

COUNCIL FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ENGLISH
Minutes of the AGM Business Meeting
7 May 2011 at 2pm
St Anne's College, Oxford

1. Susan Watkins sent her apologies to the Meeting. The Chair announced that Susan Watkins was stepping down as Assistant Secretary and thanked her for her work on the Committee.
2. Minutes of the OGM held on 4 December, 2010 at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London, were approved. There were no matters arising.

3. Chair's Report (Linda Anderson)

Full text of the oral report given by the Chair:

Each time I have made my Chair's report over the last two years, I have been surveying a turbulent or uneasy future in HE. After the elections on Wednesday, we are also looking out on an increasingly fractured or fragmented landscape, where a deepening North-South divide, and the different choices made by Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, will have their own impacts on what happens, instituting increasingly pronounced differences in HE provision.

I was interested that Sir Adam Roberts drew our attention to a longer history, as well as remarking on the peculiar way in which HE is attracting so many proposals for change, when it has proved itself one of the main success stories of the UK, in economic as well as other terms. That longer view, as well as the knowledge of our success, is important to hang on to, in times which seem determined to ignore both.

At the OGM you will remember we were on the eve of the vote in the House of Commons to raise student fees to an upper limit of 9k, and we were also debating, with passion and concern, the government proposal to remove teaching funding from Band D, in effect most Arts and Humanities subjects. As a result of that meeting a letter was drafted and sent to David Willetts by the Executive, and, though it had little effect on government policy, it did, I think, draw us together with a sense of common cause. David Willetts did eventually reply, dismissing our fears, and insisting that funding was simply coming from a different route (i.e. from students). It seems as if there has been some rowing back by him from the Browne report, with its proposal that certain subjects - STEM subjects - were so strategically important that they had to be protected, but we have to remain uneasy, particularly given the crassness of David Willetts' recent remarks about social mobility and women which scarcely warrant his nickname of 'two brains' (maybe divide by 4).

Certainly it is true that at the BA on 1st March this year, Willetts publicly endorsed the importance of the Arts and Humanities, acknowledging their global reputation and their popularity. He also said that English had been one of the 'star turns' of the Impact pilot, confirming our view that this was an exercise that the Arts were not expected to do well at. He also made the point, which I think deserves some reflection, that an emphasis on public discourse, which is a consequence of 'impact', means that the natural and medical

sciences find themselves increasingly drawing on the Arts and Humanities. If this is true, and I believe it may be, I wonder if people working in those disciplines recognise how often they are using literature to illustrate or illumine their public narrative. There are, however, some contradictions in the current situation, despite Willetts' reassurances, which are concerning to say the least.

1. How far are the assumptions underlying Browne and the priority given by his report to STEM subjects, seeing them as underpinning future economic recovery, still guiding government policy.
2. The government is encouraging, indeed, insisting on widening participation, as part of the new fees regime, but its policies are undoubtedly divisive and pushing Universities towards greater elitism. Our earlier discussion about the future of PG funding voiced fears about PG work only being open to students who could afford to pay.
3. The belief in the benefits of the market, a cornerstone of current ideology, has been contradicted by government response to most Universities choosing the upper limit as the level at which to set fees. This upsets the sums, of course, and in response the government has been rather belligerently threatening penalties, which might include controlling the market, by lowering the number of students.
4. Any statement about the value of the Arts and Humanities has nevertheless been accompanied by policies which have included the closure of local libraries and the cuts in Arts Council funding to many organisations including NAWE, PBS, and various important small presses.
5. The government's justification for introducing fees is partly based on wanting us to recognise the importance of teaching more. This however has not prevented funding to HEA being cut, and as a consequence (though not a necessary consequence – the HEA has chosen a particularly damaging way of implementing the cuts), the English Subject Centre, as well as others, is to close at the end of July.

The subject centre has been an important means of us raising awareness about new developments, and about good practice in our subject discipline, and this can only be seen as a diminishing of our resources and possibilities. CCUE had a historic role in the particular way ESC was set up and has received regular reports about its activities. I want us to debate the ways in which we can possibly carry some of its legacy into the future. However for the moment I want us to record our thanks to Ben Knights and his team for all their exciting and innovative work for the subject, and for the manner in which they have coped with an exceptionally difficult time.

