



Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland

Annual General Meeting

Main Hall, Taylor Institution, Oxford

Tuesday 26 March 2013

Chair: Trevor Dadson

Minutes: Sarah Wright

Committee: Tilmann Altenberg (Treasurer), Chris Harris (Conference Secretary), Andrew Ginger (PG liaison), Ann Davies (Membership Secretary), Lesley Twomey (UCML), Phil Swanson (ex- President), Geoff West (British Library).

1. President's Welcome (TD)	Professor Dadson began by thanking Chris Harris for a most successful conference and extended his thanks to the whole of the Oxford team.	
2. Apologies (TD)	Kirsty Hooper (ACLAIIR, DSS fellowship), Stephanie Dennison (Lusophone), Mike Thompson (webmaster)	
3. Minutes of the AGM, Stirling 2012	These were approved and signed	
4. Chair's Announcements:	TD offered thanks to the Spanish Embassy for the funding which had enabled the new website to be launched. Passwords would be issued shortly to all members of AHGBI. Awards would be advertised on the website and TD urged everyone to consult them there.	

<p>5. Eulogies</p>	<p>Carmen Domínguez, University of the West of Scotland</p> <p>Medardo Fraile, University of Strathclyde</p> <p>TD presented a eulogy for Anthony Heathcote</p> <p>Juliet Perkins presented a eulogy for Stephen Reckert</p> <p>TD presented a eulogy for Nigel Glendinning</p>	
<p>6. Chair's Business</p> <p>a) Future strategy of AHGBI</p> <p>b) Open Access Publishing</p> <p>c) Future Conferences</p>	<p>TD asked the AHGBI to consider endorsing a proposal to obtain charitable status for the AHGBI. TD and SW were pursuing this with a law firm who were offering their advice pro-bono. Charitable status would offer tax benefits (Gift Aid could be added to subscriptions) but would not change the ethos of the Association in any way. TD asked those present for their support – support was confirmed unanimously.</p> <p>TD set out some of the ramifications of this worrying proposal. The British Academy response to HEFCE was circulated as was TD's response on the behalf of the AHGBI. From the floor, Professor N Round supported the President in his concerns over this proposal.</p> <p>The 2014 conference would be held in Galway 14th-16th April</p> <p>For 2015 the Executive Committee had received an offer from the University of Exeter to host the conference and this had been accepted.</p>	<p>Action: TD and SW to take steps towards acquiring charitable status</p>

<p>d) REF</p>	<p>Professors Andrew Ginger, Isabel Torres and Stephen Hart represent Hispanic Studies on the REF panel for Modern Languages.</p> <p>AHGBI had nominated Professor Hilary Owen as Luso-Brazilian member on the panel, and this had been accepted by HEFCE.</p> <p>AHGBI had submitted nominations for impact assessors, but had as yet not received any feedback on those nominations.</p> <p>Isabel Torres explained that the REF team were currently collating responses to the survey and confirmed that Hilary Owen would be joining them as an assessor. Results of the nominations for impact assessors were still being considered. IT explained disaggregation and encouraged colleagues to consider using double weighting for substantial monographs, since this time round there was no danger if the panel did not accept double weighting since we could all submit a reserve item.</p>	
<p>7. Treasurer's Report (TA)</p>	<p>A statement of the accounts (attached) was circulated and approved. The AHGBI is in good financial health.</p> <p>TA was investigating the BACS system of payments</p> <p>TA explained that it was not possible to tell from the current database whether membership fees had been paid or not. The President encouraged the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary to work with the Webmaster to re-organise the database so that we could have an up-to-date list of members as well as a list of all those working in/teaching Hispanic Studies in the UK and Ireland.</p>	

