



ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



SPARTA

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FOREWORD

by our Chairman, Rod Paterson



I am delighted to provide the opening Foreword for our Sports and Recreation Association (SPARTA) Annual Report covering the last two years of activity.

I have been Chair of SPARTA since 2019. It is a role that I am hugely passionate about as I see how critical the role of SPARTA is, and can be, to the health and wellbeing of all our staff in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Department for Transport (DfT). Our often-repeated mantra is that “SPARTA is your sports and recreation Association” but we truly mean it, we want SPARTA to appeal to everyone and be a truly inclusive organisation.

Before looking back on the last two years I first want to pay a very warm tribute to Sue Johnson who will be retiring at the end of this year. Writing that Sue is a true stalwart of SPARTA sounds a clichéd statement and certainly undervalues just how critical she has been to our association. Notably, Sue has been a mainstay and driving force behind the SPARTA Yoga Club for over 20 years. But I really want to highlight the last seven years that Sue has also served as our Deputy Chair. Put simply, without Sue, and a small number of very committed members, it is likely that SPARTA would not exist today and certainly not as stable as these accounts show.

On a personal level Sue has been a tremendous guide, support and friend to me since I became the Chair of SPARTA. I think we have worked well as a team and I will miss her greatly (Sue also puts up with my tendency to have a lot of thoughts!). We will be looking to ensure Sue gets the recognition she deserves including as we look to the celebrations ahead in 2022.

I also want to briefly take the opportunity to highlight and thank the other two mainstays of our management team. The first of those is Jason Marchant who joined as our full time General Secretary around 18 months ago. It goes without saying that having Jason employed full time gives SPARTA much greater ability to step up our ambition and to increase our offer to all staff. He is though just one person! Jason has delivered a number of particularly positive

improvements including a vastly improved website and a regular and well-received monthly newsletter as well as a much-enhanced relationship with our clubs and societies, within our Departments and with important partner organisations like other Departmental Associations and CSSC.

I also want to really thank Paul Jones who has joined SPARTA as our Treasurer. Sadly, SPARTA's financial record keeping had fallen into a sorry state combined with a long running and challenging financial claims issue. Our previous Treasurer also unfortunately left at very short notice leaving us without a suitably qualified person for a difficult period. Paul has been phenomenal for us, working above and beyond, to bring our records into good order and to ensure that we set a standard for our records that we ask of our clubs, societies and affiliated organisations. I am also delighted that as well as acting as our Treasurer Paul gets more and more embroiled in the work of SPARTA whether he realises it or not!

While I recognise we are a small voluntary body and it is all relative, the last two years have of course been a challenging time for SPARTA and for our clubs and societies. We are an organisation that thrives on human contact and interaction and used to everything being done in person. So, despite the very real challenges that Covid created for continued activity I am hugely proud of what we have been able to achieve. I would pay tribute to all our clubs and societies who sought new ways to operate or started up again as soon as it became viable.

I am particularly proud that, during those most challenging of lockdown periods, SPARTA offered two Virtual Activity Weeks offering a wide range of events including everything from PS4 and tenpin bowling competitions, quizzes and yoga, mindfulness, fitness and dance classes through to hugely popular history society talks, a talk by a multi-Olympic medallist and inspirational and emotional you tube Civil Service Choir recordings. And, as soon as it became viable, clubs like the Golf Society, Tennis and Superstars Cricket Club started to operate again in a Covid secure way.

I am grateful to everyone involved in making those events happen and believe that SPARTA was one of the only recreational associations across Government to try and respond to the challenges of lockdown and to hopefully contribute in a small way to the wellbeing of our staff.

Putting on the Virtual Activity Weeks perhaps also showed the way in which SPARTA can adapt and evolve and potentially how that will continue. We will of course continue to support all our clubs and societies, but it is also clear we need to keep on looking for new ways to attract members, to be relevant to everyone in the Civil Service and to grow.

For the first time I think we, like many in the Civil Service, realised the potential opportunity to be had from online events reaching new audiences and growing interest in SPARTA and our clubs. Looking ahead, with hybrid working becoming commonplace, we will continue to provide in person events and opportunities which give vital face to face social interaction but we will also need to offer additional online and hybrid opportunities as a regular part of our offer.

2022 is the year that we celebrate SPARTA turning 50 years old. Indeed, our anniversary is November 2021 but, with the challenges of Covid and continued uncertainty, we will make 2022 our year to really celebrate our half-century. We are delighted that both Permanent Secretaries have also agreed to be our honorary Presidents throughout 2022. We are already developing plans for an appropriate celebration at the SPARTA Sport and Wellbeing Day 2022 (renamed from Fit for Business Day) which will also see us return to Chiswick after several years at Teddington. I am very keen that SPARTA50 will be a time to celebrate, to recognise those members who have really been at the fore of SPARTA's success over many years and also to look to the future and our next 50 years. If anyone reading this has any ideas or wants to help us make those celebrations that much bigger and better, then do get in touch!

