by splitting work between more volunteers We have a huge army of willing people who volunteer to search out and register dials and we should explore asking that group for help in other areas.

## **D. Participation**

How can we attract new members?

Publicise more widely reasons why people should join the society and not just use the website as a free resource. Make the website's key role one to attract members. Make the role of a private Members section of the website one to offer information to members

How can we be more attractive to existing members?

Provide a proper dialling resource in a protected Member's section on the website that is ONLY open to the membership. Make a point of emphasising what people get for their membership and enhance that as far as possible

What Society activities, including its management, would you be willing to help with?

Having served on the Council since 1997, I am now more thinking of retirement!

What would be your preferred form of help?

Advice!

How would you like the Society to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014?

A special (?extended?) annual conference in a prestigious place.

A meaningful, memorable though modest gift to members

A programme of a few well advertised dial tours around the country for members of the public which can be conducted by a few of our Members. How about aiming for all parts of the UK and the Crown Island dependencies to be covered.

Try to get our anniversary mentioned on television along with a professionally prepared summary of our achievements. Perhaps get a short dial tour of Cambridge as a programme on television?

Possibly develop *and sell* an iPhone 'App' that indicates the nearest non-vulnerable dial(s) when out and about in the UK

Please comment below on any other matter you consider appropriate.

Stick to the knitting. The present formula doesn't need much change. Members know full well they can contact any Council Member if they have an issue. Be careful not to blow it by constantly asking for input. However we should provide a little more information to members than we do at the moment.