

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of BAIS which took place at Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London, on 23 November 1991 at 12.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Ruth Dudley Edwards (chair), George Boyce, David Cairns, Nesson Danaher, Graham Davis, Tony Downey, Jim O'Hara, Mary Hickman, Jonathan Moore, Bob Purdie, Shaun Richards, Kate Thompson, Seán Hutton.

APOLOGIES: Bob Bell, Paul Bew, Eamonn Hughes, Séamus Mac Mathúna, Jim McAuley, Joe Sheeran, George Watson.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE MEETING: These were accepted as an accurate account and signed.

REPORTS A

CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR: Reported that the Association had moved to a new office and that the Executive Director had commenced to work a half-time contract from 1 October. These developments had achieved the 50% cut in running costs which had become necessary in order to allow time for fundraising. They reported on developments concerning the Irish Studies Review and on fundraising. A brochure was being prepared with endorsements from eminent people. Tribute was paid to Niall Crowley for his efforts on behalf of the Association.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: A written report was presented which provided an update on management of Association expenditure, indicated some positive developments concerning Association activity, and provided information on current Association membership. It stressed the importance to developing the work of Advisory Subcommittees.

David Cairns mentioned an offer to help with distribution of materials, which had not been noted with other offers in the Exec Dir's report.

HONORARY SECRETARY: The Hon Sec's written report was noted. The sympathies of the Executive were extended to him on the death of his mother-in-law.

TREASURER: The Treasurer outlined the difficult financial situation facing the Association and referred to the measures taken to date to address that situation. He stressed the importance of 3-year funding to allow the Association to plan ahead. He stressed the importance of the services and activities of the Association, and its general profile, in retaining membership. He felt that the Association must give more thought to how money becoming available should be spent.

He also reported on the recent successful BAIS lecture series which had been held at Bath. While the fact that it had been possible to make the lecture series virtually self-financing, by charging a fee, was generally welcomed; the role of lectures series to which admission was free of charge was also stated and acknowledged.

CONFERENCE SECRETARY - REPORT AND 1993 BAIS BIENNIAL IRISH STUDIES CONFERENCE: The Conference Secretary stressed the importance of sponsorship in ensuring the success of the most recent conference.

In the discussion which followed, it was suggested that it might be necessary for the organisers to book flights for speakers to ensure that costs did not escalate. It was also suggested that a call for papers should be issued. Papers would then be offered and the necessity to pay expenses need not arise. There followed some discussion of the foregoing point; and also on the issue of whether a conference should have a unifying theme. The need for a local conference secretary who knew the institution hosting the conference was also emphasised. In view of the lack of a local secretary in Leicester, it would be necessary to seek a new venue for the 1993 Conference.

Nissan Danaher explained that he had informed the Officers why he was not prepared to take on the organisation of the 1993 Conference as local conference secretary. The 10th anniversary Soar Valley Conference would go ahead. * It was agreed that Nissan would be informed if any theme was agreed for the 1993 BAIS Conference in order to avoid overlapping.

* After some discussion, matters concerning the 1993 Conference were finally remitted to the Officers to be discussed at their next meeting.

CULTURAL SUBCOMMITTEE: It was reported to the Executive that Steve Regan of Ruskin College was prepared to attempt the organisation of a committee to promote the cultural programme of the Association. His nomination as Convenor of the Cultural Subcommittee was proposed by Bob Purdie and seconded by Shaun Richards and agreed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CONTRACT: There was a discussion of the post. David Cairns suggested that the title of Executive Director encouraged a centripetal tendency which was inappropriate to the present financial situation. He felt that the post should be retitled and that ways should be sought whereby members of the Executive could take on identified tasks now undertaken by the Exec Dir. Bob Purdie suggested that the role of the Executive Director was to see that things were done; not to do them himself. The Exec Dir stressed the need for agreed job descriptions among the Officers, so that it was clear what an Officer was taking on on accepting office. He also stressed the need for fully operational subcommittees, instancing the Irish Language Subcommittee as an area to which he could delegate. These, as well as the issue of secretarial help, were relevant to the role of Executive Director as Bob Purdie perceived it - a perception with which he concurred. The Executive Director's renegotiated contract, as approved by the Officers, was accepted.