I am proud of SPARTA and all that we try to do. I am hugely grateful to all those who are involved on a voluntary basis, giving up their time, to help make our clubs and societies a success. I am also certain there is much more we can do to enhance our offer and grow our membership.

Our first annual SPARTA survey prompted a really encouraging level of responses and a real interest in the development of new offers and opportunities whether that be simple events like wine tasting or theatre nights through to new clubs and societies covering rambling or running. I wish we had the resource to start them all tomorrow! but we rely not just on the great ideas but people with the passion and drive to help us realise them. We also really need the support of anyone connected to SPARTA to help us promote our activities. We promote ourselves in many different ways so it can be a frustration to hear that staff still do not know who we are. We

will re-double our efforts but need advocates and ambassadors from across both Departments to help us raise our profile, membership and resources.

I hope you find this report useful and of interest and would like to thank all those who have contributed and helped deliver it.

Rod Paterson

Chair, SPARTA

DLUHC and DfT Sports and Recreation Association

FINANCIAL REPORT

by our Honorary Treasurer, Paul Jones



The SPARTA financial year runs from 1st October to 30th September, as this report covers two years the finances referenced in it relate to the periods 1st October 2019 through to 30th September 2020 and 1st October 2020 through to 30th September 2021.

I took on the role of SPARTA Honorary Treasurer in September 2020. As SPARTA hasn't had a Treasurer since 2016/17 financial year I have had to work through the finances for the last three financial years (2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20), also due to Covid-19 restrictions I have had only access to online documentation, when a great deal of the documentation for previous financial years is only held in paper form. This has made the work to prepare the finances particularly challenging, but I believe that they are now in a position that they can be presented for auditing.

The previous auditor of our financial accounts, Andy Nicholas, had resigned but had kindly stepped up to audit 2019/20 accounts and a new auditor, Simba Mapose is currently auditing 2020/21.

Andy has confirmed that the financial statements for 2019/20 are free from material misstatements and gives a true and fair view of the accounts. I would like to thank Andy for the all work he has done in auditing previous SPARTA financial accounts.

The SPARTA bank account is in a reasonable condition at this time as we held a bank balance of £71,700 at the end of the financial year (2020/21).

The financial year 2019/20 saw the first Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC) grant that was issued only by signing an MOU agreement between CSSC and SPARTA, previously this had been a rebate. This change was partly due to the way the Cabinet Office give money to the CSSC and partly due to a change in ways of internal workings at CSSC. SPARTA received a grant of £12,600 of which half was received in the 19/20 financial year with the remaining 50% received in 20/21 financial year.

Membership income during 19/20 was £5,604. This was down on 18/19 which had been £6,218. That is a drop of £614 which equates to 9.87%.

Membership income has further dropped in 20/21 to £5,187, reduced by a further £417 on 19/20 membership income which equates to 7.44%

There is no available evidence to conclude why this drop took place although it is reasonable to assume that Covid-19 restrictions may have had some bearing on this drop of income.

There was no other income for both years as the annual Sports Day (known as Fit for Business Day (FfBD)) was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Expenditure for the 19/20 financial year consists of some costs for the cancelled FfBD which were paid to Kings House School Enterprise Ltd regarding the booking of the sports ground at Chiswick, and the booking of first aid for FfBD. These deposits will roll forward until such time as we can hold the FfBD. Other expenditure was for miscellaneous costs relating to Tennis and Table Tennis membership and registration fees plus a charitable donation.

With regard to the Club Bids for 19/20, no bids were paid out in 19/20 due to the restriction of activities during the calendar year of 2020 following of the outbreak of Covid-19, apart from revised club bids from the SPARTA Golf Society for £1,000 and the Superstars Cricket Club for £154 which were paid out.

Clubs Bids for 20/21 (calendar year 2021) totalling £11,952 were paid out to all the clubs apart from Ten Pin Bowling, Yoga and Tennis where Covid 19 restrictions had curtailed their activities.

Breakdown:

Expenditure Type	£
Club Bids 2020	
Club Bids - CS Choir 20/21	6,671
Clubs Bids - Cricket - 20/21	154
Club Bids - Golf - 20/21	3,854
Club Bids - Table Tennis 20/21	416
Club Bids - History 20/21	858
	11,952

There had been an ongoing matter relating to a requested rebate from DVLA. The rebate requested covered a period of four calendar years (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019) and for estimated amount of £40,000. After a thorough investigation and numerous contacts with DVLA, we have finally resolved the issue with an agreement to pay for 3 years of claims totalling £10,870 which was paid out in 20/21.

Breakdown of the Regional rebates:

Expenditure Type	£
Regional Bids	
Nottingham Rebate FY 18/19	1,297.54
Proposed DVLA Rebates FY 17/18	3,469.68
Proposed DVLA Rebates FY 18/19	3,667.32
Proposed DVLA Rebates FY 19/20	3,733.20
	12,167.74

The “Rebates to Affiliated branches” is showing a positive figure of £19,498 rather than showing as an expense of £12,167.74 as the accounts had to be adjusted for over accruing for DVLA rebate in the previous year and writing off accruals for NEROSS Newcastle and NWOS Manchester going back to 2018-19 as both regions haven’t claimed for a number of years and the FGPC agreed that as no contact had been made we assume they have left SPARTA which was ratified by the GMC.

