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Minutes of the meeting of the Executive of BAIS which took place at the Institute of Historical Research, London, at 12.30 p.m. on Saturday, 23 February 1991.

PRESENT: Ruth Dudley Edwards (chair), Bob Bell, Paul Bew, George Boyce, David Cairns, Nessel Danaher, Graham Davis, Tony Downey, Emrys Evans, Mary Hickman, Eamonn Hughes, Jim McAuley, Jonathan Moore, Jim O'Hara, Siobhán Uí Néill, Bob Purdie, Shaun Richards, Joe Sheeran, Kate Thompson, George Watson.

APOLOGIES: Séamus Mac Mathúna.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE MEETINGS: The minutes of the outgoing and incoming Executives on 10 November 1990 were agreed as correct accounts of those meetings and were signed.

MATTERS ARISING: There were no matters arising.

CORRESPONDENCE: Emrys Evans had written to the Ex Dir to inform him that Graham Davis was resigning from the Vice-Chancellorship of Liverpool University, to take over the Chair of the UFC. *It was decided, in view of his past services to Irish Studies through his support of the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool, to write to him, thanking him for that support and wishing him well. *It was also decided to invite him to the Conference Dinner.

THERE WAS NO NOTICE OF AOB

REPORTS A

(a) The Chair and Vice-Chair reported that the usual liaison had taken place with other bodies. A request had been made to DENI for assistance, arising out of the Sixth Form conferences in Northern Ireland. The financial situation of the Association had been discussed that morning at an Officers Meeting.

(b) The Executive Director had circulated a written report which was tabled. He raised the issue of the BAIS lecture series and the need to distribute regularly those publications which were advertised as benefits of membership.

(c) The Hon Sec presented a written report, to which he spoke briefly. He stressed the need to work out a "worst case" scenario, parallel to fundraising. He raised the question of "hand over" reports between outgoing and incoming officers, expressing dissatisfaction in his own case. *It was agreed that it should be normal practice for an outgoing officer to prepare a briefing report for any new occupant of the position.

(d) The Treasurer had circulated a written report, to which he spoke. He pointed out that, while the situation was "healthy" at the moment, there would be grave problems within a year. A minimum of £25000 would have to be found during the next 6 months, or the Association would have to move to a "worst case" position.

(e) The Conference Secretary gave a detailed report on progress of conference arrangements. £2000 sponsorship would be received from Johnson Matthey. Applications had been made to the FCO and the CRC (Dublin): there was no news yet on these.

*It was decided that those on the Survey database, who had not already been circularised via the BAIS membership list, should be circularised.

A press release had been issued. Apart from Irish Post coverage, Conf Sec was not aware, as yet, of any other coverage.

(f) Newsletter Editor gave the background to the delay in publication of Newsletter, arising from his own change of jobs and his dependence on "borrowed" institutional equipment.

Shaun Richards offered to read text on to disk by use of optical reader. *Newsletter Editor and SR to arrange technical details. *Newsletter Editor to send materials to SR for optical reading. *All Officers and Convenors to send updated reports covering activities since the beginning of 1990 to both Newsletter Editor and SR by 9 March at addresses set out below:

Dr Eamonn Hughes, School of English, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland (Tel: 0232-245133 x 3946)

Dr Shaun Richards, Dept of Humanities, Staffordshire Polytechnic, Beaconside, Stafford, ST18 0AD (Tel: 0785-52331)

Newsletter Editor hoped to make Newsletter available in March. Treasurer stressed the importance of maintaining services to members, of which publications formed an important part.

There followed a discussion on the role and format of the Newsletter. Three options were suggested in the discussion: (a) a newsletter: members considered that occasional bulletins produced from BAIS Office fulfilled this role; such information constituted a useful service to members; (b) a journal: this option appeared to be regarded as too risky, especially in present financial circumstances, though there was some support for the idea; (c) a forum for the Irish Studies

movement in Britain: this proposal appeared to have wider support among members of the Executive.

There was a reference to an apparent overlap with Irish Studies in Britain and a suggestion that this should be addressed.

SURVEY OF IRISH STUDIES IN BRITAIN...: UPDATE

David Cairns reported on the small number of responses to the Survey questionnaire. The problem of contacting people not in BAIS but with an interest in Irish Studies was raised. *It was decided to seek publicity around the questionnaire for the Survey in the Irish Post, the Guardian, the TES and THES. *Non-BAIS on Nesson Danaher's list also to be circulated.

BAIS STRATEGY

The Ex Dir spoke to his paper, requesting, as matters of urgency: the reconstitution of a Cultural Subcommittee (for networking); a framework for fundraising; the formulation of a strategy by each of the working subcommittees on lines set out in his paper; the making of as many as possible of the Association's activities self-financing.