The specific suggestion was made that the Hon Sec should be responsible for arrangements for meetings of Officers, Executive

and Fundraising Subcommittees.

* Finally, consideration of these matters was remitted to the Officers.

REPORTS B

HIGHER EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE: The Convenor's report covered progress on the Brochure on Irish Studies in Higher Education and the approach from Microfilm Academic to BAIS for assistance with an Irish series of publications. * George wanted suggestions from members of the Executive as to suitable items for publication in this manner: newspapers, theses, etc. With regard to the proposed pamphlet series, he was still looking for a publisher. Paul Bew, Alan Morton and Shaun Richards had agreed to become members of the Subcommittee.

David Cairns reported that after September 1992 CNNA would cease to publish the register of academics which institutions might draw on as examiners, etc. He would be prepared to organise a workshop under the auspices of CNA A to discuss the future of Irish Studies in the post-binary period. * David and George Boyce to liaise on this.

Both Bob Purdie and Shaun Richards referred to initiatives to promote British Studies in Eastern Europe and the importance, in this context, to the recognition of an Irish element within British Studies. * This matter to be considered by Higher Education Subcommittee.

ADULT EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE: The Convenor spoke to his written report, which had been circulated. He spoke about the Open College Network in the context of the need to provide a vocational aspect to Further Education. He requested a £150 grant from BAIS supplement other sources of funding in developing an Irish Studies modular syllabus. In return for this assistance from BAIS he would be able to provide BAIS with an outline syllabus and a number of modules by the beginning of February 1992. * It was agreed to grant this financial support.

IRISH LANGUAGE SUBCOMMITTEE: Kate Thompson reported on the BAIS/Institute of Linguists examinations, the publication of an Irish Language newsletter, inservice courses for teachers of Irish in Britain, the Association's support for initiatives proposed under the LINGUA programme and its formulation of proposals under the programme.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: There was no report other than the Newsletter Editor's report to the AGM, which was circulated.

SCHOOLS: There was no report under this head, where no subcommittee exists at the moment. * The Exec Dir was asked to request the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool to make copies of JEP papers available to Bob Bell.

AOB

SURVEY OF IRISH STUDIES: David Cairns reported that he had

received 147 returns for the third Survey, including 52 new entries. He had received 95 entries from the 332 respondents to the second survey. * Previous entries should be sent to those who had appeared in the second Survey for updating, with a covering letter. Some of these might have assumed that since their circumstances had not changed there was no need to respond. This would result in delay in the publication of the Survey, but this was felt to be necessary.

IRISH STUDIES REVIEW

The editorial team made a presentation on the proposed publication after which an extended discussion (adjourned over the period of the AGM) ensued.

The discussion centred largely on costings presented by the editorial team, technical aspects of the production of the journal as these affected cost, the degree of financial backing which would be involved on the part of the Association, and the viability of a journal of the kind proposed. The vital need for a publication was recognised and it was felt that the Executive should be offering constructive help for the offer of a team of members to produce an Association publication. On the question of editorial freedom, it was pointed out that the Editor of the Newsletter had been given a free hand here. It was however recognised that if there was a major divergence of policy between the Executive and the editorial board of a publication of the Association which was unresolvable that there would have to be a parting of the ways. On the question of the degree of subsidy involved on the part of the Association, the editorial group was prepared to accept an initial one-off subsidy of £3500 and that subsequently the Association would buy in copies of the magazine for its members at a price still to be determined. * Officers to negotiate and report back to Executive. * Approval of a startup grant of £3500 was proposed by Shaun Richards and seconded by Jonathan Moore and carried unanimously.

The meeting concluded at 5.00 p.m.

NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING: 22 February 1992