

# SIMPLIFIED SPELLING SOCIETY

PATRON: H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH, K.G., K.T.

## NEWS SHEET 5

Price: 40p

Publications Secretary: G. O'Halloran

January, 1976. Vol. 2 No. 1. [32pp. A5]

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### 1. EDITORIAL

I am sorry that this edition of NEWS SHEET cannot be as informative as I had hoped it would be. I do not now myself have much of the information I had intended to include. This happened as follows. Late one night in early December our chairman, Mr E. Smith, came to my home seeking the Secretary's files. I had, of course, last year been doing the work of secretary, financial secretary, education secretary, publications secretary and records secretary. I went to my study to sort them out for him but Mr Smith followed me saying he was in a very great hurry — so I gave him all of the files. I have since written to him requesting the return of certain items but have not had an answer to my letters. However, I know he has been busy on another project (see Memorabilia later in this issue) and I will do my best to provide as much information as I can from my memory. I hope you will all forgive me for any defects which may occur in NEWS SHEET 5. I cannot hold it up any longer awaiting the missing information.

APOLOGY. Mr Smith has now brought the files I need but I have not got the heart to go back and re-write all I have already done. There are no errors so I propose to let stand all I had already written.

## 2. MEMORABILIA

CONGRATULATIONS to our Chairman, Mr Edward Smith, on the publication of a report of which he is co-author on the traffic problems of Britain. Mr Smith spent a year as a research officer at the University of Reading working on the evidence.

CONGRATULATIONS to Prof. Robert Carvell, Ph.D. When he joined the Society about two years ago Robert Carvell was still a student at the University of Wisconsin. He became Ph.D. with a thesis on 'Reading Comprehension and Regularised Orthography'. Prof. Carvell believes that further research is necessary on the effect of the possible loss of homophonts (right-write-rite) on ready comprehension.

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr. Helen Bonnema Bisgard on her recent marriage. We wish her and her husband every possible kind of happiness.

OBITUARY. We regret to announce the death of Mr Thomas Elderkin — a former member of the Society — and offer our sympathy to his relatives. Mr Elderkin bequeathed the sum of £200 to the Society.

THANKS TO MR HARRISON. Mr Maurice Harrison, a long-term member of the Society; member of the committee for over 30 years and Treasurer for ten years, has been elected a Vice-President of the Society. Mr Harrison is also a Trustee of the Society and an Honorary Member. We are sorry to learn of Mr Harrison's recent illness and we wish him a speedy recovery.

THANKS also to Mr Raymond Elser for his generous contributions to the Society's Publication Fund.

All those who received the first number of News Sheet have read my report, made at the request of the A.G.M. of 1974, on the affairs of the Society. Mr Sinclair Eustace (formerly secretary of the Society) was upset by the report and feels parts of it might be taken as allegations of conspiracy and dishonesty against him. I would like to make it clear that there was no intention on my part to suggest anything of this nature. I wish also to make it plain that Mr Eustace acted completely inside the constitution as it then was. I am sorry that Mr Eustace has been caused distress and embarrassment.

Mr Eustace is once more a candidate for the office of Secretary of the Society and has my full support. I would not feel able to give this support if I did not feel that he is in every way suited to fill the office satisfactorily.

Signed: George O'Halloran.

Please keep the last week end in AUGUST 1977 free for our SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. Details may be obtained from the Education Secretary, Mr Stanley Gibbs.

The publication of the PROCEEDINGS of our First International Conference is now being delayed only by the failure of some members of the Society to send us corrected versions of their papers. Several papers contained minor errors, erasures and other small blemishes which would spoil the appearance of a volume produced photographically. May I urge upon these members to let me have their copy (in some cases only one page) as soon as they can so that the volume does not

lose some of its topicality. I appeal to members who are not competent typists to get their amendments typed professionally.

The PROCEEDINGS of our First International Conference will be published under the main title "READING & SPELLING". It will contain all the papers presented at the conference and also those tabled. The price including postage will be about £4.00 (\$10.00). We are particularly anxious to receive subscriptions especially from libraries of colleges, universities, etc. as soon as possible.

#### HELP THE TREASURER

(The A.G.M. because of the great increases in the cost of postage, etc., authorised an increase to £2.00 (\$5.00) in the annual subscription. It also passed a resolution authorising the Secretary to remit the full subscription for folk living on the state retirement pension who ask for this to be done. Such Senior Member remain full members in every sense.)

The following is a letter from the Treasurer asking for your co-operation.

"May I thank all who have paid the 1976 subscription which is now due. Some of you have paid the full £2.00, others clearly think it is still £1 a year, I will enter that as a half year's subscription and leave you to pay the other half at your convenience.

"Although it has been a pleasure to contact members personally by way of sending an acknowledgement I'm hoping that all members will pay direct through their banks where they can. For me to check who is a paid up member via our Bank Statement is only one operation. But payment in the ordinary personal way means that the Treasurer has seven operations to do — i.e. an acknowledgement, a stamp, a note on postage, a note in the Receipts Book, a note as to who has paid, sending the money to the London Bank, checking if the Bank has entered it — seven operations as against one or two, I think.

"So if you don't mind would you please ask your bank to pay the £2.00 for you *but* if you *do* mind and if the former is inconvenient please don't hesitate about sending it to me. Either way I shall be grateful."

Mona Cross (Miss)

A separate Banker's Order form is enclosed to help members to help the Secretary. Editor.

We should be grateful if members who wish to have a reply to letters would kindly enclose a stamped addressed envelope. This will let us know that a reply is needed.

Members are asked particularly to study the parts of NEWS SHEET 2 between line 36 page 4 and the end of the issue. These have been scheduled provisionally by the AGM as the new Financial Rules of the Society and will be voted on as the permanent Financial Rules of the Society at the AGM this year 1976. Members who wish to offer suggestions for changes should send them to me as soon as possible with a copy to the chairman. Letters should reach us not later than the end of May, 1976. New members (only) may obtain copies of the NEWS SHEET by sending the cost of production of the NEWS SHEET, i.e. 35p together with a stamped addressed foolscap size envelope.

