

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, RGS/IBG Annual Conference Wednesday 31st August, 6.45pm Lowther Room

1. Apologies for absence

Keith Lilley, David Harvey, Alan Baker, Robin Butlin, Lowri Jones, Heidi Scott, Edwin Aikin, Alastair Owens, Oliver Dunnett, David Nally, Miles Ogborn.

2. Minutes of last meeting

These were approved.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

Item 5: HGRG Postgraduate Session on publishing: This has not gone ahead and perhaps superseded by the Postgraduate Forum Annual Conference Training Symposium. NT asked if there was appetite for this sort of activity. It was suggested from the floor that opinion should be canvassed from postgraduates at the Practising Historical Geography event in November.

ACTION: NT to arrange to canvass the opinion of postgrads at the Practising Historical Geography event.

4. Reports from committee members

a. Chair – Nicola Thomas

It has been a very busy and successful year for HGRG!

Very successful 16th Practising Historical Geography conference in Nottingham and thanks to Briony for this. We have got our funding streams for this more organised now with an RHED grant secured for 2010 and 2011 funding, and we will continue to apply for 2012 funding this autumn. Participants costs at £10 per head don't appear to have impacted attendance. Indeed it was greater than ever this year at 55.

The newsletter has gone from strength to strength under Harriet's guidance and we receive many responses from members indicating how pleased they are to receive it. We had some hiccups sending out the hard copy editions this year, and the last general hard copy edition was sent in August. This will save the group considerable money as time goes on.

Nine different theme sessions sponsored by HGRG through the conference and this represents great vitality but also a problem for those faced with irritating clashes, which are unavoidable. We were joined at the conference by a number of group guests: Su Guoji, Chelsea Avirett, Lyrica Taylor, James Cronin, Nick Edwards and Nicolas Martlandv

We had a very successful two day workshop on Teaching Historical Geographies, fully funded with a grant from GEES. I have subsequently reported about the workshop at the Annual GEES conference and am in the process of writing a further grant application to enable all the great ideas for developing teaching resources to be taken forward. Reorted in more detail report on this in more detail later in the meeting.

James Wallis was awarded £100 as part of the post-graduate support scheme. He will be presenting a paper at 'The Great War: From Memory to History' at the Interdisciplinary Conference, University of Western Ontario, 10-12 November 2011. We would encourage postgrads to apply for funding to this scheme.

This year saw the publication of a very successful monograph in commemoration of Denis Cosgrove. My thanks to the editor Veronica Della Dora, the participants, and to David Nally and Charlotte Jones for their editorial support.

HGRG has responded to various HE consultations through the year and has attempted to ensure that the needs of the sub-discipline are represented appropriately.

Finally, Innes and I spent a day undertaking stage one of a rough catalogue of the HGRG archives. It is good to report that progress is being made with this long term project to make the HGRG archives more accessible and useful to researchers.

b. Secretary – Heidi Scott

Thanks to Heidi for her efforts in the role of secretary. No further report was received.

c. Treasurer - Carl Griffin

1) Balance:

Account	Balance Dec 2009	Balance Dec 2010
Treasurer	£3099.79	£3174.45
Deposit	£2792.37	£2794.33
Total	£5892.16	£5968.78

2) Major income:

RGS subvention	£400
Publications	£249.35
Subscriptions	£1559.50

3) Major expenditure:

Newsletters	£926.23	
Committee expenses	£0	(meetings held via email)
HGRG Postgraduate Conference expenses	£397.40	
Postgraduate and conference support	£800	
Publication costs	£0	
Other costs	£10.56	(domain registration)

4) Key points

HGRG funds have shown a slight improvement, the net surplus of £76.62 reversing a £600 deficit in 2009. However, 2010 was an exceptional year: there were no publication costs and yet past publications continued to sell well. Costs for 2011 will show a marked increase due to the publication of *Visual Geographies*. Costs notwithstanding, sales of this latest volume are healthy (for which thanks to David and Charlotte).

Income from subscriptions remains stable which given increased costs is a potential problem for the future. Indeed, that subscription rates have not altered in decade is reason, I would suggest, to consider some small increase.

An area of concern is the cost of producing and posting the newsletter (rising from £443 in 2010). Hopefully the renewed effort to shift all members to the digital newsletter will substantially reduce associated costs in future years.

Our other major areas of expenditure in 2010 were the HGRG Postgraduate Conference – though this is on a stable financial footing – and support for post-graduate students attending conferences. These activities are at the heart of the HGRG and given our sound financial position, should, I feel, remain as priority areas of expenditure.

In short, HGRG funds remain sound – though future costs may undermine this position.

