

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 19 November 2011 at the Institute of Historical Research – 11 a.m.**

**Present:** Ann Hughes, Co-Convenor (Keele), Keith McLay Co-Convenor (Chester), Glenn Richardson, Secretary (St Mary's UC), Rainer Schulze, Treasurer (Essex)  
Chris Aldous (Winchester), Joan Allen (Newcastle), Richard Allen (Wales, Newport), Sarah Ansari (Royal Holloway University of London), Ewan Cameron (Edinburgh), Emma Cavell (Exeter), Malcolm Chase (Leeds), Jonathan Conlin (Southampton), Karin Dannehl (Economic History Society/Wolverhampton), James Davis (Queen's Belfast), Andrew Dilley (Aberdeen), Trevor Dean (Roehampton), Harry Dickinson, Jackie Eales (Historical Association/Christ Church Canterbury), Dejan Djokić (Goldsmiths College, London), Bryce Evans (Liverpool Hope), Andrew Foster (Historical Association/Southampton), Amanda Goodrich (Open), Daniel Gordon (Edgehill), Karen Harvey (Sheffield), Colin Jones (Royal Historical), Rep Mike Maddison (OFSTED), Lucinda Matthew-Jones (Swansea), Frank McDonough (Liverpool John Moores), Simon Lambe (St Mary's UC/Student Rep), Philip Ollerenshaw (U. West of England), Panios Panayi (de Montfort), Rogelia Pastor-Castro (Strathclyde), Robert Poole (Cumbria), Pedro Ramos Pinto (Manchester), Paul Readman (King's College, London), Anne Elizabeth Redgate (Newcastle), Rebecca Rist (Reading), Andrew Roach (Glasgow), Faye Simpson (Manchester Metropolitan), Ulf Schmidt (Kent), Chris Storrs (Dundee), Neil Wynn (Gloucestershire)

### **1. Apologies**

Di Drummond, John Young, Jason Peacey

### **2. Minutes of the Plenary meeting of 20 November 2010**

Accepted as a correct record subject to one correction: Dr Amanda Power is at the University of Sheffield not Leeds.

### **3. Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising

#### **4. Convenors' Reports**

Ann Hughes: Thanked Jackie Eales for her work over many years as a member of the Steering Committee and as Co-Convenor. The meeting congratulated her on becoming President of the HA and a token of appreciation on behalf of History UK was presented.

AH will have been Co-Convenor for 4 years by the time of the 2012 Plenary. It being appropriate for a reasonable turn-over of officers of HUK, a new Co-Convenor would be sought in 2012. Expressions of interest should be directed to Ann or to members of the Steering Committee.

Reported on the range of activities in which HUK had been involved since the last plenary. These included a response to the consultation regarding REF.

History UK was also involved in consultation on the National Curriculum for English school alongside the HA and other bodies. The advice offered was that History ought to be a compulsory subject to 16 but this seems unlikely to be implemented as government policy.

History UK was also involved in discussion following the end of HEA subject centre and the Subject Lead in History is closely associated with HUK. We conducted a survey on the effects of ending the British Academy small research grants scheme and submitted evidence to the Academy's Chair, Prof. Sir Adam Roberts. The Academy has now brought back the small grants scheme, albeit in a modified form.

Other matters reviewed were HUK's representation to London Metropolitan University over the closure of history. The meetings of the Steering Committee had proved a useful forum for representatives from universities in the devolved nations to meet, discuss common issues and inform SC deliberations.

There were problems with the website but a sub-committee of the SC had been formed to address this issue and it was expected that the website would be re-launched early in 2012 and hosted on IHR web services.

There had been fruitful discussion with RHistS regarding closer relationship with HUK. While a merger of the two bodies was

considered, it was agreed in discussion that a closer working relationship was preferable to a merger.

## **5. Secretary's report**

The secretary reviewed the current membership of the Steering Committee and reiterated that elected representatives served for 3 years with the possibility one renewal and that regular attendance at SC meetings was expected.

The following members of the SC were stepping down after a number of different terms:

Prof. Michael Hicks (Winchester) 2005

Dr Peter Shapely (University of Wales, Bangor) 2005

Dr Nicholas White (Liverpool John Mores) 2005

Prof. Neil Wynn (Gloucestershire) 2005

Dr James Davis (Queen's University, Belfast) 2008

Dr Glenn Richardson (St Mary's UC) 2005 was due to step down but at the Steering Committee Meeting of 15 October 2011 he was nominated from the floor to remain as Secretary for another three years in the interests of administrative continuity given the exceptional circumstance of his having only taken on the role a year ago. This was endorsed by the Plenary.

