

**Historical Geography Research Group  
Annual General Meeting  
1 September 2017**

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Fae Dussart, Carl Griffin, and Iain Robertson.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

Approved without correction.

**3. Matters arising not on the agenda**

None.

**4. Reports from committee members**

**4.a. Chair's Report (Briony McDonagh)**

BM noted that all issued would be covered under item 5.

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

The Secretary reported that a diverse and high-quality selection of proposals were received for HGRG sponsorship at the 2017 RGS-IBG Annual International Conference. The Group was able to sponsor all applications received by the deadline, but many other interesting proposals came in too late to be considered. The Secretary requested that all interested parties should ensure the timely submission of their session proposals. The Group was able to devote three time slots to its ever-popular "New and emerging..." sessions; a fact that speaks to the continuing vibrancy of the field, particularly at postgraduate level. The Secretary asked those in attendance to being to think ahead to the 2018 AIC and the sessions they may wish to propose.

**4.c. Treasurer's Report (Hannah Neate)**

The Treasurer reported that the Group's finances are in healthy state, partly due to monies received from a senior HGRG member. The Treasurer drew the Group's attention to its support of the Harley Fellowships, and encouraged all interested parties to explore that funding source. The Treasurer reminded postgraduate members about support offered by the Group for seminars, conference travel, and the like. These schemes are somewhat undersubscribed to. In the last year, the Group has also provided financial support to the RGS-IBG Postgraduate Forum for its Mid-Term Conference and has covered the costs of dinks at the HGRG drinks. HN reminded members to check their standing orders to ensure that subscription rates are correct. HN to email members with a reminder about membership fees later in 2017.

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

This was another good year for recruitment. We have added almost 70 new members and have experienced very few withdrawals. Membership now stands at just under 900. The vast majority of the number of new additions are postgraduates and that is a very definite sign of the continued vibrancy of the field. One concern relating to this, however, is the seemingly low level of conversions to full membership amongst this group and the extent to which we are recruiting new, long-term and active members. This, I am sure, is a reflection of the much wider (and hence largely out of our control) issue of scarcity of academic jobs.

Nevertheless, looking more broadly at our list, conversion from CatB to full membership remains an issue. We did make an attempt to tackle this issue this year via an appeal through the newsletter. Although an excellent idea, regrettably this appears to have elicited very few conversions and this must remain an issue. Further suggestions for tackling this are very welcome!

Finally, I must end this report on a slightly downbeat note. Our actual membership list remains, shall we say, 'messy' at best. Like all my predecessors I took on this task determined to tidy things up. For the second year in succession I have singularly failed to do this much to my chagrin! I will try to do better in 17/18.

#### **4.e. Communication Officer's Report (Fae Dussart, *in absentia*)**

E-circulation: The e-circulation list continues as a useful mode of communication with the membership. Please could members keep us updated as to their contact details.

The website: We have started to organise a section on the website that will show 'How I Became a Geographer' (as suggested in the e-committee meeting). It occurred to me in the process of altering the website that there may be other things, from the newsletter and other places, we would like to include on it: perhaps there might be short blog style articles or reviews that it would be worth putting on there. I initially put How I Became a Geographer on the home page menu banner, but it didn't fit on one line and looked rather messy, so for now I have put a tab in the Home page banner entitled 'Miscellany', for want of a better word (suggestions are welcome!), under which can be found links to the 'How I became a Geographer' page, and to an announcements page which could have CfPs and conference announcements etc. If we do want 'How I Became..', or anything else, on the home page menu banner then we should perhaps consider re-jigging the menu to consolidate categories and make space for other things that might draw in visitors. For example, Grants and Prizes and Events could be consolidated under an Announcements or News link.

The HGRG website has to date in 2017 received 1203 visitors from a range of 69 countries (though predominantly the UK, US and Canada) and 3557 views.

Twitter: Twitter continues as a useful way of communicating with a wider audience beyond the membership. I would like to encourage members to keep us informed of information – CfPs, relevant articles, research projects and events that could be tweeted to our expanding number of followers (currently 1046 followers).