Members who wish to present items for consideration by AGM should submit these as soon as possible as formal resolutions for publication.

### Results of Ballot

The total number of Agendas/Ballot Papers received was 38. 27 were returned by post and 11 at the A.G.M. You will note that not all ballot papers returned recorded votes on all questions.

The results of voting on the Agenda were as follows:

	YES	NO	
Question 6	31	2	Financial Rules
Question 7	28	3	New Constitution
Question 8	27	3	Vice Presidents — selection of
Question 9	35	1	Subscriptions doubled
Question 10	29	4	Senior Members Subscriptions
Question 11	32	4	Prince Phillip
(Question 12	14	12)	Withdrawn at A.G.M. (1948 New Spelling)
Question 13	24	13	Members' Spelling Schemes, no cash for.
Question 14	30	1	Maurice Harrison as Vice President.
Question 15	27	2	Trials
Question 16	29	4	AGM 1976
Question 17	24	5	Conference in 1977
Question 18	35	0	Approval of Auditors
Question 19	33	1	Approval of Banking arrangements
Question 20	26	0	Discussion of Estimates

On every question there was a majority of 'YES' votes over 'NO' votes.

### BUDGET 1975–76

The following is a summary of how the members of the Society voted on the estimates of expenditure for 1975 – 76 as returned by the Electoral Reform Society. The authorised expenditure now becomes the Budget.

ROUTINE EXPENDITURE				
Head	Description	Amount	YES	NO
1	Postage	£150	34	0
2	Stationer	£100	35	0
3	Clerical assistance	£ 25	32	2
4	Hire of rooms	£ 30	33	0
5	Tax	£100	32	1
6	Office equipment	£ 10	33	1
7	Travel	£300	28	4
8	Sundries	£ 20	33	1
9	Secretary's Emergency Fund	£100	31	2
10	Reserve to offset inflation	£100	33	1
	TOTAL:	£935		

PART 2 EXTRAORDINARY EXPENDITURE				
Head	Description	Amount	YES	NO
E1	Journal	£280	29	3
E2	Conference	£300	27	4
E3	Leaflets	£150	30	2
	TOTAL:	£730		

### 3. THE SECRETARY'S RESIGNATION: AN EXPLANATION

Again, I fear I am unable to give accurate dates, etc., for the reason given above but all members of the Society at the time have had all of the documents in reference and so will be able to follow.

Before the middle of last year while engaged in the preparations for the conference and the annual general meeting I became aware that the Chairman had (as is provided in section 6 ELECTIONS of the Constitution) not activated the election procedures. The section reads 'The Chairman, or failing him, the Secretary shall be responsible for activation of the election procedure in good time'. I acted as follows.

A. I published a circular to all members asking them to send nominations for office and the committee to me by a certain date. I do not remember the date (for the reason given earlier) but this may not be important since ALL members were sent this circular.

B. Some time later I became conscious of another part of Section 6 ELECTIONS of the constitution. This reads 'No officer of the Society shall have any connection with any part of the procedures of the election. If it shall be shown that any officer or member of the Society had any part in the election procedures the election shall be invalid'. I realised that if I were to collect nominations for the elections I should be 'taking a part in the election procedures' and would thus be rendering the election invalid.

C. I realised the danger and immediately sent out another letter to all members asking them to send their nominations to the Electoral Reform Society. Again, I am (for the reasons given above) not very sure when I sent out this circular but a copy was sent to ALL members and so all members will know about it.

D. I thought no more about this until after the annual general meeting when I was distressed to receive from the Ballots Officer of the Electoral Reform Society the original of a letter to him from Mr R. Lawler, a member of our committee, which stated that I had 'misaid' a nomination which he had made. No copy of this letter had been sent to me by Mr Lawler. I was troubled by this since rumours of corrupt practices (so far as I knew unfounded) had been bandied about concerning previous elections held inside the Society. It was to prevent future scandal that the conduct of the elections had been put over to an independent body outside the Society and was, in fact, the very reason why I had sent out my second letter to members (see paragraph C above). I wrote to Mr Lawler asking him to withdraw the statement that I had 'misaid' his nomination. I pointed out that there were derogatory implications involved. I had no reply from Mr Lawler.

E. I then decided to seek the protection of the committee. It seemed to me that since Mr Lawler seemed unwilling to do so privately this was a matter that had to be cleared up publicly. I tabled a motion at the next committee as follows: 'The Secretary will request the committee to invite Mr Lawler to withdraw an unjustified statement which he made concerning the Secretary in a letter to the Electoral Reform Society. The letter will be produced'.

The proposal was duly introduced at the next committee meeting. I informed the committee that I regarded this as a matter of confidence. Mr Lawler's letter and nomination were produced. No member of the committee asked to see them. They are reproduced below for information.

The envelope in which they were sent to the Electoral Reform Society was dated '— Sept 1975'.

Mr Lawler's proposal read as follows:

NOMINATION SSS  
Proposal for Committee  
G.H. UNSWORTH-MITCHELL  
by R.J. Lawler (signed) June 28th  
& seconded by  
(signed) M.B. Chaplin (June 28th)  
I agree to accept the above nomination is elected  
Signed G.M. Unsworth-Mitchell Dated 28/8/75.

(Members might like to note the variation in dates and compare them with the dates on the circular letters which they received from me as Secretary.)

This is Mr Lawler's letter to the Electoral Reform Society:

Please find enclosed nomination. This had been mislaid by the Secretary

Yours Faithfully,

R.J. Lawler

Financial Secretary SSS

PS This has also been re-affirmed at the AGM on July 30th from which this letter dates.

Members might wish to note that there was no AGM on 30th July. This is clearly a mistaken date. This makes the date on the envelope more important. Mr Lawler, during "any other business", on 30th August stated that he had sent in a proposal for Mr Unsworth-Mitchell for membership of the committee and asked why his name had not appeared on the list of successful candidates. I was unable to give an explanation since all proposals should have been sent to the Electoral Reform Society. He was told by the President and myself that the best thing to do was to put forward Mr Unsworth-Mitchell's name for co-option. (There were still two unfilled vacancies and the committee is empowered also to co-opt five extra members. It seemed and I think I said that Mr Unsworth-Mitchell was assured of getting on the committee. Mr Lawler clearly did not accept this advice and chose instead to write as above to the Electoral Reform Society. One wonders why — since the part played by that Society was over when they had counted the votes sent to them.)