We have accrued to 20/21 the 2021 calendar year rebate to DVLA in case we have to pay for this. The proposal is for DVLA to reclaim their rebate direct from CSSC, however this arrangement has not yet been agreed and finalised and therefore we may need to pay the rebate for year 20/21.

The next page contains a statement of SPARTA finances as at 30th September 2021.

Financial Statements

	FY 20/21	FY 19/20	FY 18/19
INCOME STATEMENT	Year Ended 30-Sep-21	Year Ended 30-Sep-20	Year Ended 30-Sep-19
	£	£	£
Income			
Sports day income	-	-	1,453
SPARTA Member subscriptions	5,187	5,604	6,218
CSSC Rebate	12,600	12,600	16,712
Other revenue	-	-	1,522
TOTAL INCOME	17,787	18,204	25,905
Expenditure			
Rebates to affiliated branches	19,498	(5,737)	(11,519)
Grants to clubs	(11,952)	(1,154)	(6,920)
Sports day cost	-	(1,262)	(7,412)
Entry fees	-	-	(75)
Wimbledon	-	-	(1,527)
Miscellaneous	(594)	(547)	(982)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,951	(8,700)	(28,435)
NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	24,738	9,504	(2,530)
BALANCE SHEET	At 30-Sep-21	At 30-Sep-20	At 30-Sep-19
Current Assets			
Debtors	-	6,300	-
Petty cash	177	177	177
Cash at bank	71,699	73,481	63,386
Cash at building society	0	0	0
Unpresented cheques	-	-	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	71,876	79,958	63,563
Current Liabilities			
Creditors	(0)	(1,154)	(0)
Accruals & Provisions	(6,672)	(38,337)	(32,601)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	(6,672)	(39,491)	(32,601)
NET CURRENT ASSETS / (LIABILITIES)	65,204	40,466	30,962
NET ASSETS	65,204	40,466	30,962
Equity and Reserves			
Equity at beginning of year	40,466	30,962	33,492
Movement in Reserves	-	-	-
Surplus/(deficit)	24,738	9,504	(2,530)
TOTAL SHAREHOLDER EQUITY	65,204	40,466	30,962

MEMBERSHIP

Our finances show that membership income was down during the financial year 2019/20 by 9.87% and 20/21 by 7.44%. There is no available evidence to conclude why this drop took place although it is reasonable to assume that Covid-19 restrictions may have had some bearing on this drop of income. Even though there had been an increase in membership applications following the SPARTA Virtual Activity Week that took place in September 2020, that has been offset/reduced by gradual decline in numbers.

As always it is not easy to determine the precise size of our membership due to the different ways that people can join, i.e. new members who might pay an annual membership directly their SPARTA club. Our finances show that we currently have 206 members who pay directly to SPARTA. That is a decrease of 15 members from the start of the year (221).

It is hoped that new members will be attracted to join through better publicity and by invigorating and enhancing SPARTA's offer in the future.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The 46th Annual General Meeting was held on 16th July 2020.

This meeting had originally been scheduled to take place on 18th March 2020 but due to the outbreak of Covid-19 this had been cancelled.

This was the first AGM to be held virtually using Microsoft Teams and was well attended.

No motions were proposed at the meeting

A copy of the AGM minutes is available on the SPARTA website

The 47th Annual General Meeting was held on 21 January 2021.

No motions were proposed at the meeting

A copy of the AGM minutes is available on the SPARTA website

THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (GMC)

The General Management Committee met on 31 January 2019. Following a break in meetings due to the outbreak of COVID 19 the meeting resumed on 8 April 2021 and 7 July 2021.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee were due to meet in March 2020 to consider the annual bid for funds from the London clubs. Due to COVID 19 restrictions this was completed through correspondence.

The FGPC met again on 3 March 2021 and discussed the annual bid for funds from the London clubs. Due to time restrictions, another FGPC meeting was conducted through correspondence in November 2021.

Regional Associations

No reports were received from Regional Associations during this period.

SPARTA LONDON BASED CLUBS

The SPARTA clubs managed to continue to operate despite the challenges faced during the Covid-19 outbreak. A report of each club is below:

The Civil Service Choir

The Civil Service Choir was very fortunate to have given a concert in 2020 prior to the devastating impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a performance in January of parts one and six of Johann Sebastian Bach's Christmas Oratorio with orchestra and soloists in St John's Smith Square.

The concert was attended by 400 people and a charity collection raised £1,283 which was donated to the Cardinal Hume Centre, the Lifeboat Fund and St John's Smith Square. This brought the total raised for charities by collections at concerts to £39,500.



