

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 31st August, RGS/IBG Annual Conference, London 2007

1. Apologies for absence were accepted.
2. Minutes of last meeting were approved.
3. There were no matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
4. Chair's Business
 - a. Report on activities (September 2006 – August 2007)

Dr Hayden Lorimer (HL)

Over the past 12 months the HGRG committee and members have continued to be active in a number of different areas, organising meetings and supporting research in historical geography. This includes the work of the committee and members in organising the 2006 undergraduate and postgraduate conference in historical geography, Practising Historical Geography, which was held at Queen's University, Belfast (28 participants). The conference was funded by HGRG and a grant from the Research and Higher Education Division of RGS-IBG (£300). While participant numbers dropped for this conference, HGRG remains committed to circulating this conference around the regions.

The committee has been actively involved in the organization of the 2007 RGS-IBG Annual Conference. In addition to our usual Postgraduate Research session organised by the committee, sessions sponsored by HGRG are:

Gender and historical geography (convenors: Nicola Thomas and Catherine Brace)

Senses and memory (convenor: Thomas Barton, Royal Holloway)

Atmospheric geographies (convenors: Simon Naylor and Mark Whitehead)

Negotiating postcolonial distance: scale, hierarchies and networks (Steve Legg, Colin McFarlane, Dan Clayton)

Liquid Landscapes (convenors: Stephen Daniels and Mike Pearson)

The judging of the 2007 dissertation prize (sponsored by CUP) has been undertaken by the guest dissertation prize judge Richard Dennis, supported by Diarmid Finnegan and Hayden Lorimer. The result will be announced at the Practising Historical Geography conference in November.

During 2006-2007 HGRG has awarded postgraduate bursaries of £100 to Bertie Mandelblatt to fund her attendance at the AAG conference in San Francisco and John Donaldson to support his fieldwork in Zambia.

- b. Committee positions

HL reported that HGRG had inherited a problem about three years ago whereby several committee positions are vacant all at one time. HGRG are conscious that a full change in personnel could destabilize the necessary workings of the committee and so are keen to mix continuity with change. Accordingly, the following committee changes were proposed and voted on by members present:

Chair: end of Hayden Lorimer's tenure. The proposal by Kate Brace (seconded by David Lambert) that Hayden Lorimer should continue in post for a further two years was approved.

Secretary: End of Prof Kate Brace's tenure. The proposal by Kate Brace (seconded by Peter Merriman) that Dr Nicola Thomas should assume this role was approved.

Treasurer: End of Prof Jon Stobart's tenure. The proposal by Hayden Lorrimer (seconded by Kate Brace) that Jon Stobart should continue in this role for a further term (of three years) was approved.

Membership Secretary: end of Dr David Lambert's term. The proposal by Yvonne Whelan (seconded by Merle Patchett) that Dr Lambert should continue in this role for a further term (of three years) was approved.

Conference Officer: end of Dr Yvonne Whelan's term. The proposal by David Lambert (seconded by Jon Stobart) that Dr Heidi Scott should assume this role was approved.

Newsletter Secretary: End of Dr Nicola Thomas' term. The proposal by Nicola Thomas (seconded by Diarmid Finnegan) that Dr Jude Hill should assume this role was approved.

Hon. Editor of the Monograph Series: End of Dr Liz Gagen's period of service; currently on maternity leave. The proposal by Hayden Lorimer (seconded by Peter Merriman) that Dr David Nalley should assume this role was approved.

Ordinary member with website responsibilities: Dr John Morrissey's period of tenure is over. The proposal by Diarmid Finnegan (seconded by Merle Patchett) that Prof Kate Brace assume this position was approved.

Ordinary member with responsibilities for the dissertation prize: Dr Diarmid Finnegan still has one year to serve.

Publicity Secretary: Peter Merriman still has one year to serve.

Postgraduate member: Merle Patchett still has one year to serve.

HL welcomed new members and expressed a very large vote of thanks to all committee members standing down from positions for their service.

5. Forthcoming meetings

- a. The 12th Annual Practising Historical Geography conference will take place on Wednesday 7th November 2007 in the Department of Geography, University of Exeter with keynote lectures from Prof Charles Watkins and Prof James Ryan, and workshops from Hayden Lorimer and Prof Kate Brace.

