

**Historical Geography Research Group
Annual General Meeting
1 September 2016**

MINUTES

In attendance: Daniel Allen, Caroline Bressey, Thomas S. Carhart, Bronia Chichlowska, Alicia Colson, Natalie Cox, Felix Driver, Oliver Dunnett, Jan Faull, Rebecca Ford, Ryan Foster, Carl Griffin, Mike Heffernan, Jake Hodder, Innes M. Keighren, Mark Lambert, Mike Langthorne, Peter Martin, Briony McDonagh, Cheryl McGeachan, Hannah Neate, Benjamin Newman, John Schembri, Ruth Slatter, Nicola Thomas, Carry van Lieshout, Lucy Veale, and Jane Wess.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Julian Baker, Alice Insley, James Kneale, Keith Lilley, Alastair Owens, Iain Robertson, and James Robinson.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved without correction.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

3.a. Chair noted that the HGRG archive is in the process of being reassembled (and added to) in advance of renewed efforts at producing a preliminary catalogue prior to official, long-term deposit at the RGS-IBG.

4. Reports from committee members

4.a. Chair's Report (Carl Griffin)

Chair reported on another busy and exciting year of HGRG business, to be reported on by the Committee, and offered thanks to the Committee and to the Group for their efforts.

4.b. Secretary's Report (Innes Keighren)

Secretary noted that following the last AGM, the collection of HGRG archival materials has been expanded. A very welcome donation from Richard Dennis of items accumulated by him (and, earlier, by Hugh Prince) has enriched the Group's collection and filled in some important gaps in coverage. The material will be subject to initial cataloguing before being accessioned by the RGS-IBG in due course.

Secretary reported healthy sales of HGRG-branded mugs at the 2015 International Conference of Historical Geographers and that surplus mugs are currently being stored by RHED at the RGS-IBG.

Secretary noted that several enquiries and applications were received in relation to the Group's Small Conference and Seminar Funding scheme and that, ultimately, one conference was supported (with £300): "Conceptualising Island History: A Postgraduate and Early

Career Researcher Workshop”, organised by Katy Roscoe (School of History, University of Leicester) and Reshaad Durgahee (School of Geography, University of Nottingham).

Secretary reported on the diverse and interesting mix of HGRG-sponsored sessions (totalling thirteen) at the 2016 RGS-IBG Annual International Conference. The HGRG was noted, also, to have sponsored a number of guest passes.

In closing, Secretary advertised the inaugural HGRG speed mentoring event, to be held in the evening of 1 September 2016.

4.c. Treasurer’s Report (Briony McDonagh)

Treasurer presented interim accounts (final accounts go forward to the RGS-IBG at the end of the year) and noted that Group finances remain in robust health.

Treasurer reported on continuing efforts to ensure all members are paying the correct dues and requested that everyone double check to make sure they are on the correct rate (£12 for full members; £6 for postgraduate members).

4.d. Membership Secretary’s Report (Iain Robertson, *in absentia*)

Membership Secretary noted the steady growth in Group membership, now standing at *c.* 870, making HGRG probably the largest RGS-IBG research group.

Membership Secretary, echoing the Treasurer, invited all members to check their current subscription rate and to get in touch if they notice a discrepancy with published rates.

4.e. Web and E-Circulation Officer’s Report (Hannah Neate)

Officer reported the continuing use and value of the e-circulation list.

Members were reminded to update their contact details to reflect any changes in personal or professional circumstances (such as institutional relocations) to ensure continuing access to HGRG mailings.

The HGRG website continues to be well visited by a diverse and international audience.

4.f. Dissertation Prize Coordinator’s Report (Carl Griffin, acting)

Officer reported nine, strong submissions for the 2016 prize (all from English universities), with the prize to be announced in the autumn.

The prize is now supported by Routledge, following its acquisition of Ashgate.

James Kneale and Cheryl McGeachan were thanked for acting as judges.

4.g. Research Series Editor’s Report (Alastair Owens, *in absentia*)

Nothing to report.

4.g. Conference Officer’s Report (Cheryl McGeachan)

Officer reminded Group members that the 22nd Practising Historical Geography conference will be held at Aberystwyth University on 2 November 2016. The final programme is currently being finalised and will be pushed shortly. All members were encouraged to promote the event (particularly to interested undergraduate and postgraduate students).

Chaired offered formal thanks to Aberystwyth University (and its Department of Geography and Earth Sciences) for hosting.

4.h. Newsletter Editor's Report (Jake Hodder)

Editor noted that three issues of the newsletter had been issued since he assumed his role; all have seen a gradual refinement of content and style to enrich and enliven the newsletter.

Newly commissioned content appeared, first, in the summer newsletter, with "from the archive..." reports and autobiographical reflection on the journey to becoming a historical geographer. These new sections have received very positive responses and the Editor thanked contributors for their work.