The choir, which has 150 active members, was to have returned to St John's Smith Square three times in 2020 with performances of Antonín Dvořák's Mass in D in April in the prestigious Holy Week Festival; Dan Forrest's Jubilate Deo in July; and Will Todd's Mass in Blue, with a big band in the London Jazz Festival in November. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, the first of these was cancelled only three weeks before the concert and the other two were cancelled soon afterwards. In 2019, in all the choir gave 23 performances and it had anticipated a similar number in 2020 but for the pandemic.

Virtual recordings

Following the Covid-19 pandemic the choir worked on virtual recordings, which involved individuals recording themselves at home using supporting resources and their recordings then being combined using audio editing (with the incredible help of a sound engineer) and with video. The first recording was a performance



of *The White Cliffs of Dover* to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe in May 2020, with the video including photographs of relatives of some choir members. The video on YouTube ([click here to view](#)) has been viewed 2,838 times (as at 25 November 2021).



The second recording was a performance of an arrangement of *Bob Dylan's Don't Think Twice. It's All Right*, which was specially commissioned for the choir in memory of former Cabinet Secretary Baron Jeremy Heywood of Whitehall. This was published in June 2020 on the anniversary of a thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey at which the choir sang in 2019. The video on YouTube ([click here to view](#)) has been viewed 2,211 times (as at 25 November 2021).

With the success of these initial attempts, a recording of an arrangement of *This Little Light of Mine* followed in July 2020 and has been viewed 968 times (as at 25 November 2021).



The choir was then commissioned to produce a recording to close the SPARTA Virtual Activity Week in September 2020. For this the choir tackled *Pleni sunt caeli* from Ola Gjeilo's *Sunrise Mass* (IV - Identity). The video includes brief moments of footage from the choir's concert performance of the whole work in 2019. The video on YouTube ([click here to view](#)) has been viewed 889 times (as at 25 November 2021).



The choir was asked to produce a recording to close the virtual Civil Service Awards in February 2021. *God only knows* by the Beach Boys was chosen and a more sophisticated video was produced to accompany it. This video has been viewed 2,320 times (as at 25 November 2021).

The five virtual recordings in total have been viewed 9,226 times (as at 25 November 2021).

Zoom-based rehearsals

It is not possible for choirs to sing together on Zoom or via other video conferencing platforms owing to the variable latency across people's broadband - in simple terms participants will not be together and it sounds dreadful. The only way to use Zoom is for participants to be muted and so be singing without hearing any of their colleagues, other than the choir leader and or accompaniment.

For many this has proved to be too far removed from the experience of singing in a choir to be worthwhile; for others it is too much to participate via Zoom when having to work remotely via computer screen all day; for others, pressures of work have escalated immensely in dealing with Covid-19 or EU/ UK Transition. Undertaking virtual recordings is also a challenging enterprise.

However, some choir members were keen to try to do something together on a regular basis, and from May onwards two weekly Zoom-based rehearsal sessions were offered, on a lunchtime and an evening. By this means in the summer term participants worked successfully on Dan Forrest's Jubilate Deo, which is in seven different languages.

In the autumn term of 2020 participants were offered sessions on the theme of discovering or rediscovering selected short choral pieces before moving to Christmas music in December 2020.

Live performances

In the last week of October 2020, with some 'real' activities becoming possible within guidelines, a small contingent of the choir met for two socially-distanced rehearsals and the following week 13 choir members sang in an All Souls Day Eucharist service at St Stephen's, Rochester Row, which was live-streamed and viewed 100 times. The second lockdown started two days later.



Following the second lockdown 'real' activity was very briefly possible in the first half of December 2020 and after socially-distanced rehearsals, 20 members of the choir sang in a live-streamed carol service at St Stephen's and this has been viewed 797 times.

In November 2020, the choir's music director, Stephen Hall, was an invited guest for 'Conversations with conductors' as part of an on-line project hosted by the Brandenburg London Choral Festival and he talked about the impact of the pandemic on the choir and his approach to operating the choir virtually.

In 2021 singing in groups was not allowed for many months, but in June, with then six people allowed to sing together, a sextet was formed to sing at a Corpus Christi service at St Stephen's, Rochester Row.

With more people returning to offices, in October 2021 the choir was finally able to return to weekly lunchtime in-person rehearsals and five weeks later weekly evening in-person rehearsals were introduced. In November 2021 the choir sang at an All Souls Day Eucharist service at St Stephen's, Rochester Row, which was also live-streamed and viewed 102 times.

The choir is currently planning how to allow people to engage with in-person rehearsals on a virtual basis.

Carol Advent Calendar in 2020

A project, 'Civil Service Choir at Christmas', was initiated to publish YouTube videos of past Christmas performances on a daily basis throughout December 2020 and through to 6 January



2021 (Epiphany). Two videos were filmed performances from the Bach Christmas Oratorio concert given in January 2020; the rest were recordings of carols and Christmas music from the choir's past carol services and concerts, accompanied by the words on screen. Each video ended with the message 'Still here for you this

Christmas'. The videos were used by several departments for their virtual carol services and Christmas events. They were also promoted within some departments. In total the Christmas videos have been viewed 13,217 times on YouTube (as at 25 November 2021).

