

Minutes of the History Subject Associations' Meeting

Tuesday, 14 July 2015

Wolfson Room NB02

Senate House, Institute of Historical Research

Present: Arthur Burns (Royal Historical Society) (RHS)
Andrew Dilley (History UK [HE]) (HUK)
Lawrence Goldman (Institute of Historical Research) (IHR)
Peter Howlett (Economic History Society) (EHS)
Karen Hunt (Social History Society) (SHS)
Valerie Johnson (The National Archives) (TNA)
Lucy Newton (Association of Business Historians) (ABH)
Mark Overton (British Agricultural History Society) (BAHS)
Rick Trainor (Economic History Society [in the chair]) (EHS)
Mary Vincent (Royal Historical Society) (RHS)

Attending: Maureen Galbraith (Economic History Society)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Rick Trainor welcomed participants to the meeting. As previously agreed, the meeting had been broadened to include representatives of subject associations who had regularly attended an annual meeting, hosted by the EHS. The future format of the meetings would be: one in June/July, attended by subject association representatives, and one in December to which representatives of the research councils would also be invited.

Apologies for absence were received from: Henrice Altink (SHS); Teresa da Silva Lopes (ABH); Henry French (BAHS); Peter Mandler (RHS) and Rebecca Sullivan (Historical Association [HA]).

2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 July 2014 and matters arising

The circulated minutes were approved with one minor amendment. Item 4.4 History UK: 'HUK Plenary Lecture' should be amended to 'HUK Plenary Meeting'.

2.1 Venue for future meetings

The group noted that the EHS has no premises in London and gratefully accepted the offer from the Director of the IHR to host all future meetings.

2.2 Attendees at future meetings

After some discussion, it was agreed that History Lab Plus, which represents postgraduate students, should be invited to send a representative to future meetings. **[Action: MV/MG]**

The current attendees would liaise with other History Subject Association (HSA) groups and, where appropriate, represent these at future meetings.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 2 December 2014 and matters arising

The minutes were noted and would be reviewed by the December 2015 meeting.

3.1 The Census

As noted in the December 2014 minutes, the Government had accepted the National Statistician's recommendation around the future of the census. This was in line with the learned societies' recommendation that it would be reckless to move to a wholly administrative data census in 2021, and that there was a need for 'dual running' of a traditional (albeit more online) census, alongside testing of administrative data sources.

The group noted that the EHS planned to respond to an ONS consultation entitled 'Content of the 2021 Census', highlighting the substantial risk in moving to an online-only census and urging that as many questions as possible should be included in the census. The deadline for responses is 27 August 2015.

[Action: RHT/WPH]

4. Open Access (OA) Publishing

4.1 Review of the implementation of the RCUK policy on OA

The group noted the circulated papers:

- A report on the review of the implementation of the RCUK policy on OA.
- Conclusions and recommendations from the review.

It was agreed that, given the early stage of the review, there are no conclusions to be drawn.

4.2 HEFCE report on Monographs and OA

The group noted the circulated papers:

- HEFCE report on monographs and OA.
- Conclusions and recommendations from the report.

The group further noted the continuing confusion around OA but welcomed the helpful notes, drafted by Peter Mandler, that are available on the RHS website.

5. Relevant Policies of the New Government (e.g. 'Cuts', Teaching Excellence Framework)

There was a wide-ranging discussion on the relevant policies of the new Government, with the group expressing considerable concern about some aspects of the emerging policies towards HE, particularly the suggestion that there should be a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) tied to funding and somehow using the concept of added value which seems to be more appropriate to schools than to HEIs. It was agreed that BIS would be lobbied to ensure that learned societies are consulted about a TEF.

[Action: AD]

It was further agreed that other issues, such as the HEFCE consultation on QA, would be monitored and the group alerted when a response is required.

[Action: AD/RHS]

6. Subject Association Updates

The National Archives (TNA): Valerie Johnson reported that TNA had undergone restructuring and there is now a new Research and Collections Directorate. As part of the strategy development of this new directorate, scoping studies will be undertaken on Digital Research Challenges; and on Scoping the Research Landscape and Responding to the Changing Needs of the Academic and Research Sectors. Valerie asked if she could involve HSA members in consultation, particularly over the second study. She also asked if she could circulate the call for new TNA non-executive board members to the group. It was agreed that the group would circulate the details to their respective organisations in due course.

[Action: VJ/All]

Economic History Society (EHS): Peter Howlett reported that the EHS had launched a student ambassador scheme. Students are tasked with representing the EHS at their institution, and facilitating communication

between the Society and students with interests in economic and social history. The EHS hopes to establish a similar scheme for academics.

