

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting August, RGS/IBG Annual Conference, Friday 29th August London 2008, 13:20 – 14:20, Sunley Room

1. Apologies for absence

David Lambert, Peter Merriman, Jude Hill, David Nally, Merle Patchett, Jon Stobart, Catherine Brace

2. Minutes of last meeting

These were accepted.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

Initial notice of an RGS-IBG Introduction to the Archives workshop, 5th December 2008 was given. This day long workshop will introduce the archival holdings of the RGS-IBG to HGRG and HPGRG members with a view to developing research collaborations to increase usage of the archives. There are likely to be 25 – 30 places which will ideally be allocated to ensure representation from departments across the UK. Further details will be circulated as they come available.

4. Chair's Business:

Report on activities (September 2007 – August 2008)

Practising Historical Geography Conference

The 2007 Practising Historical Geography Conference was held at the University of Exeter in November and attracted 56 participants. This was a very successful day with funding (£400) received from the RGS-IBG RHED to help support the event. Thanks were expressed to the Historical and Cultural Research Group, Department of Geography, University of Exeter who undertook much of the practical organisation for the day, and to the speakers and workshop organisers: Prof Charles Watkins, Dr James Ryan, Dr Hayden Lorimer and Prof Catherine Brace.

The 2008 Practising Historical Geography Conference will be held on Wednesday 5th November at the Institute of Geography, University of Edinburgh (co-organised with Department of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow). Following discussion at last year's AGM an £8 fee will be charged for attending the conference to cover refreshments. This change in policy has emerged owing to the rising costs of the conference following the introduction of full economic costing in UK Universities. The conference will be extended to include a second day titled 'Spaces of and for Historical Geography' on Thursday 6th November. £8 fee to cover refreshments

RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2008

HGRG continues to maintain a strong presence at the RGS-IBG annual conference supporting nine different sessions:

- **Using Histories Politically** Richard Phillips (University of Liverpool) & David Featherstone (University of Liverpool)
- **Uncertainty and Inference in Historical GIS** Richard Healey & Humphrey Southall (University of Portsmouth)

- **Matters of Interdisciplinarity: Archaeology meets Geography** Divya P. Tolia-Kelly & Richard Hingley (Durham University)
- **'New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography'** Merle Patchett (University of Glasgow)
- **Locating Knowledge: Alternative Spaces, Networks and Histories** Ruth Craggs & Hannah Neate (University of Nottingham)
- **'Indigenous' knowledge, resistance and agency: telling the hidden histories of geographical field science and exploration** Jude Hill (University of Exeter), Lowri Jones (Royal Holloway, University of London) & Nicola Thomas (University of Exeter)
- **Historical Geographies of the Subterranean** Sarah Cant (University of Plymouth) & Heidi Scott (University of Aberystwyth)
- **Elemental matter: gardens and the geographies of horticulture** Amanda Claremont & Andrew Church (University of Brighton)
- **Imperial Geographies** (Roza el-Eini)

HGRG were pleased to welcome the following group guests to the conference:

- **Prof. A.J. Christopher**, Department of Geosciences, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
- **Dr Bill Schwarz**, Department of English, Queen Mary, University of London
- **Dr Daniel Rycroft**, School of World Art Studies and Museology, University of East Anglia
- **Dr Adam Wainwright**, Department of Archaeology, University of Exeter
- **Dr Claire Nesbitt**, Department of Archaeology, Durham University
- **Kirsten Greer**, Department of Geography, Queen's University, Ontario, Canada

Small Conference Grants Scheme

The HGRG Committee had awarded two Small Conference Grants of £250 in 2007-2008 supporting the **London Group of Historical Geographers Seminar Series** and for the provision of postgraduate bursaries at **'Mapping medieval geographies: cartography and geographical thought in the Latin west and beyond, 300-1600'**, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA, USA, May 7 – 9, 2009.

Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

Four entries have been received for this year's prize which is supported by Cambridge University Press. The judges of this year's competition were thanked: Richard Dennis, Jon Stobart and **Diarmid Finnegan**.

Research Monograph Series

During 2007 members received the edition titled 'Practising the Archives' and the title for 2008 is in press with further contributions under consideration.

Website

Hayden Lorimer expressed his thanks to Catherine Brace for re-launching the website for the research group. It was flagged for its value to members as a poster board, for circulation of details for PhD abstracts, conference reports, notices and events.

Email- distribution list

Hayden Lorimer reminded members that up to date information is frequently circulated on the email distribution list and he encouraged members to sign up.

