

A Challenge

The enterprise culture, of which SBG would surely have approved, and of which in his way he was certainly a doughty exponent, presents opportunities, risks, crises, confrontations, wounds, successes and rewards. And so, as with the London Marathon, there are plenty of starters - new businesses, new fashions, new institutions, new publications - but not all last the course. Our Society too is an enterprise facing a challenge.

There is the 'editorial' challenge. Thrice yearly deadlines; will the contributions keep coming? Will there be adequate material to sustain an interesting publication?

Then there is the 'collector's' challenge. One of our recently joined members claims to have all but half a dozen of SBG's hardback output - about 150 titles. But there are pamphlets, letters, ephemera and associated items; is any collection ever complete?

That leads on to the 'bibliographical' challenge: discovering hitherto unrecorded material (such as newspaper articles etc.), describing accurately the original issues of the books, differentiating later issues, and offering a publishing history.

Isn't there a 'scholarly' challenge too? There must be 'out there' those who have studied SBG's topographical works or his folklore or song collections or biographies or theology or the background to his novels, and could provide an up to date assessment, with maps, photographs, charts and contemporary material.

May I then reiterate the 'geographical' challenge to members in the four SBG 'regions' - north (Yorkshire), south (London & Sussex), east (Mersea) and west (Devon) - to put on a day's programme once a year in rotation. I am more than happy to act in a consultative capacity, but the initiative needs to be local I am sure.

Finally, there is the challenge of SBG himself - to care for people and to care for our surroundings, and to live as full and creative a life as it is given to us to do.

D.P.R.S.