Dr. Carl J. Griffin, HGRG Hon. Treasurer
17 August 2011

Thanks were expressed to Carl for his careful management of the finances.

d. Research Series Editor – David Nally

David Nally is stepping down in his role as editor. The committee are very grateful to him for his excellent efforts in sustaining the research series. David reports that the new volume is published and selling well alongside *Practicing the Archives*, which makes him think that exciting edited collections are the way to go. Unfortunately we are still not in the position of turning away proposals and the new editor will need to address this, perhaps through *Crit Geog*, and other listservs, in a bid to drum up interest in the series.

In terms of current stock there are about 14 boxes containing printed volumes which need to be re-housed with the new editor. Alternatively, following up a conversation with RHED that was started a few years ago, there is a possibility of RGS posting them for us, in which case the stock would go to them.

ACTION: NT to pursue.

David points out that we need to start charging customers for posting, or incorporating the postage into the price of the edition. At present *ad hoc* orders are posted through departmental mailing systems.

It was AGREED after a majority vote in favour to charge postage to those who order back issues of the monograph series but there was a strong feeling that it should be at cost.

e. Newsletter Secretary – Harriet Hawkins

This is the last year that the newsletter will be sent out in hard copy unless this is specifically requested. The section for current research is proving very popular.

f. Conference Secretary – Briony McDonagh

The 2010 Practicing Historical Geography conference was held at the University of Nottingham last November. Speakers included Dave Matless, Susanne Seymour, Caroline Bressey, George Revill and Lucy Veale. The day attracted 50 delegates and seems to have been a great success. We ran on a relatively modest budget and, having been lucky enough to get the rooms for free, the £10 per person charge covered most of our costs. We also received a grant from the RGS, which was put towards speakers' expenses.

Planning for the 2011 annual Practicing Historical Geography postgraduate conference is in hand. It will be held at St John's College, Oxford on Wednesday 2nd November, where the venue was kindly organised for us by Richard Powell. Keynote speakers for the day are Alan Lester (Sussex) and Georgina Endfield (Nottingham). There will also be two workshops and we are also hoping to have an extended postgraduate voices panel session made up of three postgraduates at different stages of their doctoral career. The planned charge for the day is £10, which should cover food and refreshments and perhaps yield something towards speakers' costs. The £300 charge for the venue is being paid from HGRG funds (St John's will invoice HGRG after the event).

g. Postgraduate Committee Member – Isla Forsyth and Charlotte Jones

Both stepping down this year and they were thanked for their help. IF thanked the committee on behalf of herself and CJ for the opportunity to work on the committee.

h. Membership Secretary – Lloyd Jenkins

Lloyd Jones is stepping down this year. Thanked for help with maintaining the membership lists.

Nicola Thomas reported: This year, with thanks to RHED and Stephanie Wyse we have had an overhaul of the membership lists. This revealed we had:

A number larger membership than we realised – with around 650 members. Only about 1/3 of members are paying correct subs, with the remainder on old rates, having missed payment for many years, or on incorrect rates. We also have a list of out of date addresses, which is a problem in terms of the mailing of the monograph series.

When a new membership secretary is in place we need to review this situation and get all members paying appropriate dues and getting up to date information. Getting full payment of subscriptions will enable us to support more activity such as the Large Conference Grant, which is currently in mothballs.

i. Dissertation Prize Coordinator – Innes Keighren

14 dissertations received. A winner will be announced shortly. Ashgate has replaced CUP as the sponsor of this prize which is now valued at £200.

j. E-circulation officer – Lowri Jones

This Autumn Lowri will be sending out all correspondence, including the newsletter. Lowri raises an important point about the consistent management of the membership lists and she will work with Ruth to overcome problems. One thing we have thought about for some time is moving to a JISC mailing system. This maybe something that HGRG should review once the membership lists are sorted out.

ACTION: NT to review.

k. Web Officer – Catherine Leyshon

The website is up to date. There is a new URL – HGRG.org.uk – and a new section of archive material relating to the group has been started.

5. Election of new committee members

a. Secretary

Harriet Hawkins (Aberystwyth). Proposed Heidi Scott; seconded Catherine Leyshon.

AGREED

b. Research Series Editor

Alastair Owens (QMUL). Proposed Miles Ogborn; seconded David Nally.

AGREED

c. Newsletter Secretary

Oliver Dunnett (Nottingham). Proposed Nicola Thomas; seconded Harriet Hawkins.

AGREED

d. Membership Secretary

Ruth Craggs (St Mary's). Proposed Lloyd Jenkins; seconded Carl Griffin.

AGREED

e. Postgraduate Committee Members

Kim Ross (Glasgow). Proposed Isla Forsyth; seconded Chris Philo/Will Hasty.
Jake Hodder (Nottingham). Proposed Briony McDonagh; seconded Lowri Jones.

AGREED

f. Ordinary Member (with responsibility of Teaching and Learning)

Edwin Aiken (Bristol). Proposed Carl Griffin; seconded Innes Keighren.