It remains for me to record a few news items:

1. The AHRC has attracted controversy because of misreporting by the *Observer*. I want to echo something Sir Adam Roberts said about the flight into self-righteousness, and encourage us to look to the bigger picture. The fact is we have

someone from English (indeed former Chair of CCUE) leading AHRC and now chair of RCUK. English has never been in a stronger position in relation to the Research Councils. I hope Rick will be able to accept an invitation to speak at the OGM.

2. Greg Walker, another former Chair of CCUE, has been appointed to the Council of AHRC and I want to congratulate him.
3. I also want to pay tribute to the work of Judy Simons and Dinah Birch, chairs of the Impact pilot and REF sub-panel 29 respectively. Because of them we have highly effective leadership and we are, and have been, in safe hands. All the above 3 points should be seen as causes for optimism.

I have been Chair of CCUE for two years and this is the moment at which I am standing down. It has been a great privilege to be Chair and to work with members of the Executive, particularly the two secretaries, David Duff and Susan Watkins (who is also standing down and who I want to record our thanks to). CCUE has, more than ever, important work to do, and I hope you will all go on supporting it, and encouraging your institutions to support it as well.

4. Report from ESSE (Marcus Walsh)

The ESSE Board Meeting took place on 23-24 August in Turin. It was followed by the ESSE biennial conference, ESSE10, 24-28 August.

Marcus Walsh represented CCUE at the Board Meeting.

The Board Meeting agenda included a Report from the President, an account of activities of the Executive since 2009, contacts with member associations, and contacts with the ESSE committees.

The Treasurer (Tim Caudery) presented the Accounts and Auditors' Report, with expected income and expenditure in 2010. The present financial position of ESSE is 'very satisfactory'. 2009 was 'a neutral year financially', and the same is expected in 2010, despite greater anticipated expenditure. Current assets are circa €134k. Total membership is steady. However, membership from the United Kingdom has, after a notable rise in 2008, fallen again steeply:

2007	2008	2009	2010
195	673	488	350

This is a matter of concern to the ESSE Board, and must be so to CCUE.

Reports were received from the Secretary (Slavka Tómaščíková), from the new editor of *The Messenger* (Marina Dossena), and from the Webmaster (Jacques Ramel).

An application from the Albanian Society for the Study of English (ASSE) was presented, considered, and approved.

A report was given by the Bursary Committee (Maria Georgieva, chair; Išil Bas; Marcus Walsh). Type B Bursaries, 'for scholars already holding a PhD or its equivalent', have up to now been available only to academics from Central and Eastern European countries.

The Bursary Committee suggested that political and economic changes made the lifting of this restriction appropriate. Marcus Walsh drafted a new wording: 'Applications are invited from all ESSE member countries. Awards are made on the basis of academic merit. Priority will be given to scholars employed at Universities in Central and Eastern Europe who are in need of support to pursue a project or programme of research.' This was accepted. Maria Georgieva stood down. Smiljana Komar was nominated to replace her. Marcus Walsh was nominated chair of the committee, which has now made 2011 awards.

A report was given by the Book Awards Committee. Among the award winners were David Duff, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (OUP, 2009); Matthew Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction After the Invention of the News* (OUP, 2009). Though a number of entries were made by UK scholars in literature and cultural studies, none were made in the area of language studies.

ESSE conference registration fees were considered. It was agreed that accompanying persons should pay 25% of the full fee (€30), and that PhD students should pay 50% of the full fee (€60).

A proposal by Liliane Louvel, of doctoral student sessions at ESSE11, was presented, considered and agreed.

A report from the organisers of ESSE11 was received. Concern was expressed about the high cost of hotel accommodation in Istanbul.

The Nominations Committee (Chair Smiljana Komar) reported that, for each of the posts of Treasurer and Secretary, no nominations had been received apart from the incumbents, Tim Caudery and Slavka Tómaščíková. Both were re-elected to their posts.