F. During the course of the discussion at the committee meeting Mr Lawler said that he had, after my first letter asking for nominations to be sent to me, handed me a nomination on the street outside the university after a committee meeting. I have no recollection at all that he did so and, in any case, I do not think that handing over bits of paper in the street is the best way to do the Society's business. Whether he did hand over a piece of paper or not does not seem (to me) to have much relevance. Even if he did hand me the proposal I could not do anything with it (as explained in section 8 here earlier) without infringing the constitution. Quite apart from this Mr Lawler was adequately informed of the correct procedure by my second letter asking members to send nominations direct to the Electoral Reform Society. One wonders a little why he did not send his proposal in the correct way after the receipt of the second letter. He had also been sent earlier a copy of the constitution which sets out the correct position clearly and at some length.

G. After some heated debate (perhaps my fault) my proposition failed to find a seconder. It had been composed in very conciliatory words (i.e. the committee invites, etc.) to make it easier to accept without damaging anyone's feelings. Its rejection by the committee indicated very clearly that the committee believed Mr Lawler that I had 'misaid' his nomination. They had also rejected my proposition as a vote of confidence.

I had clearly lost the confidence of the committee. The implications were clear enough: the committee believed either that I had been neglectful or that I had been up to some kind of jiggery-pokery connected with the elections. I felt that I had no option but to resign which I did at once at the meeting.

I am sending by recorded delivery a copy of this explanation to Mr Lawler and asking him to make any kind of rejoinder he may wish. I have promised to print this in full. I have asked him at least to acknowledge this letter in one week.

I have written to our Chairman, Mr Edward Smith, with the request that he should check with Mr Lawler whether he wishes to make a rejoinder.

Below is the reply which I received from Mr Lawler, 51 Purser's Cross Road, SW6 4QY

George O'Halloran, 83 Hampden Road, London N8 27th January 1975

Dear George O'Halloran,

Do you still wish to distract our energies (you have heard my side of this nomination bussiness)?  
Ref letter 26/1/76 from G'OH.

The SSS Secretary was registered at both of our banks as a cheque signatory. Have you written and told them that you have resigned?

Just after Christmas '75 Ed Smith rang me and told me that Mona Cross had resigned as our treasurer. Do you know if she has written to the both (our banks)?

Mr Unsworth-Mitchell phoned today to say that he was preparing a statement on his nomination. If you use the societies magazine for this purpose rather than send a circular to members from your own expense it will distress me.

Yours Faithfully,  
Richard James Lawler

## 4. MEMBERSHIP

In the past membership of the Society seems to have gone up and down inside every year; new members have joined and, usually an equal number seems to have dropped out. Now for the first time, at least for many years, the membership has gone over the 100 mark. I believe also that recent developments inside the Society have prepared the way for a successful drive for new members and I have drawn up plans to prepare for this as an object for 1976.

For the convenience of members the List of Members is being published as an appendix to this News Sheet. The names of new members joining after this list will be published in NEWS SHEET 6 in May/June 1976,

We should like to hear from members who would be willing to take part in a co-ordinated drive for new members by speaking to individuals and groups at schools, colleges, professional bodies, etc. in their locality, and by writing to the Press either local or national. Please send your letters to the chairman.

### COMMITTEE 1975–76

The membership of the Committee is as follows:

Office	Name	Until
Chairman	Edward Smith	1976
Vice Chairman	William Reed	1976
Secretary	George O'Halloran	Resigned
Treasurer (Acting)	Mona Cross	Co-opted
Education Secretary	Stanley Gibbs	1978
Financial Secretary	Richard J. Lawler	1976
Publications Secretary	George O'Halloran	1976
Records Secretary	Ken Lavender	1978
Member	Eileen O'Hara	1978
"	J. Fergus McBride	1978
"	Herbert Wilkinson	1978
"	Marjorie Chaplin	1978
"	Mr K. Jones	Co-opted 29/11/75
"	Vacancy	—
"	George O'Halloran	1976
"	J.R. Orange	1976
"	B.M.S.T. Darley	Resigned
"	R.E. Hayley	Suspended

### OFFICE OF SECRETARY (ACTING)

I have been asked by the chairman to put in a notice asking that members who believe they could perform the duties of Secretary and who would be willing to do so should write to him. There is no need to send in names of proposer and seconder. The duties of Secretary are described at Section 5 of the Constitution. The chairman will inform candidates how many hours work is likely to be needed per week.



## 5. NEWS SHEET and ANOTHER

NEWS SHEET is now entering its second year of existence. It has been reasonably successful in its function — that of keeping members au fait with what is happening inside the Society. But there is also another function which needs to be fulfilled: that of presenting an acceptable face of the Society to the public. This has been discussed in the pages of NEWS SHEET and by letter with members.

There have been no dissentients from the view that the Society should have two journals: one (NEWS SHEET) entirely devoted to internal news of the Society; the other made up of authoritative articles, papers, etc. related to some aspect of simplified spelling which would aim at a wide general circulation, inside and outside the Society. A number of other expanding societies follow this practice of an internal and an external journal.

What I propose to do is as follows. In future NEWS SHEET will come out twice a year: in December/January carrying reports of the recent A.G.M., elections, committee meetings and other matters of internal only significance and in May/June to lay the scene for the coming A.G.M., elections, and so on. It will come out in the format of the present number.

The new journal will come out at the beginning of April and October. It will contain no news of the Society and will be entirely devoted to items of a 'serious' nature (from members and outsiders) related in some way to simplified spelling.

A number of titles have been submitted of which 'READING & SPELLING' seems the best. We would expect to get much of our external circulation in the beginning from the libraries of university colleges, colleges of education, institutes of education, teachers and parents; this would seem to be a title which would attract such subscribers.