AGREED

6. Items for discussion

a. Review membership subscription levels

A review of subscription levels has not been undertaken for several years. The current subscription levels are:

Ordinary Members The two categories of membership are:

Category A membership: £8.00 p.a. You will receive the HGRG Research Series (one or two issues a. year, worth #7.95 each) and the HGRG Newsletter, you will be eligible to apply for various grants, and you will get reduced rate on back issues of the HGRG Research Series.

Category B membership: £2.00 p.a. You will receive the HGRG Newsletter, you will be eligible to apply for various grants, and you will get reduced rate on back issues of HGRG Research Series. Most of our members are category A members.

Postgraduate Members Postgraduate membership subscriptions are as follows:-

Category A membership: £6.00 p.a. You will receive the HGRG Research Series (one or two issues a. year, worth #7.95 each) and the HGRG Newsletter, you will be eligible to apply for various grants, and you will get reduced rate on back issues of the HGRG Research Series.

Category B membership: FREE You will receive the HGRG Newsletter, you will be eligible to apply for various grants, and you will get reduced rate on back issues of HGRG Research Series.

It was felt in discussion that the costs of the research series had risen and the membership rates had not taken account of this. In recent years although many savings had been made, for example through electronic committee meetings and the e-newsletter essential HGRG activities had had to be reduced. The funding of the small conference grant was indicative of this. There was a positive feeling in the meeting of the need to had a raised cost of membership that would cover costs of the monograph series and provide much needed financial support of HGRG funding streams. It was noted that as external funding came under pressure that the pockets of funding provided by HGRG were increasingly important. In discussion it was noted that there may be some bureaucratic issues around changing people's standing orders. It was suggested that, since the change is quite involved, it would be better to put the price up to £12 a year.

It was AGREED that the cost of subscription should rise to £12 a year for full members and £6 a year for postgrads.

b. ICHG 2015 (see attached briefing paper)

Felix Driver reported that he had been in discussion about hosting the ICHG 2015 in the UK as there seems to be real appetite for this from the RGS and from geographers in academic departments. We could make a bid for the conference to be held at the RGS in July 2015. What is being sought is feedback on these proposals, with permission to prepare a bid to be discussed at the meeting in Prague 2012. The approval of HGRG is sought. This was given.

It was AGREED that HGRG would support Felix Driver in preparing a bid to host ICHG in the UK in 2015.

c. Maintaining HGRG archives and deposit of research series

We have started a rough cataloguing process of HGRG papers. This is a fascinating archive and although HGRG has not had a formal archivist, the records are complete, until the 2000 and the digital age. It is noticeable that we need to print and collate records from the last decade in order to maintain the archives integrity.

Issues:

Where shall we keep the research group's archive?

Do we need a research group archivist?

What does members wish to see them used for?

Pete Merriman has asked a question in relation to the placement of the monograph in **legal deposit libraries**. Although we now have a full run in the RGS-IBG library, however we do not have a run in any of the UK's legal deposit libraries. Is this something that we should rectify? As the Research Series volumes have ISBNs, it should be possible to place the volumes in a legal deposit library.

d. 40th Anniversary of HGRG – 2013

In looking at the archives we realised that the HGRG 40th anniversary is fast approaching and it is time to start considering the best way of marking this occasion. Although the discussion and agreement to form HGRG out of the Agrarian Landscape Research Group took place in 1972, the final formal approval of HGRG took place in 1973 and Robin Butlin suggests this would be an appropriate year to celebrate.

Ideas currently in circulation for this:

A 40th anniversary edition of the research series containing histories of the group, memoirs, relevant archival materials

A party to be held at the Society

A celebratory mug

An oral history project

Ideas and thoughts?

A session on the history of HGRG at the 2013 RGS/IBG.

A JHG plenary session at 2013 RGS/IBG.

Need for a committee member to take responsibility for this?

e. Teaching Historical Geographies – next steps

We need to continue to work in close association with RHED to achieve our aims of a sustainable and long lasting open access resource for those teaching historical geography and for resources for students.

NJ is putting an application to GEES for funding to pay for a research assistant to gather:

- Teaching materials
- Pod casts of HGRG members doing student facing discussions of using materials in research
- Lists of useful websites and archives

6. Forthcoming meetings

a. HGRG Practising Historical Geography Conference, November 2nd 2011

b. RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2012 – call for sessions

No proposals came from the floor, but calls for sessions will occur earlier this year in anticipation of the July 2012 conference.

Felix Driver requested that we limit the number of sessions to ensure that there are fewer clashes.

c. ICHG 2012

HGRG will be opening up the conference fund and will apply to RHED for additional resource to support postgrad attendance at the conference.

HGRG members are encouraged to place calls for panel sessions on the HGRG e-circulation list.

7. Any other business?

There was none.

8. Date of next AGM

Annual Conference July 2012

Nicola Thomas
August 2011