<p>8. Conference Secretary's Report (CH)</p>	<p>CH offered thanks to the Oxford team including Professor Edwin Williamson, Richard Stayt, Suzanne Leedham.</p> <p>Funds are healthy with no concerns over budget. The online store had worked very well and should be used in the future. Abstracts should continue to be submitted electronically in future. The introduction of PGR helpers had been a great success – they received free attendance at the conference in exchange for their help. The posters had worked very well. CH was congratulated on a most successful conference.</p>	
<p>9. Membership Secretary's Report (AD)</p>	<p>This would be AD's last report and TD thanked AD for all her hard work for the AHGBI.</p> <p>There were 85 new members.</p> <p>AD wondered whether, in the light of the introduction of the database, it would be possible to continue with the Directory. The Embassy had approached AD with a view to gaining access to the AHGBI contact list. AD would issue them with a password for them to gain access to the database.</p> <p>All members would still be issued with login details and they could then update their own profiles.</p> <p>It was reported that Duncan Wheeler would take over as Membership Secretary.</p>	
<p>10. Webmaster's Report (MT in absentia)</p>	<p>The website was now up and running. TD thanked MT for all his work with this. A document (below) set out the report.</p> <p>TD thanked Don Fidel López of the Spanish Embassy in particular for the funding that had made these improvements possible.</p>	
<p>11. PG Officer's Report (AG)</p>	<p>AG thanked TD for his energy in getting new awards set up.</p> <p>Publicity of the awards is still an issue and PGs and ECRs were encouraged to look at the website regularly for information.</p> <p>AG had had certificates printed to be distributed to prize-winners.</p>	<p>NB. A Facebook site has now been set up by Katie Brown: https://www.facebook.com/groups/146378552205219/</p>

12. Prizes and bursaries	<p><u>AHGBI/Spanish Embassy Travel Award</u></p> <p>Agata Lulkowska (Birkbeck College, University of London) Dilys Jones (Trinity St David's, University of Wales) Mirna Vohnsen (University College, Dublin), Maria Belén Rabadán Vega (University College, Dublin) Fiona Noble (Aberdeen University) Beatriz Tadeo Fuica (St Andrews University) Leticia Villamediana (Queens University Belfast) Laura Rodríguez Isaza (University of Leeds) Jose Peñón García (University College, Dublin)</p> <p><u>AHGBI CONFERENCE TRAVEL AWARD</u></p> <p>Anna Kathryn Kendrick (Cambridge) Paul Lennon (Cambridge) Nadia Oberto (Cambridge) Charles Maurice Pigott (SOAS, London) Holly Pike (University of Birmingham) Eamon McCarthy (Queens University Belfast) Olivia Vázquez-Medina (Royal Holloway University of London) Katie Brown (King's College London)</p> <p><u>AHGBI/Spanish Embassy Postgraduate Publication Prize with Tamesis Books:</u></p> <p>Cecilia Sosa (Queen Mary, University of London)</p> <p><u>AHGBI/Spanish Embassy Postgraduate Publication Prize with Legenda – Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Cultures:</u></p> <p>David Miranda-Barreira (University of Bangor, Wales)</p>	
13. ACLAIR and library liaison (GW)	See report below.	
14. UCML (LT)	See report below.	

Webmaster's report

The new AHGBI website went live in early March and appears to be working as intended. Half of the cost of the design and development work has been covered by a grant from the Spanish Embassy. As well as achieving a much more attractive overall look (including a new logo), the redesign has brought the following enhancements:

- images from places around the Hispanic/Lusophone world supplied by members of the Association
- a news/announcements section
- listing of new books published by members of the Association
- listing of major research projects led by members
- better presentation of useful links, forthcoming events, and vacancies and studentships
- an online conference proposal submission form
- an archive of programmes and photos from past AHGBI conferences
- a streamlined membership application process, including online payment in euros for Irish and Europe-based members
- links to Twitter and Facebook (if someone volunteers to set up a Facebook group – perhaps a postgrad member?)
- a login facility for members, who can check and update their own profile, including details of research interests
- once logged in, members can search the Directory of Hispanists to find an individual, a Department staff list, or a list of people with research interests in a particular area or period or matching specified keywords
- the online Directory also allows the Membership Secretary and Treasurer to access the same password-protected parts of the database in order to maintain their records of membership and subscriptions
- easier maintenance of the site by the Webmaster

I plan to offer some of the pages translated into other relevant languages. Other minor improvements and additions will be made in due course.

