

SCHOOL OF HUMAN &  
HEALTH SCIENCES

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J. Meads  
P. Bow  
G. Wilson  
G. Boyce  
H. Fradie  
R. Sumner



26th June 1992

Dear Executive Member,

Ruth wrote to you recently to inform you of the next meeting of the Executive at which we intend to discuss the future organisation and direction of the B.A.I.S. As I am sure you are aware this is an extremely important event at which an external facilitator will be present and I do hope you can attend. Can I now confirm that it will take place on Friday 17th July at 12 noon. It will be held in 'The Old Bindary' at :

The Institute of Historical Research  
Senate House  
Malet Street  
LONDON  
WC1E 7HU

Please find enclosed the minutes of the last Executive meeting.

with all best wishes,

Dr. James W. McAuley  
Honorary Secretary,  
B.A. I. S.

# BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

MINUTES of the EXECUTIVE MEETING of the BAIS which took place on Saturday 23rd May 1992

## Present

R. Dudley Edwards  
J. O'Hara  
J. McAuley  
G. Davis  
J. Moore  
P. Bew  
G. Watson  
G. Boyce  
B. Purdie  
N. Sammels  
K. Thompson  
B. Bell  
S. Hutton

## 1. Apologies

N. Danaher  
S. Regan  
D. Cairns  
M. Hickman  
E. Evans  
S. Ui Neil  
S. Richards  
J. Sheeran

## 2. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed as a true record

Because of the importance of item 6 it was agreed that the early items on the agenda be dealt with as quickly as possible or taken under that item.

## 3. Matters arising

- A. Irish Studies Review Jon Moore has a copy of the draft contract to be agreed with the editors
- B. Trinity Lectures to be taken as a later item

C. 1993 conference to be taken under the conference secretarys report

D. Higher Education G. Boyce had not been available for the last Officers meeting

E. Language covered under written report

F. Schools covered under written report

G. Letter to P. Buckland concerning the motion passed at last Executive. The Executive Director informed the meeting that this letter had not been sent as he had been instructed not to send it by the Chair. Ruth questioned this. She said she had spoken to Patrick Buckland subsequently to the last Executive meeting and he had suggested September for a final report. Ruth said she had not instructed Sean not to write to Patrick. There was a discussion concerning this item and whether it was still relevant to send it. Jim O'Hara made the point that if the Executive made a decision it should be carried out and no one person had the authority to block it. Jon Moore formally proposed that the terms of the motion passed were carried out on the original basis decided. This was seconded by the Honorary Secretary and agreed. There was further discussion on this item Ruth in particular expressed concern about the terms of the letter which was to be sent. Jim McAuley reminded the meeting that this decision had now been agreed twice by the Executive and the discussion ended.

\*\*\*\*\* ACTION \*\* SEAN HUTTON \*\*\*\*\*

#### 4. Reports - Officers

##### a. Chairpersons

To be taken under item 6

##### b. Executive Director

To be taken under item 6

##### b. Adult and Further Education

No report



c. **Secretary**

The Secretary informed the meeting that some progress had been made in setting up a local BAIS group in Yorkshire. All other items to be taken under item 6

d. **Conference Secretary**

Jon Moore reported that he was investigating the possibility of holding the 1993 conference in Oxford. The 10-12 Sept was available and perhaps two weeks later. The meeting discussed the merits of these dates and it was agreed that Jon should book the later date if possible and if not the earlier date. Graham reminded the meeting of the decision that speakers should not be paid as was previously the case, and Jon emphasised that any sponsorship deal needed to be worked out well in advance. Bob Purdie informed the meeting that he believed Steve Reegan would be willing to act as local secretary

\*\*\*\*\***ACTION JON MOORE**\*\*\*\*\*

e. **Treasurers**

Graham spoke briefly to a written report, most of which was to be covered under item 6

5. **Reports - Sub Committees**

a. **Higher Education**

A copy of the contract negotiated between George Boyce and Microform Ltd. was circulated to the meeting . Sean informed the meeting that he had recieved no objections from either the officers or the Higher Education sub-committee. It was agreed that Geoege should sign the contract on behalf of the BAIS. George informed the meeting that he had not yet finished the "Where to study" guide. However this was for the best possible reasons- there were many more courses on offer than George had realised. It should be finished by the end of the summer.