A report on *The European Journal of English Studies* was presented by Martin Kayman as General Editor. Though core subscriptions are marginally down, the journal is performing well through online platforms, and is considered a success by the publishers (Routledge). Online agreements with libraries have nearly doubled since 2009. Routledge has now started to publish selected Journal Special Issues. Authors and guest editors from many European countries have contributed; the UK accounts for by far the largest share, with 27.6% of the total. The editors believe they have created for the journal a distinctive identity, with a wide range of disciplinary and methodological approaches. Two new General Editors were appointed: Greta Olson (Institut für Anglistik, Giessen), and Stephanos Stephanides (University of Cyprus), replacing Angela Locatelli and Ansgar Nünning.

Nominations for Advisory Editors were sought at the Board from ESSE members. David Duff (literature) and Susan Hunston (language) were nominated by MW on behalf of CCUE.

Members of ESSE member organisations are urged to continue to subscribe to eupdates and Table of Contents alerts; publicise *EJES* at conferences; set up links to *EJES* on departmental webpages and on blogs; encourage colleagues to request free sample copies

from the website; inform colleagues of free articles available on the *EJES* homepage; and lobby to have their libraries subscribe.

The conference, ESSE10, attracted a record 750 delegates, from European and from a number of other countries. The academic quality of the sessions was (judging by those attended by MW) very high indeed.

Only one bid for ESSE12 (2014) was received, from the Department of British and US Studies at Pavel Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, and the Slovak Association for the Study of English. The bid was accepted.

Executive meetings will take place in 2010 (Istanbul) and 2011 (Albania, Prague).

The next ESSE Board Meeting will take place in Prague, 30-31 August, 2011. The 2012 ESSE Board Meeting will take place in Istanbul (3-4 September). It will be followed by the ESSE biennial conference, ESSE11 (4-8 September).

4. Treasurer's Annual Report (presented by Nahem Yousaf)

In December 2010 I reported that the CCUE finances were in a healthy state with just over £11,600 in the account. The balance on 1st May 2011 stood at £15,225, thanks largely to monies generated from the OGM in December (£2,790 banked by me, £300 through BACS and £250 received by David Duff, giving a total of £3,340). The subscriptions spread-sheet now shows that we have subs from 61 out of a possible 94 departments, a total of £4,880 in subscription revenue. This is up on 2009-10 when only 55 departments were members of CCUE. A reminder email was sent in February but it looks highly unlikely that any additional subscriptions will come in at this late stage in the year.

Money has also been paid out for expenses associated with CCUE business, including expenses for speakers at the December event. This totals £1,209.79 and includes £200 for the book prize. In addition to this I also made a payment of €3,290 or £2,970 for ESSE membership. The spread-sheet shows that 321 members (from 27 departments) have paid ESSE subs, this is down from 366 members last year. Marcus Walsh sent out an email to department heads outlining the advantages/importance of joining ESSE and hopefully this will have an impact for next year when I intend to include a version of the same email with my annual subscription request.

As reported in December, some remittance advice notes are still being sent to the wrong place but thankfully Sue Zlosnik is forwarding these. One interesting move is that more and more university finance departments are recognising CCUE as a “supplier” and this means that payments are despatched via BACS, though not always as quickly as the old-fashioned cheque. Nevertheless, being in a university’s financial system ensures that we do eventually receive payment.

5. Elections to the Executive Committee

Susan Bruce (Keele University) was elected and the following were re-elected for a 2-year period:

Scott Brewster
Nahem Yousaf
Helen Small
Peter Middleton
Angelique Richardson

The Chair announced that she was standing down but would continue to serve on the Executive, collecting statements from high profile graduates of English. An election of new Executive Officers was to take place at the Executive Meeting following the AGM.

6. English Subject Centre

The Meeting approved, in principle, that CCUE should continue the work of the English Subject Centre in hosting the annual Subject Leaders' Event and the New Career Lecturers' Event. The Meeting commended the invaluable work done by the Subject Centre under the leadership of Ben Knights and expressed their gratitude to the team.

7. A.O.B.

There was no other business.

Deborah Cartmell, Secretary, 13.5.2011