

Dear BSRA members,

I did not think, back in the Spring of this year, that I would start this letter at the end of the year, still under the influence of the global pandemic. I hope that you, your families, colleagues and friends are all staying well and that you are coping with the ongoing transitions which are occurring almost daily, as a consequence of the pandemic. It has been a very hard year, but I still just wanted to take a moment to wish you all everything of the best for 2021. It is almost impossible to predict what the coming year will look like, but for me, I hope to have some time over the holidays not only to reflect on the year, but equally importantly to also spend some precious time considering my changed purpose within this bigger picture. What opportunities does this challenge provide and how may these, together with family, friends and colleagues be achieved.

Within the BSRA we have had several exciting events. Our website has been updated and I hope that as members you will engage with us and with it by sending us your news and achievements as well as commentaries and updates on interesting papers you have read or virtual conferences you have attended. Please therefore do keep us updated of your scientific endeavours, so we too can keep our pages current and relevant.

To this end, following our recent call for a second round of PhD funding, we are delighted to announce that BSRA member Dr Helen McGettrick was awarded funding to support a PhD studentship through the Lorna and Yuti Chernajovsky Biomedical Research Foundation. As a charitable organisation with a focus on promoting and funding research into the causes and effects of the ageing process, the BSRA was able to sponsor Dr McGettrick's application to develop a novel treatment for bone diseases such as osteoporosis, which was selected by the Foundation for funding. Dr McGettrick is based at the Institute of Inflammation and Ageing at the University of Birmingham. Along these lines, we have also launched details of small grant awards for members – these are envisaged to support publication costs, outreach events or small pots of funds towards laboratory consumables. These are open calls and details may be found here: <https://bsra.org.uk/home-page/bsra-funding-opportunities/>. Further information around what is happening within the BSRA is available online: [www.bsra.org.uk](http://www.bsra.org.uk)


Unfortunately, we were not able to hold our Annual Scientific Meeting this year and had to make the difficult decision to postpone it to 2021. We plan to hold the meeting in the third quarter of the coming year and hope you can join us for the 'Metabolism of Ageing' conference. More information will follow in the New Year. Although we did not hold the meeting, we will be holding our Annual General Meeting in January (virtually) and we look forward to seeing as many of you there as is possible. We were able to co-host a webinar with the Biochemical Society, where BSRA board member J Pedro Magalhaes presented a fantastic talk on Genes regulating ageing and the quest for immortality. This received a lot of interest and the potential to run another co-hosted webinar does exist, should any members wish to be involved.

Of further news, associate Professor Julien Ochala, a former BSRA board member, was awarded one of the Carlsberg Foundation Young Researcher Fellowships (approx. DKK 5 million – University of Copenhagen), to fund his research on Myosin-binding protein C (MyBP-C) and how it influences muscle contraction and relaxation. The studies will ultimately provide valuable information for the development of targeted therapies for cardiac and skeletal muscle diseases associated with mutations in MyBP-C. Julien has recently advertised a post-doctoral position associated with his research programme, which may be of interest to some of our BSRA members (<https://employment.ku.dk/faculty/?show=153161>).

I would like to finish this letter by saying an enormous thank you to all Trustees who are volunteers on the board and who give their time, energy and knowledge freely, to support our society. They are all integrally involved in the BSRA, its running and its transition from a learned society to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Roles span: organising Annual Scientific Meetings, ensuring our finances are appropriately administered, overseeing our legal requirements as a charity, enabling grant funding rounds, keeping members updated, enabling our partnership with Biogerontology, keeping our website live – to name just a few roles. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with all Trustees and I look forward to the year ahead. We now have availability for new Trustees on our board. New Trustees are nominated by members and elected by ballot, should any of you wish to be involved in the shaping of the BSRA; news will follow in the coming year. We will also be working on a Special Edition of the Biogerontology journal on Covid-19 and ageing – more announcements will be made in the New Year

Thank you all for your support of the BSRA and please do keep us updated with your research interests and achievements. Please take care in the current environment and please do stay in touch.

With best wishes,



Claire Stewart

UK government advice relating to Covid-19 can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.