#### **4.f. Dissertation Prize Coordinator (James Kneale)**

JK reported that seven submission has been received this year (compared to nine last year). JK thanked this year's judges— Fae Dussart (representing the Committee) and David Beckingham (representing the Group)—and reported that a decision will be made in October. The winning student would be invited, as it traditional, to attend the Practising Historical Geography conference. JK noted that a request had been received (from Gerry Kearns) that eligibility for entry be extended to students enrolled in a geography degree programme at a university in the Republic of Ireland. The idea was put to a vote and was carried unanimously.

#### **4.g. Research Series Editor's Report (Carl Griffin, *in absentia*)**

CG noted that Alan Baker's monograph—*Spreading the word: the development, distribution and cultural significance of bibliothèques populaires in France, 1860–1900*—is completed and due out as volume 45 shortly. Volume 46—*Inside and outside: nineteenth-century women travel writers' views of manners, customs and the natural world in Central America and the Caribbean*, from Beverley Duguid—is in production. CG hopes to report further news by Christmas on the prospects of establishing an HGRG-sponsored monograph series with Palgrave. BM notes that CG is now formally standing down after *c.* 10 years on the Committee. A formal vote of thanks was proposed to mark CG's years of service.

#### **4.h. Conference Officer's Report (Cheryl McGeachan)**

Planning for the 23rd Practising Historical Geography Conference in Manchester on Wednesday 8th November is well underway with all speakers, excluding the dissertation prize winner, confirmed (programme attached). Once again there has been great support from the Historical Geography community for the event and speakers include Professor Jon Stobart, Hannah Awcock, Dr Sarah Mills, Dr James Kneale and Dr Kimberley Peters. With fantastic support from Hannah Neate, rooms are being booked in MMU and catering will be ordered once numbers are confirmed (if any committee members are planning to attend then please could you let me know).

The event has been advertised once through Twitter and the HGRG Newsletter so far but further advertising will be done across the coming months. Flyers have been left at the RGS-IBG conference and I would encourage everyone with PhD students to let them know about the event. We only have one keen sign-up so far so please do spread the word to anyone who you think may be interested in attending. As usual, a dinner venue will be announced for the evening before the conference so if anyone has any top dining tips for Manchester do let me know.

#### **4.i. Newsletter Editor's Report (Jake Hodder)**

JH reported that formatting and content changes have bedded in well and noted thanks to all contributors for their time and effort in ensuring the quality and value of the newsletter.

#### **4.j. Postgraduate Representatives' Report (Bronia Cross, Ben Newman)**

BN noted the success of the “New and Emerging...” sessions this year. A large number of paper proposals were received and the resulting three sessions themed in order to broaden the

interest and appeal of the content to the larger conference community. Discussions are under way about a regular PG contribution to the newsletter. BC stepping down formally from her role. BM noted thanks to BC for her valuable contribution and to BN for continuing in the role for a further year.

## **5. Items for discussion**

### **5.a. Funding and bursaries**

BM summarised existing funding schemes and explained new ones. Thanks to gifts received, the HGRG was able to subsidise PG travel to the RGS-IBG AIC to the tune of £600. BM noted that the Group's contribution to the Harley Fellowships amounts to £800 per year for the next three years. The Fellowships are intended to support cartographic-focused research projects and are aimed at postgraduate and early career researchers.

BM noted that the Group will be administering ICHG Travel Grants (the funding for which comes from the surplus generated by the 2015 ICHG, gifted to the HGRG). These grants will support attendance at both the 2018 and 2021 ICHGs. Grants will be awarded up to the value of £1,500 per person and are aimed at postgraduate, early career, and underrepresented groups. A subcommittee—chaired by Nicola Thomas—will manage the allocation of grants.

The scheme will be advertised through IGU mainlining lists as well as the usual means. BM welcomed further suggestions as to advertising the scheme.