4.i. Postgraduate Representatives' Report (Julian Baker, *in absentia*, Natalie Cox, and Alice Insley, *in absentia*)

Representatives noted a strong and enthusiastic response to the "New and emerging..." call for papers, resulting in three sessions at this year's RGS-IBG AIC. For the first time, sessions were jointly sponsored by the HGRG and the Postgraduate Forum, a useful innovation that ensures no clashes with other postgraduate-focussed sessions.

Chair offered thanks to the Representatives, all of whom had extended their terms, for their work in ensuring the success of the "New and emerging..." sessions and the annual Practising Historical Geography conferences.

5. Items for discussion

5.a. Supporting publication in historical geography

Chair opened a discussion on the future of the Group's support for publication in historical geography by noting the important contribution made by the Research Series since its first volume in 1979.

Chair noted that, given changes in the academic publishing landscape, not least the increasing importance of research evaluation, that it is increasingly difficult to secure quality copy. For individual academics, a group-published short monograph is an increasingly less-attractive outlet. The Research Series is, therefore, failing to realise the Group's aim of supporting publication in historical geography.

Chair outlined two possible options to consider: 1) the focus of the Research Series changes to focus exclusively on annually publishing an edited selection of the best papers presented at the "New and emerging..." sessions and that these be presented as works in progress, or 2) that the Group support publishing in other ways.

Chair reported on initial discussions with Palgrave over a potential HGRG-branded series in historical geography that would focus exclusively on the publication of revised PhD theses (in similar vein to the Oxford Historical Monographs series). The potential value of the series lies in providing a forum for historical geography PhD students and in the possibility of generating income for the Group (the series might be organised in such a way that the author's advance (in lieu of any royalties) be diverted to the Group).

Felix Driver noted the potential value of both options and enquired about Palgrave's level of interest. Chair reported it as being extremely high.

Nicola Thomas asked for further clarification over the proposed financial arrangement between Palgrave and the Group and whether or not it might be better that any revenues went to likely hard-pressed early career authors directly. Chair reported that various financial models were possible and that any arrangement would depend upon the RGS-IBG approving the agreement and overseeing the income stream.

Mike Heffernan asked why the Group required an income in this way. Chair reported that it was required to redress falling income from sales of the Research Series.

Caroline Bressey asked what editorial and production assistance Palgrave would be offering first-time authors. Chair noted that Palgrave (and its parent, Springer) have, and are developing, a useful range of online resources to support early career authors, but that individual support would need to come from the proposed series' editor and editorial board.

5.b. Postgraduate bursaries – update

Chair noted that the Group's range of postgraduate-focused funding schemes and bursaries are not always well applied for and that all members should promote them to interested parties.

5.c. Teaching Historical Geographies – update

Nicola Thomas reported that the project, long on the back burner, was now to the front. Stephanie Wyse will, in the coming year, be taking the lead in developing AV content for the website and will be interviewing and filming historical geography in the coming months.

5.d. Mentoring in historical geography – update

Chair noted, following point 4.b. above, that the HGRG is testing the waters in respect to its mentoring scheme. The speed mentoring event will be used to gauge interest before a formal policy is developed.

6. Election of new committee members

Chair extended the thanks of the HGRG to the various committee members standing down and those who have agreed to replace them.

6.a. Chair

Chair proposed and Secretary seconded Briony McDonagh.

6.b. Treasurer

Secretary proposed and Treasurer seconded Hannah Neate.

6.c. Research Series Editor

Chair volunteered to cover this position, *ex officio*, until a decision had been reached as to the Group's future strategy for supporting publication in historical geography.

6.d. Dissertation Prize Coordinator

Chair nominated and Treasurer seconded James Kneale.

6.e. Web and E-Circulation Officer

Secretary nominated and Treasurer seconded Fae Dussart.

6.f. Postgraduate Representatives

Treasurer proposed and Chair seconded Bronia Chichlowska.

Secretary proposed and Chair seconded Benjamin Newman.

7. Forthcoming meetings

7.a. 22nd HGRG Practicing Historical Geography Conference, Aberystwyth, 2 November 2016.

Chair encouraged HGRG members to bring this event to the attention of relevant individuals.

7.b. RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, 29 August to 1 September 2017.

Chair noted that, whilst this is still some way off, HGRG members are encouraged to begin thinking early about the development of paper sessions.

8. Any other business

8.a. Felix Driver reported the dates of the forthcoming International Conference of Historical Geographers (to be held in Warsaw): 16 to 20 July 2018.

8.b. Secretary offered a vote of thanks to the Chair for his four years of service in that role.

9. Date of next AGM

To be confirmed, but likely to be held at RGS-IBG AIC in 2017.