READING & SPELLING would, at least in the beginning, come out in a volume of 32 pages of the same size as the pages you are reading. It could be altered in future numbers in the light of suggestions and experience.

Funds were provided in the Annual Budget which will be sufficient for its production. I would, however, expect it to cost less, page for page, to produce than NEWS SHEET.

Contributors are now invited to send in articles, papers, etc., for consideration. There is no restriction on the length of articles but it may be necessary for very long articles to be published serially over more than one issue.

Proposed items should be carefully typed on A5 (8¼" x 5⅞") paper allowing a margin of at least half an inch on all the edges (the typed area will therefore be 7¼" x 4⅞") numbered lightly in pencil. The type size should not be smaller than elite nor larger than pica. The first page of articles should have the title in capitals at the top. The author's name should be in normal type script, two spaces underneath. The first line of the article, should be three spaces under the author's name. The whole article should be in single spacing — no double spacing between paragraphs. The first line of each paragraph should be indented five spaces. Articles should be written on one side of opaque paper only. It will be possible to reproduce in black pictures, diagrams, non-Roman scripts. References and footnotes should be indicated by a number in brackets: thus (6) — in the text and gathered in serial order at the end.

No payment can be made for articles submitted but we will provide the author with twelve free copies of the issue in which they appear. We will return all unsuitable articles to their authors with a short explanation of why they were not accepted and suggestions for rewriting. A stamped envelope should be included for this.

I believe that a journal which is intended to be of a serious and authoritative nature should have a strong advisory committee and so I have written to a number of folk of high academic status inviting them to become members of an advisory committee.

Reading & Spelling will accept advertisements and similar notices for which a charge, not yet settled, will be made. It may also accept, as advertisements only, descriptions of new alphabets, reformed scripts and similar material. We hope the charge for this service may be as little as £5.00 per page.

I would hope to do a first edition of 400 to 500 copies. When the needs of members have been met I would hope to distribute the remainder of the first issue free of charge to college and university librarians in the hopes of inducing them to take out regular subscriptions.

## 6. ACHIEVEMENTS during 1974–75

The Society has now got a reasonable and workable CONSTITUTION. I put this constitution together after a study of the constitutions of other societies and after much discussion with the committee and other members. It was presented to the members at the A.G.M. 1974. It was decided to put it on trial for a year to get suggestions for alterations from members. At the end of one year's trial it became clear that it fulfilled most of our needs and it was voted at A.G.M. 1975 the established constitution of the Society. The constitution may in the course of time be found to need some modification but great care should be taken in doing this. We should not rush into alteration for alteration's sake or to meet the wishes of vested interests. This latter can lead only to the kind of cat-fighting that went on before. The section most likely to come under fire is section 16. This is almost certain to be attacked by persons who have composed alphabets and who would like to modify this section in order to work to get their own alphabets into a favoured position. I would strongly advise against any change for 3 years.

Copies of the Constitution are being sent to all new members with this number of NEWS SHEET. Older members who need new or extra copies should send a stamped addressed 9" x 5½" envelope and a postal order/cheque for 20p per copy needed with their requests.

The effect of the new constitution is to set out clearly and in some detail the responsibilities and duties of the various parts of the Society. The Society, of course, belongs to its members and so all decisions on policy and finance are naturally made in accordance with the wishes of the majority of members as expressed at a general meeting, or by a poll of members. The members of the Society choose a number of executives each of whom has a function laid down in the constitution. The committee has a supervisory function only. It has no powers over the Society's finance or policy, nor on matters on which the Society as a body has already made a decision. In the constitution (Section 4) it is laid down that "The main function of the Committee shall be to ensure that resolutions of the AGM are carried out in good time and in accordance with the intentions of the AGM". The committee has no independent financial powers of its own. The Constitution (Section 4) states "The committee shall have power by a majority vote of those present to cause to be expended for the purpose for which they were voted all funds voted at the AGM. The committee has no powers beyond this." The committee has also, for the first time, been given real power to enforce its functions. We have previously had the experience of an officer who claimed the committee had no power to direct him because he had been elected by the members. This kind of thing is now impossible. Section 12 of the constitution now says "The Committee may, by a majority vote of those present for a good cause and on issues relevant to the activities of the Society, suspend until the next AGM

(a) Any member from Membership

(b) Any officer from his office."

The Society also now has for the first time ever an efficient CENTRAL FILING SYSTEM. This was devised by myself and Mr Leslie Blake. Previously it seems that no records (except minutes of meetings) were kept. An efficient information retrieval system is now sine qua non in the running of

a Society expanding both in its activities and membership. It will become more and more important as the Society and its functions grow.

Our new LETTERHEAD was put together as the result of a study of letterheads of comparable institutions. It was composed by Mr Leslie Blake and myself. Mr Blake did most of the research. He spent a good deal of time with Who's Who, The National Dictionary of Biography, the Society's Minute Books etc. and visited several libraries to get the data established. One member has claimed in a letter to USA that some of the details are inaccurate but when I wrote to him asking for corrections for the next printing he was apparently unable to produce any. The current letterhead has been described as "The best piece of propaganda ever put out by the Society." I have proposed slight changes in the lay-out of future stationery and these will be discussed and, I hope, passed at our next committee meeting. This proposal provides that the names of all officers be included in the letterhead. Several of the busiest officers, e.g. publications secretary, education secretary, records secretary, et al. are now not included. The comments of members are invited on the Society's letterhead. These may be sent to me, as I am, since it is a publication of the Society, responsible for its production.

In order to regulate the Society's financial affairs I put together the FINANCIAL REGULATIONS. These were drawn largely from my experience as an administrative grade civil servant and at director level in two large international companies. The Financial Regulations were given provisional approval by the votes of members before the A.G.M. 1975 and are currently on a year's trial. I hope members may be wise enough to pass them without too many changes at this year's elections.

In the present state of the Society's — and, indeed, the world's — finances, very careful planning is necessary. So also is very careful control of expenditure. The cardinal principle should be that every expenditure should show a benefit — even a profit — to the Society. Let me give two examples to show what I mean.

At the 1974 AGM a member requested a grant of £15 to finance an 'Open Day' which he proposed to hold. It looked like a good idea: fifteen new members would reimburse the grant; any more would show a profit. I asked for a more detailed analysis of the cost. I was told by the chairman that it was detailed enough. As a final outcome no 'Open Day' was held; the Society's £15 was lost together with some of the member's own money and the Society got no benefit from what was essentially a very good idea. If a detailed cost had been worked it would probably have shown that the sum asked was not enough to do the job proposed and a suitable addition to it could have produced a satisfactory result. There is a danger in trying to do work on a shoe string.

When I drew up the plans for the First International Conference I was able to produce detailed costings for each part of the operation. I was able to guarantee that there would be no loss if we got 40 enrolments, as a minimum. Above this number we should start to show a profit. I was able to guarantee that in the event of complete disaster the Society could lose no more than £250. Rather reluctantly the committee approved the sum I asked for. In the outcome we made a profit of some eighty pounds and acquired several new members.

NEWS SHEET was probably also a step in the right direction. It has suffered from the fact that I have not been able to devote sufficient time to it — occupied as I was with duties which have now been off-loaded on to the Secretary, Financial Secretary, Education Secretary, Recording Secretary. We have new ideas for the future for this intro-Society new publication. For example we hope to have a report from all the executive officers of the Society in each issue in future. The Treasurer will for example give the state of the bank accounts; the Secretary the names of new members; the Recording Secretary an outline of committee business, and so on. In this way we hope that members, especially those at a distance will be kept more in touch with the affairs of our (and their) Society. We shall be delighted to receive suggestions for the improvement of NEWS SHEET.

The high point of our year was our FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. When I first proposed holding it the committee gave a cautious consent. It was a very strenuous time. I wrote, myself, literally hundreds of letters to folk who, I thought, might be interested.

Mr Stanley Gibbs gave vigorous help with our advertising campaign. Mr Vic Paulsen in U.S.A. gave massive assistance. The high numbers of speakers and members from U.S.A. were the result of his energy and zeal. It was easier to get help in the actual running of the conference when the time came. Here Miss M. Chaplin and Mr Reed gave valuable help at a time when I was, perhaps, feeling a bit tired. We were also lent the services of Mr Sunny B. Udohnsseh by Dr. D. Pidgeon of the i.t.a. Foundation. Sunny is the best conference organiser I know.

In the event the conference was a success from every point of view. We had an attendance of around fifty. This was sufficient to ensure that there would be a little profit. The profit was augmented by the fall of, the pound in relation to the dollar and so our overseas friends' subscriptions became worth a little more than I had intended when I fixed them.

The College of All Saints (in London, N.17) proved an excellent venue for the conference. There was a fully-equipped lecture hall with additional space available, if needed. There were comfortable study bedrooms with all mod. cons. The food was excellent and plentiful. The staff at all levels were helpful and anxious to make our stay a success.

The papers, lectures and discussions represented a varied and interesting intellectual pabulum, ranging from pre-historic writing down to the latest developments in written communication. There were also presentations on teaching methods and on English as a Foreign Language. Eminent scholars from many countries flew in at their own expense to give presentations. Apart from the United Kingdom, members of the conference came from countries as diverse and distant as Switzerland, U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Nigeria, and Germany. Several publishers paid us to exhibit their books.

Before the conference I had a letter from a well-known British Professor who said "I think the idea of a conference is excellent and I must congratulate you on the very active way in which you are seeking to raise the standard of the Society's activities. I think if you carry on in this way there is some possibility that the Society may achieve some degree of credibility."

I think with the success of the conference we passed the 'credibility barrier'. It has certainly been much easier since then to get PUBLICITY and encouragement from the Press and other media. We have had a 'spot' each on BBC Television and BBC radio. We have had notices in The Times, The Sunday Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Yorkshire Post, The Teacher, Lancashire Post and a number of other papers. We had a serious two page article in 'Punch'. There have also been a number of notices overseas including one in a Saskatchewan paper which spoke of "the very active Simplified Spelling Society". I am informed also that the Open University now mentions the Society in at least one of its courses. I believe at least one other University does so also.

## **7. PRINCE PHILIP'S PATRONAGE**

We have also taken an important step forward in gaining PRINCE PHILIP'S PATRONAGE of the Society. When I put this idea forward first at a committee meeting before the AGM it was received with dubiousness. One member (Mr Lawler) said "He'll never join a propaganda society". I was in agreement with this and so for some time had been working to turn the Society into a well-run body which would be more than a mere propaganda society. Many of our previous activities had been planned to lead directly to this. First there was the establishment of a decent administration system through the Constitution and the Financial Regulations; the NEWS SHEET leading to plans for a more scholarly journal 'Reading & Spelling'. Finally the success of the Conference and the favourable publicity made me realise that the time to make an approach to the Palace would never be riper. I had put down a resolution for the AGM asking our President to act formally on behalf of the Society. I decided not to withdraw it. The scene had been set as well as I was able to set it and negotiations went through with remarkable speed.

During the year we also got our first outside assistance in the shape of a direct GRANT FROM A FOUNDATION. The Thomson Foundation (Director Mr T. Neil) very generously gave us a grant of nearly £400 to pay Dr Osanyinbi's expenses from Nigeria in make his presentation on "The Gambian Experiment". If it had not been for this munificent assistance it would not have been possible for Dr. Osanyinbi to present this important paper in person. The Thomson Foundation had already paid out the sum of £400 to cover the cost of the collection and analysis of data by the West African Examinations Council. Thomson Foundation has also already promised a further £600 towards the cost of publishing this important paper in a separate volume describing all stages of the Gambian experiment. The importance of this paper is now starting to be felt internationally and I have had several enquiries about it. There will be a publication concerning it later this year in the journal of the International Reading Association in U.S.A. I think I can in all fairness say that the Society has made more overall progress in the past year and a bit than it made in the preceding 20 years.

## 8. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

I have drawn up a number of plans for future activities. The A.G.M. has already approved my proposal for the 2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE in 1977. Although I will have no responsibility for this I will be most happy to give as much help as I am asked for by the Education Secretary, Mr Stanley Gibbs, who will be making the arrangements. I hope that all members, at home and overseas, will keep free the last week in August 1977 to attend this major function of the Society.

It will I hope be possible to launch our external journal READING & SPELLING in April. Contributions of a serious nature are now invited from all members of the Society and from others who are interested.

It is my responsibility at present as publications secretary to launch also our volume of the PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON READING AND SPELLING. This volume has already shown signs of being a possible commercial success. The Sub-committee on Education of the United States Senate has expressed a desire to see a copy. We have a number of orders on hand — mostly from overseas — and these will help to making it a commercial success. We have also some demands for review copies from influential journals. I have applied my usual criterion: to show a benefit, possibly even a profit, to the Society in my calculations on this matter.

I have also drawn up new plans for a MEMBERSHIP DRIVE. We desperately need new members to help us in our activities in these inflationary times. I made a promise at the 1974 AGM to get 400 new members for the Society. In the event I had to make a choice between the things we have already achieved (as described earlier) and an all-out membership drive. I believe I may have made the right choice and we can now show possible new members some evidence of our activity and performance.

I leave my plans with my best wishes to my successor as secretary.

I will myself be willing to remain as Publications Secretary until I have achieved success in the publication plans outlined above — provided I am not subjected to a continuation of the kind of harassment about which I had to complain at the 1975 AGM when I had to appeal for protection against the unconstructive contentiousness of certain members. If members do not approve of what I am doing there is a procedure laid down in the Constitution to have an officer removed from office. It would be better for the Society if such members were to make use of this procedure rather than write abusive letters to me.

## 9. TRIALS

These are such an important part of our projected plans that I am giving them a special section of their own. A trial is a scientific experiment aimed at finding some aspect of the truth about something. A comparison trial is a kind of competition when two or more things are compared in an attempt to decide what advantages each has. Such an experiment if it really is to find out the truth must be allowed to proceed unaffected by any kind of bias. If a trial can be influenced in any kind of way by any kind of vested interest it is no longer worth while carrying out because its results have little chance of telling us the truth. A trial, therefore, must be both carefully and honestly planned. This Society is fortunate in being able to have the advice of Prof. Downing, our President, in planning our trial. Prof. Downing is probably the world's most experienced planner of comparison trails in reading in English.

Prof. Downing has also found for us a Research Controller in the person of Mr W. Bellin, a member of the University of Reading. Mr Bellin is, I understand, prepared to draw up a design for our trials and to supervise them for the period covering the length of the course in the Infants School, to score (or supervise the scoring) of the tests; to prepare a statistical evaluation of the scores and to render a report. We are very, very lucky, indeed, to have the services of such a well-trained expert. Finance is, of course, a very difficult matter for the Society at the moment — and, indeed, at all times! The AGM 1975 did not provide any finance for this project but merely gave permission for an investigation to be made and estimates of expenditure to be drawn up. I am writing (as the original trial instigator) to Mr Bellin asking him to give me at least a rough calculation of the expenses he will need and, if possible, the approximate periods at which such funds will be necessary. Depending on his reply I will know whether to put a proposal at the next AGM or to take an earlier poll of the members. It is possible also that I may be able to get help from a Foundation. I am investigating this.

At both AGM and Conference it was explained that the trials were being planned as inexpensively as possible. It was agreed that those who wished to have their alphabets tested would have to provide suitably prepared reading material for the children or alternatively would have to pay, in advance, for the cost of production, where this is possible, of the reading and teaching materials to be used.

The alphabets accepted for trial at the AGM are:

Name	Inventor	Proposer
1. New Spelling 1948	SSS	G.O'Halloran
2. Torskript	V. Paulsen	V.Paulsen
3. Consistent Spelling	W. Gassner	W.Gassner
4. Readspell	(Late)Kingsley Read	P.Burke
5. Ed. Smith's Script	Ed. Smith	Ed. Smith
6. i.t.a.	Sir James Pitman	Prof. Downing
7. Traditional Orthography	As the control medium.	

Thus as planned at present seven alphabets are to be schedules for trial. This may be imposing too great a burden on Mr Bellin, our Research Controller, and we must consult him on whether this number ought to be reduced.



I, personally, would be in favour of dropping i.t.a. It has already been researched literally hundreds, possibly thousands, of times and the results of this research have been widely published and are easily available to everyone anywhere in the world. i.t.a. does not need any further research. Quite apart from this we are supposed to be investigating alphabets suitable for spelling reform. i.t.a. is the openly declared enemy of spelling reforms: its rationale is to ease the path of learners into our traditional spelling — exactly the opposite of what we are trying to do. There is also the fact that Sir James Pitman has frequently said that i.t.a. is unsuitable as a spelling reform and should be used only as a transitional alphabet.

I would favour the retention of New Spelling, 1948, in any circumstances. This is the descendant of several earlier versions, which were produced by some of the greatest scholars who have lived. New Spelling 1948 has been polished and perfected over the years by eminent linguists, phoneticians and orthographers. It also has a high place in the considerations of the Society's members. It won an easy victory in the count of the votes at the last AGM asking for its reinstatement for use in the Society. Unfortunately the resolution as such was out of order — which does not affect the value of New Spelling 1948. New Spelling 1948 has had the attention and blessing of many more distinguished scholars over a much greater number of years than any other alphabet in the competition. With so much of the Society's money and brains invested in it it ought at least to be given a trial.

## **A QUESTION OF DESIGN**

Soon after I joined the i.t.a. Foundation Sir James Pitman showed me the design of a trial in teaching English as a foreign language which was going on in Nigeria. It took only a few minutes inspection to show me that this trial as arranged could not possibly show any real differences between the groups being compared. I wrote a memo to Sir James saying this.

In the fullness of time the trial ended; the results were published and showed — no differences of any importance between the two groups!

This was, of course, the result of a poor design.

My long experience in Africa had shown me that the vagaries of our lying alphabet are a major difficulty to learners of English at all ages. I drew up a new design for another trial and approached the Government of the Gambia to allow us to set it up in that country's schools. An enlightened Director of Education (Mr Sam Jones) and a far-seeing Minister (Hon. Kalilu Singhatch) gave consent. Apart from a short teacher's course, which I gave, the management of the trial was entirely in the hands of the Gambian Ministry of Education. The trial was scheduled to last for 2–3 years but came to an abrupt end almost exactly at the end of two years. This was brought about by the refusal of Sir James Pitman to continue the supply of i.t.a. materials when I left the i.t.a. Foundation. Nevertheless the Gambian Ministry collected written tests and sent them to the West African Examinations Council for scrutiny, scoring and evaluation. The results were published at our Conference in 1975 and showed — overall a significant difference in favour of those who had learned in i.t.a. — a simplified script!

It was all a question of design.

## **THE QUESTION OF TESTING.**

The question must inevitably arise whether testing is to be done before and/or after transfer to ordinary English spelling. It is my opinion that such tests should be done only in the medium the children have learned in. The scripts used (except i.t.a.) are not designed as transitional scripts and so it is not fair to test them as such. It is immoral to test something for a purpose for which it was not designed. i.t.a. is not the same kind of thing as these other scripts since it, but not they, was designed as a transitional script. Different kinds of things are not really comparable and this is another reason for excluding i.t.a. from the trials. I would like to have members' opinions on this. Then there is to be considered the kind of tests to be given. In the past in Britain in all published trials the tests have been oral. The two tests which have been most used are those by Schonell and Neale. Schonell is a word test. Prof. Haas (Manchester University) believes that children trained through i.t.a. would, after transfer, perform better on a Word Test. We ought to have tests which give all children an equal chance. This is yet another reason for excluding i.t.a.

We ought also to consider the administration of written tests — perhaps of the kind used in The Gambia. These are very easy to administer and skilled personnel are not needed. They are economical in time as they can be given as Group Tests. They are very easy to score and again skilled personnel are not needed for this. It is only at the stage of evaluation that skilled personnel are needed. They can give a better estimate of the real literacy of children than oral tests alone. At the least there is a case for their additional use.

## **INSTRUCTION MATERIAL**

It is usually (but not invariably) considered appropriate that all children taking part in a trial of reading should use the same series of learning materials.

This applies to both experimental and control groups alike and is done to reduce the number of variables in the trial. In a trial where there are several variant alphabets in competition the provision of learning materials is likely to be both difficult and expensive. In the present trial seven sets of the same material in the six different alphabets and T.O. would be needed. At the A.G.M. discussion I put forward the suggestion that each contestant should accept full responsibility for the provision of materials in his own alphabet. This was accepted without demur.

Then the question arises: which course materials to use? There are very many production difficulties attached to the use of materials already on the market. There is also the fact that prior familiarity with the use of these materials might give certain teachers or groups of children an advantage. It occurred to me that it might be better to use new material which could be produced in a uniform format for all groups. I have been using my own school for a course of my own composition which is based on the commoner nursery rhymes. It has now been in use there (and only there) for three years. The success rate among children using it has been quite high — so we know it works. It has been produced in duplicated form on a typewriter. There are no illustrations — the children make their own and paste them with the lessons into a scrap book. It seemed to me that the use of this course might solve many problems.

I wrote around the inventors of the alphabets to be tried and all of them have now agreed that they are willing to produce the material needed for the trial.

I do not, however, wish this to be the final word on this matter. I should not wish it to be felt that I have used my (former) position as secretary of the Society to press something which might be to my own advantage. If an alternative is available I would prefer that it should be used. I invite suggestions on this point. Please do not send them to me but to the Chairman.

There is another point which needs careful consideration. In deciding that seven alphabets should be included in the trials we may have been biting off for our Research Controller a bit more than he can comfortably chew. I think he must be consulted about this before we proceed. I think he should be invited to say — not which alphabets should be tried out (it is surely for the Society to decide which alphabets it wants to be tested) — but rather if the number now proposed is too great. I believe he should be invited to state how many alphabets he thinks might be included. I think we should follow his opinion in this matter. I do not know of any past trial which has included more than four writing systems. If any alphabets are omitted from the present trial, they may be included in another trial in the near future.

The committee has passed a resolution giving complete control of the conduct of the trial to the Research Controller. It has also authorised the formation of a sub-committee for the purpose of rendering assistance to him when he asks for it. Those who would like to become members of this sub-committee should send their names to the Chairman for proposal at the next committee meeting.

I am asking the Research Controller by means of this item if he would kindly make an estimate, however rough, of any expenses he foresees over the period of the trial. It would be a good thing also if he could agree to come to a committee meeting to discuss this and other things with the committee. I would then undertake to put all that has been agreed upon into a suitable proposal for the sanction of members at the A.G.M. in 1976.

I have one final bit of advice which I should like to offer to members of the Society — especially to those whose alphabets are part of the trial. Please do not write to or call on the Research Controller on any matter connected with the trial. You will not be able to influence him in any way. All you could possibly do would be to throw suspicion on the results of the trial. I fear it is necessary to issue this warning. Already one member has got in touch with the Research Controller. The committee has discussed this and agreed that it was innocent enough, but dangerous. There is no danger whatever that the Research Controller will be influenced by anything other than the facts. However, it is very likely that when the results are published that Mr. PQRS whose alphabet did not win might well be tempted to say something like "It isn't fair. Mr. XYZA went to see/ wrote to the Research Controller. My own alphabet is really the winner." Anyone with any experience of this Society knows quite well that this is a like possibility. I appeal to members not to spoil this wonderful opportunity the Society has to sponsor a piece of research which can produce important results in the teaching of reading and also bring credit to the Society.

## 10. LIST OF MEMBERS as at 30th September 1975

(Appendix to NEWS SHEET 5)

You can keep your list up to date by adding the names of new members as they appear in NEWS SHEET.