*There was some discussion of the BAIS lecture series before the matter was remitted to the Officers. Discussion turned on ways in which costs might be reduced, plus a suggestion of a different format: three lectures by one speaker over three successive nights. The project of a prestigious BAIS lecture was referred to.

Nesson Danaher referred to the possibility of conducting some of the activities of Adult & Continuing Education Subcommittee's activities (and also that of any Compulsory Subcommittee's) as In-Service activities.

The Hon Sec referred to the need to formulate an alternate strategy which could be put into action if fundraising did not progress as was hoped.

The Conf Sec, and others with experience of the voluntary sector, pointed out that the problem of how to survive from day to day was a common one. It merely meant that much more time and effort had to be given to fundraising.

CULTURAL SUBCOMMITTEE: The Treasurer stressed the importance of such a subcommittee to enable the Association to develop a national and local strategy of networking in connection with fundraising. The Ex Dir said that it had been decided, at an Officers Meeting that morning, to reactivate this subcommittee as an

intelligence gathering group which would give the Officers and Fundraising Review Group early notice of cultural events which they might seek to use in connection with fundraising.

There was a brief discussion of the merits of "slipstreaming" as opposed to direct initiation of events. The balance of opinion appeared to be with "slipstreaming" where that was possible.

The Hon Sec raised again the need to formulate a strategy to meet a "worst case" scenario. *It was agreed that the Ex Dir, the Hon Sec and the Treasurer would meet in advance of the next Officers Meeting to formulate proposals which they would bring to that meeting.

NORTH-WEST FUNDRAISING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Ex Dir's document on this subject was tabled. A report from Patrick Buckland to Neil Crowley, on progress in this area, was circulated.

FOURTH COOPTION TO THE EXECUTIVE

The Ex Dir reported the opinion of the Officers on the matter: that if there was no firm proposal from the Executive, the place should be left vacant for the moment - to allow for a possible future need give representation to a particular area of expertise.

REPORTS B

(a) George Boyce reported that it was intended to go ahead with the project to publish a "where to study" booklet to support Irish Studies in higher education. He pointed out that the THES was canvassing for articles, and that this avenue could be explored to publicise newsworthy developments. The THES Seminar and Public Lecture Noticeboard could be exploited also. *He proposed that the Association should explore the possibility of a BAIS series of pamphlets covering key areas of Irish Studies and directed at teachers, sixth formers and undergraduates. He was mandated to follow up this proposal with publishers.

(b) Nesson Danaher reported that it was hoped to organise a follow-up to the meeting of the Adult & Continuing Education Subcommittee, which had met in October 1989, during the summer term. He instanced the following as matters of importance in this area: the National Curriculum, Local Management of Schools, the A, A/S Levels developed under the JEP, the Open College Network. He indicated the relevance for Adult, Community and Continuing Education of the February Soar Valley Conference.

It was established that the RSA Irish Studies Course was now defunct.

Regarding the A, A/S Levels, Tony Downey pointed out that the success of these depended on resources/support being available. He felt that the present level of support was unsatisfactory. He instanced the sort of support which should be available: time off for teachers for curriculum development; support materials coming through to schools; a good working relationship between chief examiners and centres.

Nessan Danaher referred to the expertise/resources which had been built up as a result of the Manchester and Leicester experiences.

In response to a question, Mary Hickman said that she had met Christene Kinealy to discuss a London-based conference in connection with the JMB examinations. The proposal which had been outlined had been too narrow to meet the requirements of the London area; but they would be quite prepared to organise a conference in which they would form an element. Jim O'Hara expressed a willingness to have further discussions with Mary Hickman re a London-based conference.

(c) Kate Thompson spoke to a written report on Irish Language Subcommittee developments. This covered a newsletter and a further one-day course for teachers of Irish; an interview on Radió na Gaeltachta, the receipt of £IR 500 from Bord na Gaeilge; progress on the Institute of Linguists Irish language examinations. Siobhán Uí Néill reported on an interview she had given on RTÉ and said that the work which BAIS was doing to support Irish language teaching in Britain was well known in the Republic of Ireland.

Emrys Evans stressed the importance of publicising initiatives which were taking place independently also.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION: Bob Bell reported that he had had preliminary discussions with Joe Sheeran and Tony Downey. They planned a more extensive meeting in the near future. They hoped that they would be then in a position to make proposals to the Association re activities in this area.

The overlap between Compulsory/Adult and Continuing Education was noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Saturday, 1 June 1991.

The meeting concluded at 4.50 p.m.