\*\*\*\*\***ACTION GEORGE BOYCE**\*\*\*\*\*

b. **Adult and Further Education**

No report

been. He argued that promotion had been central to the reason why the BAIS had given £3,500 to the venture. Neil reminded the meeting that the magazine also had to be a commercial success. Jon Moore suggested that in any future copies the BAIS be given greater prominence and should certainly be seen on the contents page. Neil said that this would not be a problem.

\*\*\*\*\*ACTION NEIL SAMMELS\*\*\*\*\*

The meeting then turned to the issue of complimentary copies and how these could best be distributed to achieve maximum effect.

### 8. Trinity Lecturers

Ruth informed the meeting that at the request of the Trinity representatives there were now to be five lectures in the series which Trinity would underwrite to the amount of £3,000. She had agreed the following speakers P. Brooke, D. Klberg, R. Foster, B. Kinnealy, and J. V. Luce. Jim O'Hara asked why Ruth had agreed these speakers without consultation. As requested at the last meeting he had made an informal approach to another person and was now in a very embarrassing position. He reminded the meeting that it was for a very similar reason that at the previous meeting one of the speakers had been confirmed- on the grounds that too much embarrassment would be caused if an informal approach already made was not confirmed. He did not think the Chair should act in this individual way. George Watson argued that the Association should only lay down guidelines upon which individuals should act. The Secretary said although he had not minuted it he understood that the list of speakers was to be brought back to this meeting for confirmation. Jim McAuley made the further point that he saw the fundamental problem as the way in which the meetings were structured, they were too "loose" and it was never clear just which decisions had been made because we so rarely spoke to a set motion. This point was strongly supported by Jim O'Hara and Sean Hutton. Ruth said she would continue to chair the meetings in whatever way she saw fit and the meeting moved on to the next item after a short break.



## 6. Discussion : The future structure and existence of the BAIS

Graham Davis opened the discussion with the view that because we were now clearly in a "post-AIB" situation our financial resources were clearly limited and we needed to address where the organisation was going, how we could reduce costs and how we could function without the services of an Executive Director or an Office. He suggested that the BAIS office be rotated around each of the three major institutions of Irish Studies. Ruth Dudley Edwards said that there were hopeful signs of fundraising and several possibilities of money. Jim McAuley argued that as elsewhere we had been promised "green shoots of a new economic dawn" for too long. The organisation had to be realistic and seriously address its future structure. He asked that the meeting consider the two discussion papers he had tabled. Sean Hutton said it was necessary to consider a variety of perspectives and scenarios. Graham suggested that even if the new shoots did appear that it would not solve the problem. Ruth suggested that this was too rigid a view and that we should plan for future money. Graham suggested that there were several ventures that the organisation could continue with quite easily, the conference, the ISR and the lecture series for example. However other things such as the Office and a full time official were unrealistic.

Jim McAuley spoke to a written paper and suggested that the strategy be one of organised contraction around the strength of the BAIS which was higher education. Paul Bew and Jim O'Hara both made the point that it would be increasingly difficult to "hide the costs" within higher education establishments. George Boyce felt that the Historical Association would be a good model to follow and that the BAIS should use Liverpool University more. Jim O'Hara and Sean Hutton expressed reservation that establishing closer links with higher education may cut the BAIS off from its grass root membership particularly those involved in adult education, teachers and Irish community groups. Jim McAuley said that this was never his intention and that he saw the regional structure he proposed as the way to link all sections of the Irish community. Jon Moore said that while he saw problems the meeting should not lose the central point of the Secretary's paper. Who was going to perform the tasks which Sean currently undertook if he left? Jim O'Hara thought the concept of a regional strategy a good one but it was too cumbersome as set out by the secretary.