- b. RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2008

HGRG will continue to sponsor sessions at the 2008 annual conference. Details will be circulated in the autumn. HL noted that the committee wished to create opportunities for informal discussion and a picnic lunch would be advertised prior to the 2008 annual conference.

Feedback from the 2007 annual conference will be circulated back to the RGS-IBG. Issues such as the inadequacies of the online registration system will be raised alongside the need for continued vigilance concerning clashes between parallel sessions that are of interest to historical geographers. Members raised concerns about the opportunities that are made available for HGRG to check the programme to avoid clashes. HL indicated that he was able to check the programme and request alterations.

6. Reports

- a. Hon. Secretary did not table a report
- b. Hon. Treasurer

Treasurers report to AGM, 2007

1) Balance:

<i>Account</i>	<i>Balance Dec 2005</i>	<i>Balance Dec 2006</i>
Treasurer	£2,699.94	£1297.74
Deposit	£4,256.30	£4347.37
Total	£6,956.24	£5,645.11

2) Major income:

RGS grant £400
Publications £230
Subscriptions £1667

3) Major expenditure:

Newsletters £928
Committee expenses £449
HGRG Postgraduate Conference expenses £1672
Post-graduate and conference support £650

4) Key points

As last year, HGRG funds continue to be healthy, though reserves continue to gradually diminish – a position which we still need to address in order to assure long-term sustainability for the research group. We need to re-examine all of our major areas of expenditure, the current position of which is outlined below.

1. We have continued our commitment to (a) making significant contributions towards the costs of post-graduate students attending conferences and (b) offering financial support to those organising conferences. Is this a luxury we can do without or central to our mission?

2. Newsletter costs continue to escalate. This is the principal means through which we communicate with our members. Should we look to move to an electronic version of the newsletter (possibly sending paper copy to those who specifically request this)? Or can we recoup some of the costs by charging for members (and others?) to include fliers for books, etc.?

3. Committee expenses are reducing. These should be lower again for 2007 as we have held one meeting by email.

4. The Postgraduate conference continues to be our largest single outlay. It seems impossible to reduce costs much below their current level. As with support for conferences, we need to ask whether this should continue to be a key area of our activity. If we continue to run the conference, do we need to make some (nominal) charge?

Members should also note that this was a light year in terms of publication costs. We need to expect major outlay in the near future for the next publication.

Prof Jon Stobart, HGRG Hon. Treasurer, 22 August 2007

Following the reading of the treasurers report HL noted that it was important for HGRG to maintain its financial security without compromising its commitment to supporting future generations of historical geographers, or communication with the wide existing body of members.

While an e-newsletter was recognised as a possible way of reducing newsletter costs it was recognised that not all members would wish to, or be able to receive a newsletter in this format. It was suggested that members could 'opt-out' of a hard copy newsletter if they wished to receive an e-version. The logistics of this would be addressed during 2007-2008 following consultation with the broader membership.

The costs of hosting the annual 'Practising Historical Geography' conference have risen significantly in recent years owing to the introduction of full economic costing. The HGRG committee suggested to the membership that it was becoming increasingly unviable to maintain this as a free event, and a nominal contribution towards the costs should be made by participants. It was suggested that £8 would be charged from 2008 which would cover refreshments for each participant. This was agreed.

c. Hon. Editor

HL reported that Liz Gagen had worked very hard to try and attract proposals and recruit copy from people to publish in the monograph series. The current publishing environment remains a challenge, however HGRG are committed to continuing the monograph series and further proposals are under consideration. A collection of papers on practicing historical geography is complete with a planned distribution date during November 2007.

d. – j. No formal reports were tabled by the following committee members: Hon. Publicity Secretary, Hon. Conference Secretary, Postgraduate Committee Member, Membership Secretary, Ordinary Member (newsletter), Ordinary Member (web), Ordinary Member. Discussion of their activities had been covered in the chairs report and general notes minuted above.

7. Any other business
None was tabled.

8. Date of next AGM

This will be held during the 2008 RGS-IBG annual conference.

Dr Nicola Thomas
Secretary HGRG, October 2007