The assumption of the Steering Committee is that unless a member specifically asks to step down after three years, they automatically remain on the committee for a further three.

Accordingly, there were five vacancies on the Committee

The following people have been nominated in the Call for Nominations sent out after the Steering Committee meeting of 16 October.

Dr Lowri Ann Rees (University of Wales Bangor)

Professor Donald MacRaild, (Northumbria University)

Dr Mark Clapson, (University of Westminster)

Dr Paul Corthorn (Queen's University, Belfast)

Dr Robert McNamara, (University of Ulster)

The five nominations were accepted by the Plenary Meeting and the nominees were declared elected to the Steering Committee with effect from the first meeting of 2012.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that History UK finances were currently in a good state but that a very large number of subscriptions remained outstanding. These would be followed up and in conjunction with the re-launch of the History UK website; a drive for subscriptions would be undertaken during 2012.

## **7. Any other Business**

Colleagues were urged to support a petition protesting about the lack of funding from the EU for humanities research.

## **8. Presentations and discussions**

In addition to the business of the Annual Plenary Meeting, there were three presentations on two broad topics.

### **I. History teaching and the Secondary Curriculum in England and Scotland.**

Mike Maddison, National Adviser for History, England, OFSTED. Presented a review of History:

History for all – History in English Schools 2007-10

Mr Maddison reported on the teaching of history at Primary and Secondary Levels in England. The media's reception of report was overwhelmingly negative in tone, despite optimistic report. Meant

to advise policy makers but also intended for teachers to improve practice based on evidence.

Issues raised or discussed in the report included the extent or otherwise of chronological continuities in various curricula. The lack of teaching specialists at primary level was also a source of concern.

At secondary level, attainment levels were found to be high; teachers are highly-qualified; British History is taught – but is still too Anglocentric. Pupils don't really cover Britain beyond England and its priorities. It was possible to study the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to three times between Years 9 and 12.

The issues for Key Stage 4 and post-16 education were around assessment, limited student choice and perhaps too heavy a reliance on set texts 'with all you need to know to pass' in them. Skills of independent learning and 'Historical thinking'- beyond knowledge acquisition- skills of problem solving and thinking, forming opinions should be promoted at this level.

## **II. A summary of the presentation prepared by Mr Maddison is attached to these Minutes as Appendix 1.**

**Professor Harry Dickinson** : (Edinburgh-retired) reported on behalf of Chris Whatley, on the review of History in Scottish Schools for the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Professor Dickinson reviewed the teaching of history in Scotland reflecting that Scottish history teachers are very well trained and the best students are well taught. He reviewed the types of schools in the Scottish system and also the role of the single examination board for all Scottish schools.

The Review of which he was part looked at the Scottish system of education and the place of history within a range of elements of history within a range of elements of Scots, British, European and World History.

Some of its main criticism was that there was too heavy an emphasis on studying short extracts from sources. There was also very heavy emphasis on later modern history; very little medieval history and a danger of a somewhat nationalistic approach to Scottish history itself.

There was a danger of reliance on set texts and 'spoon feeding' as in England. At junior levels there was some lack of subject specialisation among teachers but at higher levels there were good specialist teachers in senior positions. There was a lack of subject advisors and mentors to help junior teachers and non-subject specialists at Primary Level.

Issues in discussion included: HE support for teachers from university historians, helping with source material, critiquing material on websites; secondary teachers should also be in touch with primary, so secondary had a better idea of what primary school students had done. There were advantages for HE lecturers in being aware of what is going on in schools and Issue inhibiting cooperation between schools and university departments included how can post-16 teachers easily access local universities? Perhaps the RHistS or HA could also have a role in co-ordinating or advising on mentoring?

### **III. Update on Responses to the recent consultation on the Research Excellence Framework**

Professor Chris Wickham, Chair of the REF sub-panel for History and member of Main Panel D

Prof. Wickham reported on the REF consultation process. There had been a broadly positive response to HEFCE consultation documentation of July. HEFCE and 4 main panels had taken feedback seriously.

Prof. Wickham reviewed a range of issues which had been considered in the light of the consultation and which would be clarified further in final documentation due out in early 2012. These included the allowance to be made for submissions by academics who had been on pregnancy leave during the review period, the double-weighting of extensive books, text editions, websites and articles.

He reviewed the current understanding of 'impact'. HEFCE had not been sympathetic to the position of smaller departments or units in respect of the number of Impact case studies to be produced. He emphasised the importance of a clear narrative that demonstrates the relationship of output to impact. Other issues discussed were the nature of the evidence of impact – which is sometimes wider than might be assumed.