Christmas 2021

As at 25 November 2021, the choir is planning an in-person and live-streamed carol service at St Stephen's, Rochester on 14 December. The choir will be singing carols in Great Minster House and 2 Marsham Street for the SPARTA - Hybrid Wellbeing Activity Week. The choir will be also singing at the Civil Service Awards at Lancaster House.

In conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the choir's activities, but it has not stopped them entirely. It could be even considered that in one respect it has remarkably enhanced the choir's outputs as videos and live-streamed activities have reached a large virtual audience with over 23,400 views in total (as at 25 November 2021). However, the choir is delighted to be able to return to 'real' activities.

For more information see www.civilservicechoir.org.uk

Fitness Club

The Fitness club continues to operate with a solid number of attendees at every Friday lunchtime session in GMH. The club was meeting in room (5L) on the fifth floor until Covid-19 restrictions came into place. There was a break of several weeks while the club moved activities onto Microsoft Teams. The club then operated remotely every Friday lunchtime, with coach, Jason Marchant, instructing the class from his house or garden. Unfortunately, some of the regular attendees from GMH have not taken to joining the online classes and waited until the classes resumed in GMH before attending once again.

A special session was organised for the SPARTA Virtual Activity Week that took place in September 2020. This attracted a number of new members from across both Departments.

The club returned to GMH in June 2021 with classes taking place, once again, in room LG1 and simultaneously streamed online. Initially only the coach was using LG1 with the

remaining participants joining the online stream however, as staff have started to return to the office post COVID, a number of participants have now joined in the class in room LG1.

SPARTA Golf Society

Like all Sparta clubs, the golf society's events for the year 2020 were severely disrupted due to the coronavirus outbreak. The first three events of the year were cancelled, and the first society meeting of the year was not held until late July, albeit a substantially paired down event with no clubhouse facilities. Nonetheless, the turnout from members was very good.

Whilst our Autumn meeting in September was restricted to just 18 holes, the club were able to supply a lunch and we were able to compete for two of our normal trophies. We were also able to stage our annual challenge match against the Ashdown (Hastings) Society - unfortunately we lost.....again!

The society did partake in Sparta's virtual activity week with a fun online competition. This was very well supported.

Despite the ongoing restrictions the Golf Society was able to host a number of competitions during 2021. The first was the Spring Meeting held at Pine Ridge GC on 22 April 2021. The winners were Peter Millard in the Singles stableford (Addison Plate & Adams Salver 1st Leg) and John Rea in the Singles scratch (Woodgate Cup).

This was followed by the President's Day meeting which was held at Sonning GC on 28 May 2021. The winners were Mark Hitchen in the Singles stableford (President's Tankard) and James Milligan in the 36 holes singles stableford (Lovell Salver 2nd leg). The Betterball stableford (Pepler Cup) was won by John Hurley & Andrew Gardner.

The Golf Society celebrated its centenary with a special Summer Centenary Meeting held at Chobham GC on 25 June 2021 (see picture). This was well attended, and the winners were P



Millard in the Singles Stableford (Summer Cup), W Donaldson in the 36 hole singles stableford (Centenary Trophy), and A Gardner in the Afternoon 90% handicap singles stableford (Cook Cup). A sumptuous meal was arranged post match that was enjoyed by all in attendance.

26 July 2021 was the date of the Autumn Meeting which was held at Chigwell GC. This was earlier than in previous years. The winners were Owen Jones & Darren Cooper in the Greensomes stableford (Millennium Decanter), John Rea in the Scratch competition (Chapman Cup), James Milligan in the Singles stableford (Robinson Bowl) and Geoff Dawe in the Aggregate stableford (Adams Salver).

The Captain's Day was held at Knole Park GC on 7 September 2021. The winners were Ray Owen in the Singles stableford (Summer Tankard & Lovell Salver 1st leg), Mark Hitchen in the Singles stableford (Golden Jubilee Cup) and Peter Gray in the 36-hole singles stableford (Harrop Cup). Peter would have also won the Golden Jubilee Cup, but club rules exclude players from winning both trophies on the same day.

The Hastings Challenge Match was held at Westerham GC on 29 Sept 2021. Unfortunately, SPARTA lost 3 ½ to 2 ½ on the day to the Ashdown House team.

The last meeting of the year was the Annual General Meeting held at Bletchingley GC on 14 October 2021, which was won by Geoff Dawe.

SPARTA were also represented at this year's Men's National Civil Service golf finals which was held at the Telford Golf Hotel & Spa, on 9 & 10 September. Phil Alker scored an excellent 146 overall in the handicap event which placed him fifth. The society is looking to encourage more members to enter these events in 2022.

All in all, this was a very successful year for the society despite all of the ongoing obstacles. We look forward to next year and hopefully the lifting of all restrictions.

