FOREWORD

From the President of the British Association of Sport and Medicine
the Right Honourable Lord Porritt of Wanganui and Hampstead, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., C.B.E., F.R.C.S.

This year the B.A.S.M. celebrates its official Jubilee, as it was, it was in February 1953 that the first A.G.M. was held at the Westminster Hospital. This meeting regularised the decisions arrived at by a self appointed ‘Executive Committee’ which last met on three previous occasions in June and October 1952 and January 1953; Officers were duly elected (Sir Adolphe Abrahams as President, Sir Arthur Porritt as Chairman, Dr. W. Tegner as Secretary/Treasurer and Mr. K. S. Duncan as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, with Brigadier Glynn Hughes, Lt. Col. Milne R.A.M.C. and Mr. A. E. Kendall as Committee Members); the very simple objectives of the Association approved (‘To promote the study and investigation of all medical aspects of sport’); the Rules agreed, the subscriptions decided upon (£1.1.0 for Associations nominating members and 10 shillings for individual members) and a — very fragile — financial statement produced. The meeting was followed by an Address by the President (Sir Adolphe Abrahams) on the principles and aims of the Association.

It is worthy of note that in the early days membership was restricted to medical men only; any nominated non medical candidate to be an ‘Honorary Member’; that the Associations first address was ‘c/o British Olympic Association’ and that the first Secretary/Treasurer was already a member of F.I.M.S.

These three facts point quite clearly to the original conception of B.A.S.M. — an idea floated by a group of friends — medical friends with direct or indirect interest in sport, who felt that without some such organisation as B.A.S.M., Great Britain would lack the ability to take part in the rapidly developing activities of F.I.M.S. — an international body set up by several continental countries (chiefly Italy, Belgium and later Germany) to meet the demand for greater information regarding scientific research into the medical aspect of sport.

If I remember rightly, it was a chance conversation between Dr. Tegner and myself which sowed the first seed; we later enlisted the help, and advice of Sir Adolphe Abrahams, collected a few personal friends — including the Secretary of the British Olympic Association, and, in the early part of 1952 held a number of informal ‘unofficial’ meetings leading up to the first ‘Executive’ in June.

During this period we chose a name for the Association — an association which we planned and hoped would in due course qualify for affiliation to F.I.M.S. The choice of name was not easy — it seemed rather ponderous, but it seemed essential that it should stress both sides of our project — and neither of the possible shortened versions — ‘Sporting Medicine’ or ‘Medical Sports’ — quite seemed to give the right impression!

We drafted simple ‘Rules’, decided on levels of subscriptions — to be provided we hoped in the early stages from the national bodies of the various sports — and notified the Press, both lay and medical, of our intentions to set up B.A.S.M. — asking for interested inquiries.

Somewhat to our surprise 115 replies were received — from which came the attendance at the first A.G.M. — and our original founding members.

Our meagre budget limited the activities of our first official year of existence (1953) to three lectures — Sir Adolphe on ‘Doping’, Drs. Bleasdale and Blonstein on ‘Swimming’ and ‘Boxing’ respectively, Dr. Kennedy on ‘The Physiology of Athletics’.

Arrangements for these occasions were much helped by the sympathetic and practical help of the Dean of Westminster Hospital (Mr Harding), who provided free a lecture room and light refreshment. As a result we estimated at the end of the year we had an annual income of £55 and a balance £81!

During the year Dr. Tegner resigned as Secretary/Treasurer (but remained on the Executive all his life) and was replaced by Dr. Dennis Cussen; we decided to allow medical students to become members — without subscription until qualification; we entertained the Executive Committee of F.I.M.S. which was meeting in London; we approved the closest co-operation with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists and we made Dr. Roger Bannister a Life Member!
Thus was B.A.S.M. conceived and born. Founded on a shoe-string (£10 from the Research Board for the Correlation of Medical Science and Physical Education and the first subscriptions), its early life was nourished by the faith and devotion of its original sponsors. Its growth, at first slow and occasionally chequered, has steadily and of recent years rapidly progressed. It has now reached maturity and stability — demanding some revision of its constitution, a strengthening of its organisational administration, a wider vista of activities and increased support from both medicine and sport. The next twenty-five years should surely justify the original vision of its founders.

Porritt

September 1978