Professor Wickham reviewed the Environment component of submission and emphasized the importance of being able to

demonstrate a sustainable infrastructure of research support and staff development. He went on to answer a wide range of specific questions from the floor arising from his remarks.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm

Glenn Richardson

Secretary

25 November 2011

#### **IV. Appendix 1**

##### **History for all**

##### **History in English schools 2007/10**

Age group: 5–19. Published: March 2011. Reference no:

090223V.**THE MEDIA**

##### **Ofsted's News Release – Sunday 13 March 2011**

##### **History a successful subject in schools**

- History is being taught successfully in schools and most pupils enjoy well-planned lessons that extend their knowledge, challenge their thinking and enhance their understanding, according to an Ofsted report published today. However, whole-school curriculum changes have affected the quality of teaching for 11 to 14 year olds.
- The report '**History for all**', based on evidence from inspections of history between April 2007 and March 2010 in 83 primary schools and 83 secondary schools, found history was generally a popular and successfully taught subject

##### **VITHE REPORT – STRUCTURE**

##### **Executive Summary – Key findings – Recommendations**

##### **Part A – Inspection evidence**

- Analysis of provision and outcomes in both primary and secondary schools for achievement, teaching, the curriculum, leadership & management

##### **Part B – Issues**

- Developments in Key Stage 3
- Using ICT to promote achievement in history
- Ensuring the best learning in history
- History and young people's social responsibility

**Including:** what constitutes most effective and least effective practice

##### **VII3.1 PRIMARY OVERVIEW**

In the schools visited **history was generally a popular and successful subject, which many pupils enjoyed. Achievement** was good or outstanding in 63 of the 83 schools visited.

**For example:**

In the Early Years children were gaining confidence in **asking questions** and making accurate comparisons. In **Key Stage 1** pupils had a good understanding of the importance of **basing their ideas on evidence and** were developing the skills of hypothesising, questioning and investigating. By the end of **Key Stage 2** pupils could **evaluate a range of historical sources** and were aware of different views about the events they had studied

*'We learn from the past ... ..but sometimes we keep repeating similar mistakes'(Year 5 pupil)*

**Primary concerns**

History Pupils generally had good knowledge of particular topics and episodes in history but their chronological understanding and their ability to make links across the knowledge they had gained were undeveloped.

- Teachers found it difficult to establish a **clear mental map of the past for pupils.**
- **Result:**
  - pupils ended up with an **episodic knowledge of history**
  - their sense of time was unclear
  - some pupils found it difficult to place the historical episodes they had studied within any coherent, long-term narrative.
- The **curriculum structure for primary schools was itself episodic** and militated against pupils grasping an overview.

**IX3.3 Primary concerns – the whole school curriculum**

In some schools the growth of cross-curricular framework was diluting the subject's identity. In 16 of these schools, the history was not explicit enough and planning for progression in historical knowledge and thinking was undeveloped.

- **Including history** in a thematic approach did not of itself undermine the integrity of the subject.
- **Pupils' progress in history tended to be slower in the schools visited that did not teach history as a discrete subject than in those that did.**

*'That's not history, that's topic' (Year 6 pupil)*

**X3.4 The roots of the concerns** Teachers lack confidence because

- many are non specialists – subject knowledge is variable
- there is limited training for trainee teachers
- there are limited opportunities for in-service professional training.

Quality of **subject training**: inadequate in 1 in 3 schools in which it was judged.

**Result – Teachers:**

- are unclear about standards expected
- do not fully appreciate progression in historical thinking
- have hazy understanding of how to assess effectively in history.

“There is a pressing need for primary teachers to be better supported in their professional development in history, and for the curriculum to ensure that pupils study overview as well as in-depth topics so that they can develop a coherent chronological framework for the separate periods and events that they study.”  
(Executive Summary)

**Xi SECONDARY OVERVIEW** History was successful in most of the secondary schools visited because it was well taught by very well-qualified and highly competent teachers and well led. **Achievement** was good or outstanding in 59 of the 83 secondary schools visited. It was inadequate in only two schools.

- The National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 has led to much **high-quality teaching and learning** in history.
- **Attainment** in the secondary schools visited **was high and has continued to rise**, particularly at GCSE and A level where results compare favourably with other subjects.
- **Myth**: the view that **too little British history** is taught in secondary schools in England.
- **Myth**: students at GCSE and A level do not **only study Hitler** but the national concern that most students study modern world history at GCSE and again at A level has some basis.