H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, K.G.,K.T.	59A Mr C.Milburn, Lincoln.
1A Prof. John Algeo, USA	60A Mr R.Moore, Hoole, Chester.
2A Mrs B.D.Askew, Yorks.	61A Mr J.E.P.Mordaunt, Hants.
3A Mrs M.P.Asquith, Yorks.	62A Mr D. Moyle, Lancs.
4A Prof. E.A.Betts, Fla. USA.	63A Mr H.M.Mustapha, Colchester
5A Mrs E.M.Binns, Cheshire	64A Mrs E.Oakensen, Northampton.
6A Mr A.R.Brown, London.	65A Mr G.O'Halloran, London.
7A Mr G.S.Bryden, Edinburgh.	66A Mrs E.O'Hara, Co Durham.
8A Mr P.W.Burke, Croydon	67A Mr F.K.Ogden, Hove.
9A Herr W.Neuburger, Switzerland	68A Mr C.W.Orange, Bristol.
10A Ms.S.Carnochan, Herts.	69A Mr J.R.Orange, London.
11A Mr A.Cashdan, UKRA, Milton Keynes.	70A Mrs R.B.Orange, London.
12A Miss M.Chaplin, Brighton.	71A Dr J.Osanyinbi, Lagos
13A Mr L.Collins, Yorks.	72A Mr V.P.Paulsen, San Francisco, Calif.
14A Mrs Collins, Yorks.	73A Mr G.Rae, London.
15A Mr S.T.Cradick, Essex.	74A Mr B.Read, Stafford.
16A Mr R.Cropper, Kent.	75A Mrs M.Reed, Kent.
17A Miss M.Cross, Northants.	76A Mrs G.M.Rolls-Willson, Surrey.
18A Prof.F.N.Daniels, London.	77A Mr W.J.Reed, Kent.
19A Miss B.M.S.T.Darley, London.	79A Mr E.Rondthaler, N,Y
20A Mr W.J.F.Davies, Hants.	80A Mr V.G.T.Rosewell, Wimbledon.
21A Mr Leo.G.Davis, Calif., USA.	81A Mr A.E.Rupert,KOC IRO, Ontario, Canada.
22A Mrs G.Dekker, Yorks.	82A Mr H.Schmitz op der Beck, W.Germany.
23A Mr J.S.Dekker, Yorks.	83A Mr J.H.Seager, Essex.
24A Mr T. Dickinson, Newcastle upon Tyne.	84A Mrs J.M.Shelley, Surrey.
25A Mr W.B.Dockrell,S.C.R.E., Edinburgh.	85A Mr E.Smith, Kent.
26A Mr Raymond Elser, Lyons, N.J., USA.	86A N.W.Stafford, Washingborough.
27A Mrs Eustace, Guildford.	87A Prof.D.H.Stott, Guelph, Ontario.
28A Mr C.E.C.Eustace, London.	88A Mr M.Swan, Hants.
29A Mr S.S.Eustace, London.	89A Dr A.Tauber, Yonkers, NY. USA.
30A Mr L.R.Fennelly, IOW.	90A Mr M.Taylor, Hants.
31A Dr P.Freer, Rondebosch, South Africa.	91A Mr K.Tillema, Ontario, Canada.
32A Mr R.T.Garbutt, ... School, Bristol.	92A Miss Tudor-Hart, London.
33A Dr W.Gassner, Randwick, NSW.	93A Mr N. Tune, Hollywood, Calif., USA.
34A Mr S.Gibbs, Middlesex.	94A Mrs J.A.Turner, Yorks.
35A Mr C.I.C.Harrison-Wallace, Sussex.	95A Mr G.Unsworth-Mitchell, Essex.
Hon. Mr M.Harrison, Southport.	96A Mr M.Varney, Worcs.
36A Mr. R.E.Hayley, London.	97A Prof. G.Verboven,SUCL; Belgium.
37A Ms G.Hildreth, Sea Cliff, N.Y.	98A Mrs J. Walker, West Midlands.
38A Mr A.Hobson, Caernarvon.	99A Mrs E.J.White, Yorks.
39A Prof. T.Hofmann, Canada	100B Prof. A. Wijk, Stockholm.
40A Mr H. Jamieson, Texas, USA.	101B Mr H.S.Wilkinson, Halifax.
41A Mr A.G.Jones, Sheffield.	102B Mrs D.Wilkinson, Halifax.
42A Mr B.Jones, Coventry.	103B Mr J.W.Lewis, Leeds.
43A Mr J.K.Jones, London.	104B Mr P.Wright, Stockport.
44A Mr R.Landolt, Nafels, Switzerland.	105B Dr A.Zettersten, London.

45A Mr K.H.Lavender, Kent.	106B Dr. The Hon. D. Everingham, Australia.
46A Mr R.J.Lawler, London.	107B W. Latham, Sheffield.
47A Mr A.P.Lawson, London.	108B Mrs V. Yule, Australia.
48A Dr W.R.Lee, Middlesex.	109E Prof. R. Carrel, Kansas.
49A Miss V.M.Lengyel, Colchester.	110B Dr. B.Williams, Chichester.
50A Mr E.Lewis, London.	111B Mrs D.Hewling, Exeter.
51A Mr J.F.McBride, Edinburgh.	112B A.R.G.Burrows, Velez-Malaga, Spain.
52A Mr Michael McCallion, London.	113B D.I.Masson, Leeds.
53A Mr D.J.McCann, Swindon.	114B Prof. J. Downing, Canada.
54A Mrs P.McKeown, Bristol.	115E Kerry Monaham, Lyons, NJ. USA
55A The Rt.Hon.The Lord Maybray-King,P.C.,	116B A.P. Wells, Dorset
56A Mr R.Mayhew, Calif., USA.	117B Prof. D. Abercrombie, Edinburgh.
57A Prof.J.E.Merritt, Milton Keynes.	118B Mrs Wijk (See 100B above)
58A The Rt.Hon.The Lord Merthyr of Senghenydd,P.C.,	119B Mrs G.Williams, Surrey.
	120B Mrs M.A.Rashley, Isle of Wight.
	121B Mr J.Power, Middx.