There will therefore be benefits for the Association, its members and our discipline more widely. The new website provides:

- an attractive, professional public image for the Association
- efficient, low-cost administrative resources for the officers of the Association
- a tool for keeping members informed about the Association, fellow Hispanists and related organizations, and for facilitating communication and collaboration between them
- a vehicle for promoting Hispanism, the achievements of Hispanists based in the UK and Ireland, and the Hispanic/Lusophone world in general

M. Thompson

ACLAIR and British Library Report

ACLAIR (<http://aclair.org.uk>) acts as a focus for Latin American and Iberian studies in libraries of all kinds in the UK. Geoff West reported that in 2012-13 it has continued to focus its efforts on engaging with academics, particularly early-career researchers and postgraduates. It normally offers concessions to the latter at events (e.g. the joint seminar on 21st Century Fiction from Spain at the Instituto Cervantes, 18/04/13). ACLAIR hosted its annual introduction to the resources of the British Library and London University for postgraduates from PiLAS (BL, 23/11/12). Future events will include a joint seminar on 21st Century Fiction from Latin America (at ISA, University of London; early 2014). GW also expressed regret at the final closure of an ACLAIR-member library, that of Canning House. However, on a positive note, much of the stock had been transferred to the library of King's College London.

British Library: As the Library no longer offers study days for beginning postgraduates in Modern Languages, Hispanic Collections (in European Studies) is willing to give introductory talks on the BL and resources to postgraduates in Hispanic Studies. Any supervisors interested should contact Barry Taylor (barry.taylor@bl.uk) or Geoff West (geoff.west@bl.uk).

UCML Report (25/3/2013)

UCML co-organized an event on collaborative provision in HE sponsored by the British Academy in February. Despite the weather it was well attended, with 50 people making it through the snow. One of the areas discussed was Portuguese together with its traditional reliance on support from the Instituto Camoes, now reducing. Portuguese was determined to be flourishing despite small numbers of staff. There are some BGP plans to collaborate at Postgraduate level. UCML has strengthened its links with HEFCE as a result of this event and is involved in talks there this April. HEFCE has declared that it is keen for languages to remain part of a strong HE provision and in a diversity of institutions. HEFCE recognizes that market forces do not match demand to national needs.

I would also draw your attention to the data available on language provision in the British Academy's *Languages: The State of the Nation* Report which came out on 14 February. This document is a valuable resource for all involved in language delivery. Another report, this time with a Europe-wide remit, has just been published by the British Council: *Language-Rich Europe*, which shows the UK to be in a parlous state in terms of language capacity.

UCML was notified formally of HEFCE's plan to consult on post-14 REF and sent a response to the consultation (today). UCML also responded to the BIS consultation on Open Access raising concerns about Open Access and how it could apply to languages research.

We were advised that following David Cameron's U-turn on the E-Bacc that languages are no longer compulsory for achieving A-C grades and the indicators are that take up to GCSE will be badly affected after the boost afforded in recent years. The present plans for secondary education include language entitlement up to KS2 only. UCAS figures are showing a downturn for language applications which does not augur well for the coming academic year. The UCML Chair reported he had liaised with various Departments at risk of having specialist language degrees withdrawn. University Alliance members have made a special case to HEFCE for protection of language degrees entitled *Maintaining the Strength and Diversity in HE*.

Forthcoming is the Plenary and AGM to look at steering a course through the current situation, 5 July. There will be a 'Managing Departments in Difficult Times' event again in September 2013, date to be confirmed.