### **5.b. Networking event**

BM noted the success of the networking event held at this year's RGS-IBG AIC, which *c.* 45 people attended. It is intended to run a similar event at next year's conference.

### **5.c. HGRG archive**

BM report that, after an extended hiatus, the Committee is committed to continuing its plans to catalogue HGRG archival materials and deposit them with the Society. In the first instance, all relevant materials will be lodged with the Secretary before, subject to outline cataloguing, being deposited at the Society. BM noted that the issue of dealing with electronic sources has not yet been fully agreed. As a start BM, will make a shared Dropbox folder available to the Executive Committee for the deposit of key role-related notes and files. Stephanie Wyse noted the particular value of the following: minutes, records of decisions, programmes of events run or sponsored, records of all financial matters (including who we provided grants to), etc.

### **5.d. Supporting publication in historical geography**

BM suggested that a future volume of the Research Series might draw on papers presented in the “New and Emerging...” sessions, consisting of short (3,000-word) chapters, with a succinct introduction—work that could, depending on the circumstances, be undertaken by the Series editor, specific Committee members, or Postgraduate Representatives. Such a format could be a periodic, on-going activity. The model would offer postgraduate/early career researches a good first step into publication without taking up a large chunk of material that might otherwise be going to a peer-reviewed journal. These plans were subject

to discussion and approval and are to be taken forward by next Research Series editor/Executive Committee.

### **5.e. Writing retreat**

BM proposed this as a useful potential addition to the calendar of events. The retreat would follow a common model of two-or-three 90-minuted writing slots per day. Participants would be paired with writing partner, and would take turn in offering feedback on texts in progress. The initial plan would be to host one retreat in 2018, primarily focused as the established academic community, rather than postgraduate researchers (this in light of the fact that most of the Group's other activities and events are directed at postgraduate and early career researchers). There was some discussion of the timing of the retreat and early January was suggested as potentially offering the best value for money when it came to accommodation. BM will take forward planning of the event.

### **5.f. Social media**

BM proposed that the Group reverse an earlier decision not to duplicate material on the mailing lists and Twitter account. The proposal was discussed and approved unanimously (Gerry Kearns noted the continued value of the mailing list given the fact that tweets can easily be missed). Nicola Thomas noted that the mailing list appears to be being used less frequently. Stephanie Wyse noted the possibility of establishing a closed JISC mailing list that may be easier to administer and post to.

### **5.g. Internationalisation**

BM reported that the Group is continuing to try to develop links with the Historical Geography Speciality Group of the AAG. Initial talks have addressed reciprocal membership. ICHG bursaries may help bring the Group to the attention of a wider audience.

### **5.h. Teaching Historical Geographies**

Stephanie Wyse summarised the origin and history of the project and brought members up to date on recent developments. The focus of the resource has broadened to support historically informed teaching/research in geography rather than historical geography per se. SW has uploaded initial material—including text and video resources—to the website (<http://www.historicalgeographies.org/>). The resource is, now, for the Group to take forward and develop. BM offered formal thanks to SW for her hard work in getting the website up and running and populated within its initial content.

## **6. Election of new committee members**

### **6.a. Postgraduate Representatives**

BM thanked BC (standing down) and BN (continuing).

Laura Crawford proposed by BM, seconded by IK.

Peter Martin proposed by IK, seconded by HN.

### **6.b. Research Series Editor**

BM thanked CG (stepping down). Position will temporarily remain open. Executive Committee will manage the transition to a new editor in due course and oversee monographs currently in production.

### **6.c. Ordinary Member**

Jo Norcup proposed by BM, seconded by CM.

### **6.d. Honorary HGRG Archivist**

BM noted that Edwin Aiken had stepped down from the role.

## **7. Forthcoming meetings**

23rd HGRG Practicing Historical Geography Conference, 8 November 2017 at Manchester Metropolitan University.

RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, 28–31 August 2018 at Cardiff University.

## **8. Any other business**

None.

## **9. Date of next AGM**

To be confirmed; likely to be held at 2018 RGS-IBG AIC.