

Briefing Paper on *Newsletter* for BAIS Executive, 1-vi-1991

This paper has been produced as a result of discussion of the current difficulties involved in producing a *Newsletter* at the BAIS Executive Meeting of 23-ii-91.

The situation as it stands is that BAIS has been dependent on the *Newsletter* editor's access to computer equipment for the production of its *Newsletter*. This access is no longer as freely available as in the past, and there is no guarantee that any future editor of the *Newsletter* will have such access. Added to this are similar difficulties obtaining in the production of *Irish Studies in Britain* which is also made available to BAIS members.

Due to these difficulties the Association must begin to formulate a policy in regard to the *Newsletter*. A number of possibilities exist:

- i) The *Newsletter* should be scaled down, and become a fuller quarterly version of the *Newsletter* produced by the Executive Director. The advantages of this option are that the *Newsletter* would be able for the first time to fulfil its supposed role as a disseminator of news and there would be no need to think about the purchase of additional equipment. There would still be a need to consider the editorial aspect of this type of *Newsletter* as the Executive Director could not reasonably be expected to take on the additional load singlehanded. The disadvantages are in the perceived downgrading of one of the journals available to the membership and the loss of a forum for full reports and discussion.
- ii) The *Newsletter* should be scaled up, possibly incorporating *Irish Studies in Britain*, and become a journal. The advantages of this option if carefully implemented are that the Association would gain a prestigious internally-produced journal which could become a focus for both educational and cultural aspects of Irish Studies in Britain. The disadvantages are that there would need to be an investment in equipment (and possibly part-time staff) to ensure the regular production of the journal.
- iii) The *Newsletter* remains as it is. The advantages and disadvantages of this option are I think already obvious.

Alongside these options there are a number of operating decisions which need to be made. First and foremost is the question of what we want the *Newsletter* to be. This can be partly answered by means of a questionnaire circulated with the next issue; suggestions as to questions to be asked of the membership are welcome. Secondly, almost regardless of the option chosen there is a need for the *Newsletter* to become self-financing. This will necessitate the creation of the post of advertising/business manager. There may well be a need to form an editorial board, consisting of editor, advertising/business manager, and reviews editor. The final operating issues which should be considered are to do with the location of any equipment purchased, and the printing of the *Newsletter*.

The best case seems to be that we establish a largely self-financing, prestige publication which will require a great deal of preparatory thought and work. The worst case seems to be that we acknowledge that BAIS can no longer operate on a scale sufficient to warrant publishing anything larger than the flimsy *Newsletter* which many similar organisations offer.

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