Committee positions

Merle Patchett, Peter Merriman, Diarmid Finnegan and Jude Hill were thanks for their contribution to the HGRG committee in preceding years.

The AGM were pleased to vote in the following members to the committee:

Postgraduate Members (with responsibility for PG conference activity)

Isla Forsyth (Glasgow) Nominated by Merle Patchett and Seconded by David Nally

Lois Jones (St Andrews) Nominated by Jude Hill and Seconded by Nicola Thomas

Postgraduate Member (Deputy Editor of Research Series)

Franklin Ginn (KCL) Nominated by David Demeritt and Seconded by David Lambert

E-circulation officer

Merle Patchett, nominated by Nicola Thomas and Seconded by Hayden Lorimer

Ordinary Member with responsibility for Dissertation Prize

Diarmid Finnegan, nominated by Jon Stobart and Seconded by Catherine Brace

Newsletter editor

Harriet Hawkins, nominated by Nicola Thomas and Seconded by Hayden Lorimer

HGRG Research Series

Although the research monograph series has enjoyed steady output in recent years, it is increasingly difficult to secure owing to changes in the Higher Education publishing environment. HGRG continue to believe the Research Monograph Series is worthy of support and it is proposed that efforts are made to revive a greater level of interest in the research series. The following items were discussed:

- The Committee suggestion of establish an editorial board for the series to offer intellectual guidance and prestige to the series was approved.
- The Committee suggestion of reviewing marketing for the series was approved.
- Discussion circulated around the necessity of using the series to offer a varied avenue for publication, enabling the series to be used for a different type of academic publication that wouldn't otherwise have an outlet. This idea was supported.
- It was noted that a research monograph publication could be costed into a grant as a publication output
- The valuable use of the research monograph for promoting themed issues was noted.
- It was noted that the circulation of c.400 copies to HGRG members offered a significant audience in addition to continuing sales.

HGRG Newsletter

Following discussion at the AGM 2007 concerning the financial viability of the HGRG newsletter in relation to other HGRG activities, Hayden Lorimer canvassed member's opinions on the future of the newsletter. Attention was drawn to the rising costs of the hard copy newsletter owing to changes in the postal charges, photocopying and general production cost; alongside the steady reduction of HGRG reserves (see Treasurer's report). To ensure the long term viability of the research group and to maintain the current level of activities in support of Historical Geography, it was proposed to cease publication of a hardcopy newsletter following the Autumn 2008 edition, and launch an electronic version for circulation in January 2008.

Although it was noted at moving to an electronic newsletter would release money to enable the continued support of HGRG activities, concerns were raised by members. It was noted that not all members are professional academics or postgraduates with easy access to internet serviced and that independent and non-academic members would lose out. Hayden noted that this had been one of the primary reasons for maintaining the hardcopy newsletter in the past, and if members wished to continue to receive a hard copy they would be able to request this in a mailing attached to the October 2008 newsletter.

David Lambert raised concerns about the value that members got for their annual subscription (£8 for category A members) if they did not receive the hardcopy newsletter. It was noted that this subscription was critical for the continued support of the monograph series which all category A

members received; to fund the competitions the research group runs, and support the working of the committee to enable conference such as the Practising Historical Geography to be run. It was noted that Committee spending had been reduced to zero in recent years by holding electronic meetings and combining committee meetings with the RGS-IBG annual conference. Simon Naylor noted that the production of an e-newsletter was also not 'free', noting the uncounted contribution that would be made to the Research group with use of personal computers, software and labour.

After discussion the AGM accepted the proposal to move to an electronic newsletter and the following mechanism was proposed for the transfer to this new form of circulation: the October 2008 newsletter would be the last hard copy and would contain a mailing for members to return to update their contact details (including an email address) for inclusion on the e-circulation list. Members who wished to maintain a hard copy of the newsletter would be able to opt-out of the e-newsletter and continue to receive hardcopy. The launch of the e-newsletter would take place in January 2008 and Harriet Hawkins was tasked to re-design the newsletter in electronic format.

5. Forthcoming meetings

The following forthcoming meetings were announced:

- a. 14th HGRG Practising Historical Geography Conference, 5th November 2008
- b. RGS-IBG Annual Conference Manchester, 26-28 August 2009
- c. ICHG Kyoto, Japan 23 – 27th August 2009

It was noted that the HGRG committee had allocated funds to support postgraduate bursaries for attendance at the ICHG and the funding scheme would be advertised in the Autumn. It was further noted that the timing of the ICHG clashed with the RGS-IBG Annual Conference which might reduce HGRG activity at the Annual Conference in 2009.