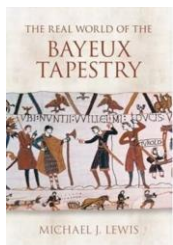
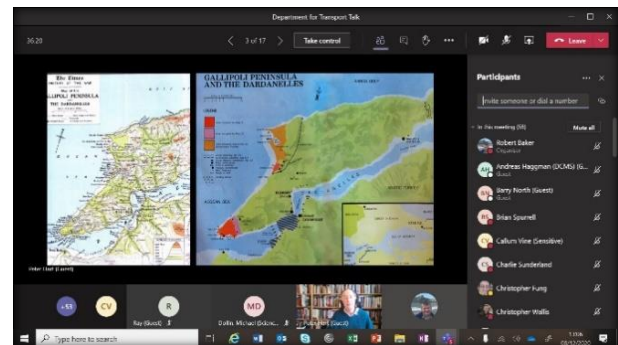
More details about the SPARTA golf society and their activities can be found on their website at <http://www.spartagolf.co.uk/>

History Society

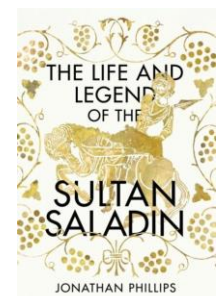
The History Society arranges talks and guided tours for members of SPARTA and for staff in DfT, CLG and Defra.

In March 2020 the History Society had a full programme of events planned for the year and was looking forward to holding its March talk in conjunction with Westminster City Archives this all changed when the government announced its first lockdown causing us to pause our events.

We restarted by undertaking virtual talks using Microsoft Teams beginning in September 2020 as part the SPARTA Virtual Activity week, this was followed by further talks on Early Medieval London, The Victorian Circus and the Gallipoli evacuation, the virtual talks have doubled attendance with new people joining us from across the UK.



The Society organised a programme of monthly virtual talks throughout 2021. These included “The Bayeux Tapestry with Professor Michael J Lewis of the British Museum” which was held during the SPARTA Virtual Activity Week in January 2021 and was very well attended. In February Professor Dan Todman, gave a talk on Britain’s War 1937 - 1947 which was based on his two books on the subject. The March lecture was on the Life and legend of Sultan Saladin with Professor Jonathan Phillips of Royal Holloway, University of London giving a fascinating lecture on a fascinating man. April our subject turned to The Cultural Revolution (1966-76): Origin, Theatre and

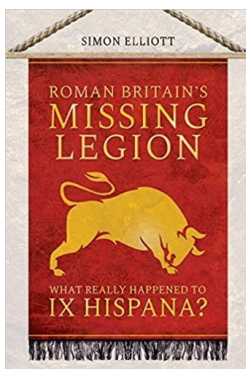


Consequences with Professor Yang-Wen Zheng, Manchester University, who is the author of Ten Lessons in Modern Chinese History.

As we moved into the summer in May we turned to a more macabre subject the Black Death which reached England in 1348 which was presented by Dr Eleanor Janega of the London School of Economics. In June we held two talks. In the first, Dr Priya Atwal, of Oxford University talked about her book The Rise and Fall of the Sikh Kingdom, and in the second Toby Green, Professor of Precolonial and Lusophone African History and Culture at Kings College London, talked to us about 'Thinking about African Kingdoms' based on his award winning book A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the rise of the slave trade to the age of revolution.

In July Stephen Bourne, talked about the experience of the population of the ethnic minorities who were part of Britain's Second World War campaign based on his book, Under Fire: Black Britain 1939-1945.

The talks took a break in August but resumed in September with "Why the English Revolution matters" with Professor Ann Hughes. In October, Professor Stephen Hodgkinson Professor of Ancient History in the Department of Classics and Archaeology at the University of Nottingham talked about Ancient Sparta 'Modern Myths and Ancient Realities'. November was the turn of Nicola Tallis to talk about Margaret Beaufort, the so called "Uncrowned Queen" and mother of Henry VII, the first Tudor King. In December we held two talks. In the first, Tracy Borman talked about her new book Crown & Sceptre: A New History of the British Monarchy, 1066-2021. Crown & Sceptre explores the history and evolution of the monarchy from 1066 to the present day.



The final talk of the year was done in conjunction with the SPARTA Hybrid Activity Week during December. This talk was on Roman Britain's Missing Legion - with Dr Simon Elliott investigating the mystery around Roman Britain's missing legion, Legio IX Hispana, made famous by Rosemary Sutcliffe's bestselling book Eagle of the Ninth and several Hollywood movies.

Recordings were made of the majority of the 2021 talks and are available to view by contacting Robert Baker.

All being well we are hoping to return to hosting talks in person sometime in 2022 but will probably also offer an online link to these talks.

The Society has a mailing list which is used to inform people about other talks available to watch online and is working with colleagues on Black History Month events.