Rick Trainor reported that a plenary session on various approaches to economic and social history would be convened at the 2016 annual EHS conference which will take place at Robinson College, Cambridge. The conference will also celebrate the Society's 90th anniversary. He further reported that four EHS fellowships, administered by the IHR (where the fellowships are based), had been awarded following interview in June. Lawrence Goldman, as Director of the IHR, had chaired the interview panel.

Institute of Historical Research (IHR): Lawrence Goldman reported that the IHR had recently, for the first time in its history, undergone a review. The outcome had been positive.

Association of Business Historians (ABH): Lucy Newton reported that the ABH Annual conference had recently taken place in Exeter. There had been much discussion about business history concerning methods of encouraging the next generation through, for example, providing more grants and promoting employment opportunities. She also highlighted publication of the Association of Business Schools' publication 'Academic Journal Guide 2015' which assesses the quality of business and management publications worldwide, based on citation scores and the judgements of leading researchers.

British Agricultural History Society (BAHS): Mark Overton reported that the BAHS is flourishing and currently has a good stream of material for the journal. He highlighted that the BAHS differs from the other organisations present in the self-publication of their journal. It was noted, as for the other HSAs, that the Society's survival depends on a great deal of voluntary work from academics.

Social History Society (SHS): Karen Hunt reported that the SHS would be celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2016. The annual conference and their journal, *Cultural and Social History*, recently purchased by Taylor & Francis, will be used as vehicles to celebrate the anniversary. While this is a time of transition, the organisation is vibrant and strong.

Royal Historical Society (RHS): The RHS Council has been reviewing, during the last year, how their publication *Studies in History* is published.

The RHS website has been re-launched and offers a useful and exciting tool for sharing information – including material aimed at early career researchers – on issues such as gender equality and OA. Findings on work around the REF will be disseminated in this manner in due course.

Education: There will be an event at the end of the year at which the examination bodies will present their new syllabuses.

An issue for future consideration will be postgraduate teaching assistants.

History UK (HE) (HUK): Andrew Dilley reported that HUK represents about 80 History departments nationally. There have been several changes in personnel, including a new Co-convenor, Secretary and Treasurer. The group noted that Andrew would stand down in October 2015; a successor remains to be identified. A Twitter feed has been set up.

A conference, entitled 'Teaching History in Higher Education', co-sponsored by the RHS, the IHR, HUK and the HA, will take place 8-9 September 2015 at the IHR. The event will be mainly organised by Peter D'Sena, a member of the RHS Education Policy Committee and senior research fellow at the IHR, who in his former capacity as History Discipline Lead at the HEA was responsible for organising the conference in previous years.

The HUK plenary meeting will take place on 14 November 2015 on the topic of the REF; Professor Chris Wickham (chair of the sub-panel for History) has been invited.

7. ESRC

7.1 Research Grants: data (2009-14) and titles (2013/14)

The group noted the circulated data on research grant applications and awards and was disappointed to note that none of the 13 economic and social history applications, made in the period 2013/14, had been successful. The ESRC would be asked, in advance of the December 2015 meeting, to provide a list of research grants in economic and social history funded in previous years. **[Action: RHT/MG]**

7.2 Peer Review College: reasons for declining to review

The group noted the circulated paper, requested at the December 2014 meeting, detailing the reasons given by referees for declining to review an application. Concern was expressed at the number of referees who cited the reason 'Outside your expertise' and questioned whether applications were being directed to appropriate individuals. The issue would be discussed at the December 2015 meeting. **[Action: All]**

7.3 Studentships by discipline (2006-14)

The group was pleased to note from the circulated paper that studentship awards in economic and social history have been maintained at 3% of the total.

It was further noted that, due to cross council harmonisation of terms, centres whereby training is provided for students across a broad range of subjects will be known as Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) instead of Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs). The call for DTPs will be released in September 2015. Two Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) will be commissioned in September 2015: one in the area of Biosocial Research and the other in New Forms of Data.

The review of the DTC network had shown them to be operating well, though many institutions were not directly involved.

8. AHRC

Mary Vincent highlighted the considerable concern about the re-structuring of the Fellowships Scheme, which had been renamed the Leadership Fellows Scheme, and the impact of this re-structuring on the allocation of these grants.

The group noted that the outcome of the recent review of the research councils, conducted by Sir Paul Nurse, was awaited and that it is unclear whether their current structure will be preserved. It was agreed that the group's preference would be retention of the current model of having two bodies (AHRC and ESRC) to which historians could apply for grants etc.

9. Any other business

9.1 Catering costs

The group agreed the proposal by Rick Trainor that catering costs for the meeting should be divided equally among EHS, IHR and RHS. **[Action: MG]**

10. Date of next meeting

A meeting will be arranged, in December 2015, at the IHR. **[Action: MG]**