6. Reports from Committee Members

Hon. Secretary

The Hon Secretary indicated that she would pass on HGRG concerns linked to the organisation of the RGS-IBG annual conference at the ne committee meeting of the RGS-IBG research groups, and issues to be put forward concerned the mistake in the conference handbook regarding the advertising of the 'New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography' sessions'.

The Secretary announced that past copies of HGRG newsletters were going to be electronically archived on the HGRG web page and that these would be collected and made into PDF's during Autumn 2008.

Hon. Treasurer

This year's accounts need to be prefaced with the note that many costs incurred in 2007 will only appear in the accounts for 2008. This is because many cheques took a long time to issue and clear. I have therefore presented the 'real' situation for the end of 2007 as well as the one officially reported to the RGS-IBG. I have also included in parentheses expenditure which has been incurred, but which does not appear as part of the 2007 accounts.

1) Balance:

<i>Account</i>	<i>Balance Dec 2006</i>	<i>Balance Dec 2007</i> <i>2007)</i>	<i>('Real' Balance Dec</i>
Treasurer	£1297.74	£4046.39	(£1073.83)
Deposit	£4347.37	£4480.30	(£4480.30)
Total	£5,645.11	£8526.69	(£5554.13)

2) Major income:

RGS grant £450
RGS subvention £800 (includes payment for 2006)
Publications £44
Subscriptions £1667

3) Major expenditure:

Newsletters (£1233)
Committee expenses £0 (meetings held via email)
HGRG Postgraduate Conference expenses (£1240)
Post-graduate and conference support £200 (+ £500)

4) Key points

As last year, HGRG funds continue to be healthy, though reserves continue to gradually diminish – certainly when we take the 'real' balance. Indeed, the production costs of a new volume in our Research Series will place further strain on our resources. I therefore reiterate the point that we need to address this situation, re-examining all of our major areas of expenditure, as below.

1. We confirmed last year our commitment to making significant contributions towards the costs of post-graduate students attending conferences and offering financial support to those organising conferences.
2. Attempts to reduce the cost of the Postgraduate conference have previously met with limited success. Introducing some charge – perhaps to cover the cost of lunch – would help us defray some of the costs without detracting from the success of this event.
3. Committee expenses have been reduced to zero!
4. Newsletter costs continue to escalate. This is the principal means through which we communicate with our members, but I strongly argue that we should shift to a purely electronic newsletter. What we should be providing is news and information. This can be readily done via email attachments and updates of our website. The c.£1200 saved would allow us to maintain our financial stability and help to promote the work of historical geographers via contributions to conferences and publications.

Jon Stobart was thanks for his continued dedication to HGRG finances.

Hon. Editor

No report was tabled.

Hon. Publicity Secretary

No report was tabled.

Hon. Conference Secretary

Heidi Scott reported that the preliminary organisation for the 2008 Practising Historical Geography Conference was complete and the programme had been circulated.

Postgraduate Committee Member

Merle was thanked for efficiently organising two very successful sessions sponsored by HGRG titled 'New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography'.

Membership Secretary

David Lambert reported that the current membership stands at 410:

Ordinary A – 219 members; Postgraduate A – 57 members; Ordinary B – 30 members; Postgraduate B – 56 members and Overseas/Honorary (B) – 48 members.

Ordinary Member (newsletter)

No report was tabled

Ordinary Member (web)

Catherine Braced asked members to send her material for the web.

Ordinary Member (Dissertation Prize)

Diarmid noted that the four dissertation entries were awaiting final adjudication and the winner would be announced at the 2008 Practising Historical Geography Conference.

7. Any other business

Hayden Lorimer announced that HGRG had been approached by Liz Baigent and Robert Mayhew for the groups financial support in the publication of a Festschrift to mark the retirement of Dr Jack Langton. This publication would not be part of the research series but a separate press. Concerns were raised by members that this might set an unfortunate precedent given the dwindling nature of HGRG reserves, however Hayden noted that this was an exceptional request and it was noted that HGRG had received exceptional support from Jack over the years including the generous donation of royalties from his 'Atlas of Industrialising Britain'. It was for this reason that the Committee felt able to ask the AGM to approve a £500 grant towards the cost of this publication. This was approved.

8. Date of next AGM

Some time during the RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2009