Details of our talks can be found on the SPARTA website: <https://www.spartarecreation.co.uk>

Robert Baker
History Society Secretary

Martial Arts Club

The Martial Arts Club has found since the move from Eland House that space available to them is a lot smaller and so training can only really involve one or two pairs working together at a time (depending on what techniques they are doing). Because of that (and the fact they aren't in an DLUHC building) they haven't re-advertised the club for some time but had been doing some training with the existing group up until the outbreak of COVID 19.

Since the initial outbreak of COVID 19 the club have been unable to meet. It was hoped that the group would start to meet as restrictions lifted but current instructor, Nora Mukachung, has been unable to take classes due to health reasons.

The club is hoping to find a new instructor, either internal or external, to resume activities in 2022. SPARTA is currently looking into access of gym space within Westminster for all members which could well improve the space for training for the Martial Arts Club.

Softball

The softball club did not meet during 2020 or 2021 due to the outbreak of COVID 19. It is hoped that the club will resume normal activities during 2022, however Charlie Sunderland will be retiring prior to the next softball season so a new organiser is currently being sought.

The club plan to continue having an enjoyable time playing in the Civil Service league most Wednesdays in Hyde Park throughout the summer. New players are always welcome - no previous experience is necessary - and all the equipment is provided.

Members also run the successful softball tournament at the Sport and Wellbeing Day, which as usual was oversubscribed.

The softball club did not seek any funding from Sparta this year.

Superstars Cricket Club

The club, formed in 1987, plays mostly midweek evening games against a range of teams with the majority coming from other Government Departments. Our home games are played in South Wimbledon.

Despite the curtailed season in 2020 we managed to play 15 matches thanks to our Fixture Secretary Vijay doing a great job at rearranging the fixtures at very short notice. With our ground at Merton not being available we switched our home games to the Kings ground at Chiswick.

Whilst we only won 3 matches this did include a win against our rivals Dodgers. Most of our games were fairly tight but we struggled to make the big scores but in general we were just pleased to have played so many games.

2021 saw a full fixture list with 33 fixtures being crammed into a busy summer season. Unfortunately, 9 were cancelled for various reasons including COVID related matters and Superstars only won 6 of the remaining fixtures and tied 2 other matches of the remaining 21 fixtures. Incredibly the 2 tied matches were both against archrivals Dodgers, which remains a close and competitive fixture, as both teams fight to claim the Ken Block trophy.

We are hoping that 2022 will also have a full fixture list and will include a Bank Holiday tour, along with plenty of wins for Superstars.

Barry Gigg

barrygigg@yahoo.co.uk

Table Tennis

The outbreak of COVID 19 devastated the Table Tennis clubs activities throughout the last two years as no games were able to take place and the Table Tennis league suspended activity.

The good news though was that the refurbishments in Great Minster House were able to be completed and that the club inherited an extra table tennis table from the building contractors, so now two table tennis tables are available in GMH. However, the room which the club was hoping to use, Room LG1, GMH, has been carpeted. This may not meet the league regulations for table tennis matches.

We are hoping to resume full activities in 2022 and to recruit new players to the team.

Tennis

With the SPARTA Departmental Sports Day cancelled in 2020 and 2021 the Tennis tournament was sadly not held. We are looking forward to hosting this again in 2022.

Our representation in the CSSC Team Tennis Championship also suffered cancellation in 2020 with indoor tennis being suspended and the location of Nottingham Tennis Centre being in too high a Tier. However, we were able to enter a team in the 2021 tournament which took place on 13th to 15th October 2021 at the Nottingham Tennis Centre.



The event wasn't as well attended as past years due to but SPARTA entered a Men's team (pictured above), a Women's team (pictured left) and a mixed team. The event as always was well organised and thoroughly enjoyable.

On the positive side the reinvigorated SPARTA Website with a Tennis section plus the new SPARTA Newsletter are great to see and should enable strengthening of our Tennis squad moving forward into 2022 and the 50th anniversary of SPARTA.

Brian Oliver
SPARTA Tennis Organiser

Tenpin Bowling Club

SPARTA Unfortunately the Bowling Winter League was interrupted by the Covid lockdown so it could not be completed which left approximately 10 weeks to complete when we return.

The Lewisham Bowl has been renovated during the lockdown but only managed to open for a couple of weeks before it was closed down again. There is still work to be done to make it suitable for league bowlers which should be done in time for our return.

The League normally bowls at Lewisham Bowl, Belmont Hill at 7.15 p.m. on Wednesday nights and we bowl as a handicap league. We run competitions throughout the league finishing with the Masters at the end of the Winter League. If people have never bowled before they are given coaching as well as a handicap to make it a level playing field.

Whilst the lockdown has been on our League Secretary John Garnsworthy has been running online bowling for some of the bowlers which they have enjoyed. They had a Christmas break but will be resuming shortly. There were some incredible scores which a lot of bowlers wish they could do when on the lanes.

Once we have a date for the Bowl to open up again we will be advertising for new bowlers to join us. If you would like to be kept informed about bowling please email me and I will add you to the list.

Rose D'Costa
Chairman STBC

petrose123@btinternet.com

Yoga Club

The SPARTA Yoga Club has been affected by the lockdown restrictions of COVID 19 and had to temporarily close in March 2020.

The club has held a number of online classes to coincide with the SPARTA Virtual Activity Weeks and the SPARTA Hybrid Activity Week.

We are hoping that the club will be able to reopen again in 2022 and we are looking forward to being back in Great Minster House now that the refurbishment work has been completed and there is an improved space to practice in.

Sue Johnson, Chair / Gareth Williams, Secretary

FIT FOR BUSINESS DAY 2020

It was with great sadness that SPARTA had to cancel the 2020 and 2021 Fit for Business Days due to the restrictions relating to the outbreak of Covid-19.

A Virtual Activity Week was arranged to try to replicate some of the activities. This Virtual Activity Week was held over the week of 21st to 25th September 2020.

The events held were:

- Yoga Class
- History Society Lecture
- Mindfulness Class
- Circuit Training Session
- Online Bowling Competition
- Online Quiz Night
- Civil Service Choir Virtual Performance
- All Ages Home Pentathlon
- PS4 FIFA 20 tournament
- Golf Society tournament



21ST – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2020
SPARTA VIRTUAL
ACTIVITY WEEK

A week of fun activities open to all
 We can't bring you Fit for Business day this year so why not enjoy a week of virtual activities open to all staff hosted by the SPARTA clubs. Try from a range of free activities including:

- All Ages Home Pentathlon competition
- Lunchtime Yoga, Mindfulness and Circuit training classes
- History Society event
- Virtual Tenpin Bowling
- FIFA 20 PS4 Tournament
- Civil Service Choir virtual performance




The virtual week that cannot be missed

-
- Lunchtime Events**
-
- Evening Events**
-
- Week Long Events**
-
- Something for all Ages**



SPARTA
 Your Recreation Association

Department for Transport
 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

SPARTA@df.gov.uk

The week was a great success

VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES 2021

With the COVID 19 outbreak continuing to disrupt activities during 2021 SPARTA was not able to host a full programme of events throughout 2021. This was very frustrating for all.

We did arrange two full weeks of activities in 2021.

At the start of 2021 we arranged a second Virtual Activity Week which ran from the 25th to the 29th of January. This included:

- A “Hot Jazz” Dance Class
- A History Society Lecture
- A Lunch Interview with Double Olympic Champion “Iain Percy”
- A “At Your Desk” Yoga Class
- A Circuit Training Session

Learning from our first Virtual Activity Week we were able to increase participation by using direct emailing and sending appointments to a huge number of staff across both DfT and DLUHC. The week was a huge success

A Hybrid Activity Week is taking place in the week commencing 13th December 2021.

All events are planned to take place at lunchtime and are designed so that participants can attend in person or online as suits their preference.

It is anticipated that more events will take place in this way going forward.



The poster features a blue and yellow color scheme with a ribbon graphic at the top and bottom. It includes the SPARTA logo and text detailing the event schedule for December 13-17, 2021. The events are listed by day, including Wellbeing Class, History Society Event, At Your Desk Yoga Class, CS Choir Event, and Fitness Class. Each event is marked as 'LIVE' or 'ONLINE'.

LUNCHTIME EVENTS

SPARTA
Invites you to Come Together for
A WEEK OF HYBRID WELLBEING ACTIVITIES
13th – 17th December 2021
LIVE in GMH and 2MS and online via TEAMS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wellbeing Class	History Society Event	At Your Desk Yoga Class	CS Choir Event	Fitness Class
Improve your mental wellbeing with this free mindfulness class	The History Society present, Roman Britain's Missing Legion - Dr Simon Elliott	Yoga Teacher, Sue Johnson shows you how to do yoga at your desk	The CS Choir will be giving a free lunchtime performance	Join Coach, Jason Marchant, for a good workout before the holidays
Live Online at your desk	Live in Room LGI GMH	Live Online at your desk	Live in GMH Canteen & 2MS Atrium	Live in Room LGI GMH
09:00-10:00	09:00-10:00	09:00-10:00	09:00-10:00	09:00-10:00

Check out all the events on the SPARTA website
www.spartarecreation.co.uk

JOIN ONLINE OR IN PERSON

SPARTA, Your Sports and Recreation Association

2022 AND BEYOND

2021/22 is the 50th Anniversary of SPARTA. A number of activities are being planned to celebrate the anniversary, that will hopefully be able to go ahead without any interruptions by Covid-19.

Finances are relatively stable and there is still more to be done to attract new members by appealing to staff based in DfT and DLUHC. SPARTA needs to attract staff of all ages to ensure that in a further 50 years' time SPARTA still meets the needs of all generations of our members.

We hope, with your support, we can reinvigorate SPARTA and make it a valuable asset in the health and wellbeing of all staff across both departments.

*SPARTA - Your Sports and
Recreation Association*