George Watson presented a different argument. He structured his comments around the central momentum of the BAIS. Was it an scholarly organisation or a movement. George listed what he saw as the major achievements of the BAIS: Liverpool; the IRS; NLP; St. Mary's and Soar Valley. He argued that these were very real achievements and that perhaps now was the time to stop. We should now be trying to "control" Irish Studies rather a clearing house to say to those involved "we are on your side so get on with it". He saw the major role of the BAIS as a "seeding organisation". Paul Bew suggested that we were helping to create a movement- just because activities in Irish Studies were happening didn't mean that the BAIS had to be involved. Its major function should be as a "clearing house". Other members of the executive took a counter view. Jim O'Hara and Jim McAuley both suggested that while we may be part part of a movement our central contribution was that we provided a national focus to these activities. George Boyce and Sean Hutton both argued that a central body was crucial however the question remained how were we going to pay for it. Graham suggested our main role should be to link events and organisations and to achieve this we should call in the debt for what we had done in the past and each of the key institutions of higher education should take on the roles of the officers. Jim McAuley and Jon Moore both made the point that this was unrealistic- the BAIS was a membership organisation and it was up to the members who represented them. They made the further point that so far the meeting had dealt with generalisations, albeit some important ones, however it was now time to deal with specifics.

At this point Sean left the room. There followed a fairly "technical" discussion concerning redundancy payment, length of notice, overall cost to the BAIS etc. At the end of the discussion the following decisions were made: That it was with great regret that the Executive committee felt they had no option but to give Sean Hutton three months notice of termination of employment. This was with the understanding that it could be withdrawn if funding was to become available; that Sean was to discuss the precise terms with the officer responsible for his conditions of employment; that when Sean was no longer employed the secretary would take over as much of the work of the Executive Director as was possible on a short term basis. There were also suggestions that an Executive Directors post may no longer be necessary to the BAIS and that Sean be co opted onto the Executive but neither was discussed in detail or agreed.

\*\*\*\*\*ACTION JIM MCAULEY\*\*\*\*\*



Sean Hutton rejoined the meeting and was informed of these decisions. The discussion returned to the future organisation of the BAIS. Ruth argued strongly that a considerable proportion of the work of the Executive Director be moved to Liverpool University who could ensure the continuation of the events which were currently running. She gave the example of the schools projects organised by Sean which she said could easily be run by the institute at Liverpool. This notion was resisted to by several executive members including Jim O'Hara, Jim McAuley, Jon Moore and by Sean Hutton. There were several objections: relations between the BAIS and Liverpool had in the past been "strained" and never clearly resolved; much of the momentum of the BAIS came from the commitment of a wide range of individuals; it was unclear just what they could do for the future development of BAIS; it was also felt that any future fundraising or events would be absorbed under the umbrella of Liverpool and that the BAIS were unlikely to be given credit or high profile; it was also felt that if this were done the BAIS would lose autonomy. Sean made the point that he would be wary of a close association with any higher education establishment, each had their own agenda and dynamic and this could easily lead to a severe conflict of interests. George Watson felt this was unlikely but even if it did happen it would be no bad thing- the danger with any committee was that it became too self important. The major role of the BAIS should be to "kick-start" initiatives concerning Irish Studies which could be done from Liverpool or another institution. This brought future protests from Jim McAuley and Jim O'Hara. they objected to the "Thatcherite " principles of "selling off the family jewels" which were being forwarded particularly from the chair. They were opposed to the idea that many of the things that the BAIS had worked hard to achieve were to be handed over without the exploration of alternatives or other "philosophical" paths. Jon Moore thought we were in danger of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater". The BAIS needed to be seen to be continually associated with "successful" events which was unlikely to happen if we moved to Liverpool. Bob Bell asked that the Secretary's paper on a regional strategy be reconsidered. He thought it would work in the school sector and had got off the ground in Yorkshire. Jim O'Hara objected strongly to the manner in which the meeting was being chaired which he described as a "shambles". Sean said it was clear that we were now in a "stand-off" position and that he thought a trained facilitator should handle the discussion. Such a



debate would need to be structured and carefully managed which clearly was not happening. Ruth suggested N. Crowley but it was felt that the last time such a meeting had been necessary a complete outsider had performed this role with much success. Bob Purdie said he knew someone who could undertake this role and it was agreed that she should be asked.

**\*\*\*\*\*ACTION RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS /  
BOB PURDIE\*\*\*\*\***

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.35 pm

Agreed as a true record

Proposed:

Seconded: