

Trustees' Annual Report 2013/14

ESPERANTO-ASOCIO DE BRITIO (also known as Esperanto Association of Britain, EAB, Esperanto UK)

Head Office: Esperanto House, Station Road, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9DE **Telephone:** 0845 230 1887 & 01782 372 141

E-mail: eab@esperanto.org.uk **Registered Charity no:** 272676

Trustees

The Management Committee of the Association are the trustees of the charity. Those who served from 1 November 2013 to 31 October 2014 were:

Paul Gubbins (President)

Edmund Grimley Evans (Vice-President)

Tim Owen (Hon. Secretary)

Clare Hunter (Hon. Treasurer)

Ed Robertson

Michael Seaton

Staff and volunteers

Staff and key volunteers who assisted the Association during the year were as follows:

Director of Operations and Events: Viv O'Dunne | **Co-ordinator for Research and Development:** Angela Tellier | **Admin Assistant:** Emma Hudson | **Honorary Librarian:** Geoffrey King | **Editor of La Brita Esperantisto:** Paul Gubbins | **Compiler of La Brita Esperantisto:** Simon Davies | **Webmaster:** Bill Walker

Accountant and Independent Examiner

Dains LLP, St John's Court, Wiltell Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9DS.

Solicitors

Tinsdills, Hays House, 25 Albion Street, Hanley, Staffordshire, ST1 1QF.

Bankers

Santander, 62 Hagley Road, Birmingham, B16 8PE

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ.

Barclays, PO Box 738, London, W6 9HY.

Governing document

The charity was founded on 13 March 1976 and is an unincorporated organisation, governed by a constitution which was last amended on 20 April 2014. Members of the Management Committee (trustees) are elected individually by the Annual General Meeting, to serve until the end of the next Annual General Meeting. The trustees are incorporated as a body.

Induction of trustees

A handbook for trustees, detailing their responsibilities and the current policies of the Association, is available on the Association's website and is regularly reviewed and updated. New trustees are sent copies of recent minutes. The first full committee meeting after the election is a residential planning weekend where induction is completed.

Objects of the Association

The objects of the Association are to advance the education of the public in the international language Esperanto in the furtherance of international communication without discrimination, and of the natural right of all people and peoples, their languages and cultures, to be treated equally.

Public benefit

In setting objectives and planning activities, the trustees complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The activities undertaken by the Association during the year to further its charitable purposes for the public benefit are detailed below.

Activities undertaken to achieve the objects

The main activities undertaken by the Association to achieve its objects are as follows:

- Providing free postal/email and subsidised residential courses for students of all levels with experienced Esperanto teachers, as well as the option to take examinations.
- Promoting a language-awareness course for primary school children with Esperanto teachers and support as required (*Springboard to Languages*).
- Liaising with other Esperanto foundations such as Buchanan and NoJEF to promote the teaching and application of Esperanto.
- Operating a *Telephone Buddy* system to help learners practise their spoken Esperanto language skills
- Maintaining the Butler Library as a study and research facility for Esperanto culture and history.
- Raising awareness of Esperanto as an international language through attendance at language shows.
- Keeping a comprehensive website up to date with information for enquirers and links to other Esperanto organisations.
- Issuing press releases to raise the media profile of Esperanto.
- Organising the annual British Esperanto Conference.
- Encouraging members to participate in local groups and national and international congresses.
- Providing a book service to encourage the reading of Esperanto literature.

Summary of the main achievements during the year 2013/14

Education

- Our courses and examinations continued to have a steady, if small, uptake.
- We held residential education courses at Shallowford House in March. Our Drondo course for helping people gain fluency took place in London in October.
- A three-day "Masterclass" was held at the University of Liverpool in March. The event was jointly organised by EAB and the University, using funding from the bequest left by John Buchanan.
- The five-day Somera Festivalo took place at Shallowford House during August. Jack Warren and Paul Gubbins each took a strand to ensure coverage for people at different levels of capability in Esperanto. Those who attended provided positive feedback.

Research and Development

- Teachers who have used Springboard materials in the past were consulted about the changed primary educational context, and their answers compared with what teachers and published documents are outlining. Lessons have been adapted accordingly (and are still being adapted) to meet these changes.

Publicity

- EAB had a prominent presence at the International Language Festival which took place at the University of Sheffield in February. Tim Owen gave five taster classes in Esperanto during the weekend. EAB provided financial support to the International Student Committee to run the event.
- Work has continued on renovating EAB's web presence, with an intention of building a suite of different applications. Translations of 8,000 text strings are mostly complete in order that users have the option of accessing the suite exclusively in Esperanto.
- EAB has funded the use of an Esperanto account on the site meetup.com, which has facilitated the organisation of regular get-togethers in the Birmingham area. EAB has encouraged others to follow this model in Update.
- Paul Gubbins recorded a radio programme on the history of Esperanto in Stoke-on-Trent.
- Our Facebook page now has 847 (2013: 702) fans, while the Twitter feed has 898 (2013: 723) followers.
- We redesigned our newsletter 'Update', printing in full colour with a modern template, to present a more contemporary impression of Esperanto to anyone who might see a copy.

British Esperanto Conference

- 50 Esperantists signed up for the conference in Sheffield in April.
- The conference was organised by Jack Warren, supported by Viv O'Dunne and Tim Owen. The trustees are grateful to Jack Warren, who was the only person approached who was willing to run an event.

Butler Library

- There are now 8,619 items in the main catalogue and the Sonbanko contains over 1,400 items.
- A Raspberry Pi was purchased during the year with a view to running it as a Virtual Private Server from Esperanto House, which should help us to install an integrated library system (Koha). Adding books to the catalogue would thereby become easy because it would occur via a web interface.
- A selection of recordings from the Bendoteko (archive of recordings on cassette tapes) has been digitised.
- Over 1,000 photographs, postcards and so on from the Houghton Archive have been scanned, with a view to introducing a Bildbanko.

Plans for 2014/15 and beyond

- Organise a well-attended British Esperanto Conference, which will take place in Brighton in April.
- Launch a new, cutting-edge web suite. It will have a feature where learners can ask questions and where peers can indicate the best answer, a community area for general discussion between members, a calendar to promote events, a shop in which people can purchase educational materials such as books and where people can even renew their membership and automatically receive notifications when it's due again.
- Continue to run educational courses, including some at Esperanto House and others elsewhere in the country.
- Make arrangements for a session of the Esperanto CEFR examinations at the Conference in Brighton and encourage participation by Esperanto-speakers in Britain to ensure the minimum number needed for the exams to take place is reached.
- Investigate the potential to build an online educational course which will dynamically respond to the learners' errors and adjust the course content to support them.
- Continue to invest in Esperanto-related research, including a biography of the life and work of Professor W. E. Collinson, a documentation and critique of publications for learning Esperanto that were written by UK-based Esperanto speakers or published in the UK, and continuing investigations into classroom-based use of Esperanto.
- Continue working towards a university-level course book in Esperanto language and literature, the material to which was trialled at the Buchanan Masterclass in March and which is currently in preparation, edited by Wim Jansen and Angela Tellier.
- Redesign and modernise our magazine 'La Brita Esperantisto', and make it available in an electronic version.
- Set up and run a Virtual Private Server from Esperanto House and use it to run an integrated library system (Koha).
- Continue to obtain formal permission for the Association to sublicense the republishing of works by British Esperanto authors who are willing to give such permission to the Association, thus ensuring that it will be possible to republish those works in future.
- Continue to send out relevant information to the public regarding our activities.
- Remind the members that the charity cannot function without trustees and make general requests for others to think about becoming trustees.

Closure of Wedgwood Memorial College

Wedgwood Memorial College, on whose Estoril site the Association has its headquarters, has remained closed throughout the year. The Association has sole use of the Butler Library and three Esperanto bedrooms as well as the Esperanto office in accordance with the terms of its lease, and will continue to enjoy this for the duration of the lease irrespective of the future of the College.

Membership

Life members = 21 (2013: 22), full members = 300 (2013: 295), family members = 11 (2013: 11), supporters = 35 (2013: 41). Total = 367 (2013: 369).

A few members of venerable age died during the year. New recruits and people re-joining after some years' absence were welcomed. Members and supporters receive *EAB Update* newsletter quarterly. Full members also receive *La Brita Esperantisto* – an all-Esperanto journal – twice a year, and are automatically affiliated to *Universala Esperanto-Asocio*. Full members are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting. Membership services include assistance with international payments via the UEA credit system.

Financial review of the year

Income

Income is derived from investments, membership subscriptions, sales, bequests and donations, and spent on the Association's charitable objects. The unfavourable economic climate has continued to result in low investment income.

Investments

The trustees continue to monitor the performance of the Association's investments on a regular basis. At the end of the prior year, the trustees became aware that income from the Association's holding in BlackRock's Charinco Fixed Interest Fund was set to fall by 20%. In November 2013, arrangements were therefore made to sell the Association's units in this fund and reinvest the money in BlackRock's Charishare Restricted Fund, which promises better returns and explicitly avoids investment in firms trading in defence and tobacco. In July 2014, the trustees decided to transfer the Association's holding of £250k in the CCLA Investment Fund to the CCLA Ethical Investment Fund, which is more in line with the Association's ethical investment policy.

Reserves

The trustees have agreed a reserves policy which requires reserves to be maintained at a level that, when prudently invested, will generate sufficient income for the charity to continue operating. £20k is currently held on deposit with Scottish Widows and can be accessed with seven days' notice in the event of unforeseen expenditure arising. The total level of free reserves, being total reserves less the endowment from John Brownlee and designated capital fund was £855,754 at 31 October 2014.

Investment policy

The constitution states that the trustees have the power to make investments as they see fit. Their duty is to seek adequate income and capital growth. Capital is invested in deposit accounts and unit trusts specifically designed for the charity sector, which are for the greater part socially responsible. The split between asset classes is shown in the notes to the financial statements.

The Association's investments have performed well during the year, mostly outperforming their relevant benchmarks. The Charities Property Fund, for example, has produced a total return of 5.4% for the year compared to 3.9% for the IPD All Balanced Funds Property Index. The COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund has also performed well, with a gross dividend yield of 4.02% compared to an average yield of 3.53% from the MSCI UK All Cap index over the same period. The COIF Charities Global Equity Income Fund produced a gross dividend yield of 4.56% compared to an average yield of 2.45% from the MSCI World index over the same period.

Risk review

The Trustees have examined the major internal and external risks which the Association faces and confirm that systems have been established to minimise these risks.

Responsibilities of the trustees in relation to the financial statements

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements at the end of each financial year which give a true and fair view of its financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In doing so the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf on 7 February 2015 by:

Tim Owen
Hon Secretary