*'It makes you think' (student Year 9)*

**XII.4.1 Secondary concerns – Key Stage 3 whole**

**school** Achievement was weaker in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4 and in 1 in 5 of the secondary schools visited, curriculum changes at Key Stage 3 were having a negative impact on teaching and learning in history.

- **Causes:**
  - more non-specialist teaching
  - whole-school curriculum changes in Key Stage 3 such as
    - the introduction of a two-year Key Stage 3
    - thematic approaches to the curriculum – competency & cross curricular

- **Results:**
  - curriculum time for teaching history had been reduced
  - **some students were giving up history before the age of 14**
  - history was becoming marginalised

*'It can't be important because we don't spend much time on it.'*  
(Year 8)

**XIII4.2 Secondary concerns – departmental** Planning for progression in the development of knowledge, understanding and subject-specific thinking was weak in some of the secondary schools visited.

- **Revisions to provision** for history at Key Stage 3 had not been thought through carefully enough.
- Key aspects overlooked: while some departments made excellent provision for the study of local history, in most of the schools visited **local history was virtually ignored.**
- **Fundamental:** the failure of some subject leaders to provide a rationale for why what is being taught has been chosen and why it is being covered in a particular way made this situation worse.

*'We need to know about the past as it helps us to respect people more.'* (Year 9)

#### **XIV4.3 Secondary concerns – Key Stage 4 and post**

**16** Patterns of entry for GCSE history varied considerably between different types of school: only 30% of students in maintained schools took the subject in 2010 compared with 48% in independent schools, and 20% in academies.

- **Students were restricted in their subject options at GCSE:** in some of the schools visited some had been steered towards subjects which were perceived to be less demanding than history.
- **Assessment at GCSE:** examination questions, especially about dealing with sources, have become formulaic and, increasingly, teachers have been able to drill students to do well in them.
- **Lower ability students are not served well at KS4** – decline in entry level numbers reflects a lack of confidence in this form of assessment.
- **An over-dependence on set text books** did not prepare students well in some sixth forms for the challenges of higher education.

*'History has taught me to read between the lines'* (Year 11 student)

**XV.4.4 Secondary concerns – general** Enrichment activities: most effective schools used enrichment regularly to support learning. Teachers had made the link between securing high achievement and providing well-planned enrichment which introduced learners to new contexts and experiences for their thinking.

- **Misuse of levels of attainment:** too much superficial focus on National Curriculum levels, with many teachers making sweeping judgements about the level that students might have achieved in class, often based on flimsy evidence.
- **Key concern:** tendency for teachers to try to cover too much content and 'spoon-feed' students – teachers talked too much, lessons were rushed, opportunities for debate and reflection were missed, and students lost interest.
- **Differentiation by outcome** does not necessarily always meet the needs of all students.
- **Subject-specific expertise** in secondary schools is not being used to best effect in supporting local primary schools.

**XVI.4.5 Ensuring the best learning in history** The best learning in history took place when teaching developed pupils' historical knowledge and historical thinking.

- Historical thinking = ability to investigate, consider, reflect and review the events of the past.
- **Pupils' historical understanding was revealed in the way that they communicated that knowledge and their thinking.**
- **Most effective subject pedagogy**, which ensured high achievement in history, was shown by teachers whose approach focused on well-structured enquiry, embracing independent thinking and learning.
- **Fundamental to effective learning and high achievement:** a culture of resourcefulness, investigation and problem-solving in history.

*'History stops people believing rubbish'* (Year 8 student)

**XVII.RECOMMENDATIONS** The Department for Education should:

- review the requirements for initial teacher education and the provision of subject-specific professional development opportunities nationally to support primary school teachers more effectively in their work on history
- ensure that, as a result of the National Curriculum Review, pupils in primary schools experience history as a coherent subject which develops their knowledge, thinking and understanding, especially their chronological understanding,

and that all students in secondary schools benefit from a significant amount of history to at least the age of 14.

**Secondary schools should:**

- ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum in history are met in Key Stage 3
- ensure that pupils have a greater understanding of the history of the interrelationships of the different countries which comprise the British Isles
- ensure that technology is exploited to best effect in the teaching and learning of history
- ensure that sixth form history students read widely in preparation for the demands of higher education.

**Primary schools should:**

- focus on developing pupils' secure understanding of chronology as well as improving their thinking and knowledge in history.

**All schools should:**

- develop formal and informal networks, clusters and federations to provide greater opportunities for teachers of history to work together on subject-specific training.

**History for all: accessible for all, meaningful to all and achievable by all**