



MINUTES

of a meeting of the History UK Steering Committee, 11th May 2019 at 10.30 am at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, London.

Present: Charlotte Alston (Northumbria); Lucie Matthews-Jones (Liverpool John Moores); Jamie Wood (Lincoln); Richard Hawkins (Wolverhampton); Adrian Howkins (Bristol); Yolana Pringle (Roehampton); Stewart McCain (St Mary's); Hannah Burrows (Aberdeen); Daniel Grey (Plymouth); Bronach Kane (Cardiff); Karin Dannehl (Economic History Society representative); Sarah Barker (Leeds); Adam Morton (Newcastle); Euryrn Roberts (Bangor); David Stack (Reading); Nandini Chatterjee (Exeter); Peter D'Sena (Hertfordshire); Sarah Holland (Nottingham); Alex Titov (Queens University Belfast); Simon Peplow (ECR representative/Warwick).

1. Apologies for absence

Charlie Whitham (Edge Hill); Bill Aird (Edinburgh); Neil Fleming (Worcester); Sarah Bastow (Huddersfield).

2. Minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting

The Steering Committee approved the minutes of the last two meetings, which had been circulated in advance by email.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Co-Convenors' Report

4.i. Joint activities with TNA. Last year The National Archives published a report (in partnership with History UK) about collaboration between archives and the HE sector. As a follow up, we have jointly organised a series of regional workshops, to explore possible collaborations between the two sectors. These have gone well. 25-30 people attended the Bristol event. Other sessions had more patchy attendance, particularly the London-based workshop. There was a question about whether the large number of different workshops had affected the numbers participating.

In September, Lucie and Jamie will have a meeting with TNA for a debrief about the past year's work, and to discuss future plans. There are a number of advantages to working in partnership with TNA: they have an imperative to work through their regional hubs, and to show that they are working with a variety of audiences; they have a dedicated team focusing on collaboration with higher education.

TNA are the national archives of England, and Lucie and Jamie stressed that, as a four nations organisation, History UK would want to replicate this kind of event with the other national archives if possible.

♦ Lucie asked if anyone would be able to attend the **upcoming Birmingham workshop** on History UK's behalf. **Karin Dannehl** agreed to do so.

4.ii. Funding applications. In response to our call for applications for funding for events focusing on the promotion/development of our discipline, History UK had received two applications for funding:

- ♦ an application from BRANCH (British American Nineteenth Century Historians), to support waivers for day tickets for their conference, which would enable attendance by local school teachers.
- ♦ a proposition from the Social History Society and the Economic History Society, that History UK join them in contributing funds to a scheme that would fund applications for events either focusing on BAME history, or run by BAME historians in the UK.

The committee agreed that we should fund both these projects.

We discussed the question of deadlines; how many applications per year we could afford to fund; and therefore how many deadlines we ought to operate per year. We also discussed whether a sub-committee should deal with funding applications, or whether the SC should consider them all together. The committee agreed that we would advertise a deadline in advance of our May meeting, and consider applications together at the meeting. We would also note in the publicity material that, if funds were available and we were presented with further excellent projects, we might be able to consider applications on an ad hoc basis after that date.

4.iii. AGM/Plenary. This year's plenary event will focus on issues around mental health in academia. The plan is to consider issues that confront us at different stages of our career journey: the mental health of students; the mental health of postgraduate students and early career researchers; and the mental health of established academics. This event will take place on 19th October 2019, at the IHR. Lucie was considering a range of different speakers: someone from Student Minds; a historian who might talk about perspectives on mental health (possibly Sarah Crook, or Ian Miller). Committee members made a number of additional suggestions: asking someone from Advance HE; UCU; and/or the NUS; focusing on the role of social media in mental health, and whether it amplifies difficulties or provides support; addressing mental health and intersectionality. In response to Lucie's query about good practice at individual institutions, Adam Morton mentioned the mental health hub at Newcastle University, which addresses staff mental health as well as that of students.

Nandini Chatterjee mentioned the possibility of History UK producing a 'state of the field' report on these issues, either before or as a result of this event. It would be important to identify the key issues across the sector, as well as focusing on good practice. The convenors very much welcomed this idea, if Steering Committee members are interested in taking this on.

4.iv. History UK focus in the next year. Lucie opened a discussion of the kinds of things members thought we should be focusing on, as an organisation, in the year ahead. Committee members mentioned the following:

- ♦ open access publishing (possibly as a topic for an event to accompany the January meeting);
- ♦ continuing to engage with the conversations around diversity and inclusion that were raised at last autumn's plenary;
- ♦ the consequences of the Augur report and the implications for the future of humanities to any change to the tuition fee model;
- ♦ TEF and its implications for teaching.

4.v. Research/Impact event. Neil Fleming (History UK's research officer) is leading on putting together an event focusing on research impact. This will take place on 4th September 2019. In the morning participants will hear from speakers who are involved in assessing impact for REF, including Dinah Birch, the chair of REF panel D; JD Hill who is an archaeologist and research manager of the British Museum; and Anne Curry who is both involved in the REF panel and authoring a case study. In the afternoon, colleagues who have or are currently writing impact case studies will offer their perspectives. The workshop will have a practical focus. The programme should be available and online in the next week.

5. Treasurer's Report

Richard reported that Sue Davison is currently sending round reminders to departments who haven't currently paid this year's subscription, and we hope that will boost the number of subscribing departments this year. We normally reach about 70 subscriptions, and we are currently at 45.

We have a healthy surplus at the mid-point of the year. We have previously taken the decision to always keep a year's worth of money (£8000-£10000) in the bank in case of difficulties with subscriptions.

6. Secretary's Report

Following Jamie's message to Heads of Department, with a re-drafted statement about History UK's role and aims, we have nine new nominations for Steering Committee membership. These new SC members will be confirmed at the AGM in October. We were lucky to have three of them (Yolana Pringle from Roehampton, Bronach Kane from Cardiff, and Sara Barker from Leeds) join us at this meeting.

Charlotte raised two issues that the Convenors and Secretary had discussed earlier in the week:

- ◆ should we be able to confirm nominees at meetings other than the AGM? Constitutionally we have always elected new members at the AGM (as the only meeting at which *all* member departments can be represented). But doing so means that we often elect a large number of colleagues in the autumn, and as a result lose a great deal of expertise and stability when they subsequently leave all at the same time.
- ◆ there are currently no set terms of office for members of the executive.

It was agreed that the Convenors and Secretary would bring proposals on these two issues to the AGM in October.

7. Education Officer's Report

7.i. New to Teaching event: Peter reported that the provisional programme for this event was already organised. The RHS are covering the cost of rooms for the event. The committee agreed that History UK would meet the costs of bursaries for participants who are travelling more than 100 miles by train.

- ◆ **Peter is looking for volunteers to lead a session on teaching using social media** – if any SC member would like to do this, or has a colleague who would be well equipped to do it, could they let him know?

7.ii. Engagement for All event. Lucie and Peter have put together an 'Engagement for All' event that will take place at Liverpool John Moores, in July. This will follow the 'theory into practice' model, featuring theory and information in the morning, and then workshops and practical case studies in the afternoon. There will be bursaries to support attendance by SC members; these will be opened up more widely if funds are

sufficient. This event has been funded by a teaching award that Lucie Matthews-Jones received from LJM.

7.iii. Teaching History in HE. The RHS will support a Teaching History in HE conference, to be held next March. This has been mooted for a couple of years. Peter is keen for HUK to be very much involved in the organisation and in presentations at the event. He will know more about the exact date and venue next week.

7.iv. RHS TEF report. The RHS have published a response to TEF on their website – Peter encouraged SC members to take a look at it. There are a couple of specific disciplinary concerns. One is that History is still attached to Archaeology in TEF terms – should we push to be decoupled? There will be a subject report coming out in June or July from TEF – Peter encouraged SC members to look out for that also.

7.v. RHS pedagogy portal. The soft launch of the RHS pedagogy portal will be in March 2020, at the same time as the Teaching History conference. Peter will be soliciting blog material, and is very keen to have contributions from HUK members. The portal will be international in terms of reach.

7.vi. De-colonising the curriculum. Peter is involved in a project on decolonising the curriculum, with the AHRC. There will be a series of events in each of the four nations, and then a culminating event at the end. These are intended to facilitate conversations between HE and schools. Peter will circulate more details. They will be starting in Sept/Oct and will run through next academic year. The aim would also be to have community involvement.

7.vii. Education Officer role. Peter will have completed two terms of three years at the end of 2020, and will stand down as education officer. He would like someone to work with him over the next year, in preparation for taking over the role.

♦ **Could anyone interested in this role get in touch with Peter and the co-convenors either formally or informally.**

8. Media Officers Report

The position of Media Officer is currently vacant.

9. Reports from

9.i. Northern Irish, Scottish, and Welsh representatives

The Committee discussed the differing positions in terms of fee structure at HE institutions in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. Hannah Burrows commented that while the fee level is a lot lower in Scotland, there is as yet no differentiation between STEM subjects and humanities.

Alex noted that the model was different again in NI, where the fees were capped per student. Euryyn Roberts noted that the Welsh model was the most disadvantageous of all for universities, although for students it is generous.

Bronach Kane spoke about the pressure on History at Cardiff to take up the shortfall for numbers in other areas in Wales – drops in tariffs, talks about redundancies in other subjects. Euryyn noted a similar situation at Bangor, where the decline in admissions is also a concern. He also mentioned the ongoing discussions in the Welsh government about role of Welsh history in the curriculum. For the first time since devolution what young people learn in schools will be markedly different to what is

taught in England; there will also be new qualifications. Lots of attention is being paid in this discussion as to how Welsh histories are taught.

A possible event to be organised at Bangor will focus at least in part on these issues. It would be good to have some wider perspectives on national histories, from beyond Wales. What do we mean by Welsh history?

9.ii. The Historical Association; the Royal Historical Society; the Institute of Historical Research; History Lab/History Lab Plus

History Lab Plus report: Sarah Holland reported that History Lab Plus have issued a survey asking people what they want from the organisation; they are also looking for new committee members. There will be a re-launch with the new committee, and they will be exploring new ideas for ways they can work with History UK.

9.iii. Postgraduate and ECR representatives

Simon Peplow mentioned a range of workshops and events that he has in mind for future initiatives. These might include something on Life after the PhD, hosted at Warwick (History Lab Plus has done something on these lines before); also possible something on the lines of the Meet the Funders workshop, but with more of a workshop element so that participants could share and work on their own applications. Simon has initiated conversations with ECRs and PhD students about what would be most useful.

10. Any other business

Peter D'Sena raised the possibility of inviting the Minister for Higher Education to the October plenary event, given that he is a historian (and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society).

11. Dates of future meetings

The AGM/Plenary event will be held at the IHR on **October 19th 2019**.

We will aim to hold the following Steering Committee meeting in **January 2020**: we will ask about 25th January. The date will be confirmed in due course.