



The Society for the Study of French History

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held in Senate House, London,
Wednesday 16 January, 2013**

Present: Malcolm Crook (Chair), Tim Baycroft, Joe Bergin, Linda Briggs, Robin Briggs, David Hopkin, Dan Powers, Penny Roberts, John Strachan, Stephen Tyre, Andrew Smith, Karine Varley, Chris Warne, Joanna Warson, and Sandy Wilkinson.

1. Apologies for absence

Joseph Clarke, Maire Cross, Isabel di Vanna, Claire Eldridge, Kevin Gould, Mark Greengrass, Pam Pilbeam, Julian Wright and Jessica Wardhaugh.

2. Minutes of meeting held in York on 1 July 2012

The minutes were agreed.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Secretary's report:

a) Grants and bursaries

The Secretary reported that applications had been approved by the Trustees for two conference awards. The first, for £500, was awarded to Robert Cimino and Edward Roberts, PhD students at the University of St Andrews, for a conference on 'Politics and Texts in Late Carolingian Europe, c. 870–1000', to be held on 8–9 July 2013 at St Andrews. The second, for £350, was awarded to Ludivine Broch (Birbeck) and Alison Carrol (Brunel) for a conference entitled 'A Century Later: New Approaches to French History, 1914-45, to be held on 21 June 2013 at the Maison Française d'Oxford.

b) Proposal from Alison Carrol to establish regular SSFH Seminar in
Conjunction with the IHR.

The Secretary reported that he had received an initial enquiry from Alison Carrol (Brunel) about the possibility of the Society jointly sponsoring a Modern French History seminar at the IHR (£50), with the intention of inviting an early career researcher or an article prize winner from *French History*. The Committee expressed the desire to see a fully worked-up proposal (including establishing what the financial arrangements within the IHR were) before the Society could commit to any ongoing collaboration. There was also a consensus that consideration be given to opening up opportunities to hold SSFH-sponsored workshops and other events across the UK.

The Secretary reminded the committee of details of funding competitions sponsored by the Society, and urged as broad a communication of these as possible.

Deadline for Postgraduate Travel Grants, £750 Friday 29 March 2013

Ralph Gibson Bursary, £2000 GBP, 30 April 2013

Conference Bursaries, of up to £300, no deadline

Postgraduate Conference Panels, up to £2000 overseas conferences, no deadline

Visiting Scholars, up to £2000 GBP, no deadline.

Stephen Tyre agreed to progress the assessment of the annual dissertation prize.

There was some concern expressed about the number of applications for this year's prize; only 10-12 had been received. Tim Baycroft remarked that being nominated for a national prize of this nature was an incredibly positive experience for the students involved. Stephen Tyre remarked that the quantity of applications was less important than quality.

Action Point: The President to contact Alison Carrol to establish full details of the potential collaboration to bring before the committee/AGM in Cardiff in late June. The President was empowered by the committee to decide on one-off funding for the current year.

Action Point: Noelle Plack and Andrew Smith to publicise deadlines of upcoming funding competitions as widely as possible.

Action Point: Stephen Tyre to progress the assessment of the annual dissertation prize.

5. Report from the Treasurer

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF FRENCH HISTORY

Running accounts, 2009 – present

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Income				
Membership subscriptions (D/D)	£773.50	£708.50	£616.00	£553.00
OUP profit-share	£15,957.00	£16,412.00	£16,931.00	£21,520.00
Returned bursaries	£2,000.00	£300.00		
INVAC interest		2008-2009 £350.93	2010 £201.88	2011 £164.83
Conference income (publishers etc)			£50.00	
	<u>£18,730.50</u>	<u>£17,771.43</u>	<u>£17,798.88</u>	<u>£22,237.83</u>
Expenditure				
Prizes	£500.00	£2,500.00	£3,400.00	£2,000.00
Research/conference bursaries	£10,739.39	£9,900.00	£12,449.85	£9,477.00
French History expenses (incl. annual prize)	£3,577.73	£1,000.00	£2,728.22	£2,797.09
Conference Support (incl. annual conference & Douglas Johnson lecture)	£2,795.00	£1,000.00	£12,621.68 *	£4,169.66
Committee Expenses	£2,254.47	£1,071.24	£2,062.43	£1,084.54
Publication support (incl. web site)				<u>£1,874.60</u>
	<u>£19,866.59</u>	<u>£15,471.24</u>	<u>£33,262.18</u>	<u>£21,402.89</u>
			*Includes £7170.28 on 2009 Dublin conference	
Assets 31/12/2009	£81,046.03	31/12/2010 £83,346.22	31/12/2011 £67,882.92	31/12/2012 <u>£68,717.86</u>

1. At the June 2012 AGM, I predicted a small deficit for the financial year. In fact, this has translated into a small surplus (£834.94). The Society's assets remain healthy, and (setting the exceptional cost of the Dublin conference aside from 2011) we are probably spending too conservatively to reduce these in line with the goals set at the 2009 AGM (when we decided our assets should be reduced to around £50,000). Given this year's rise in the OUP profit share, it is probably time to reassess our overall expenditure in favour of being more liberal.

CW, 14/01/2013

The Treasurer, Chris Warne, circulated a snapshot of the Society's accounts (see above) in advance of the meeting. He noted that the Society had struggled in recent years to reduce its reserve to £50,000. While there is no external obligation to run down the reserve, which stands currently at £68,717, the consensus amongst the committee seemed to be that this was the right course – as long as it is handled prudently. The Treasurer noted that the substantial annual income generated from OUP was sustainable – a view endorsed by Penny Roberts.

The President enquired about the fluctuating expenses for committee members outlined in the accounts. The Treasurer explained that this figure included editorial board meetings, workshops and so forth.

£1,000 had been given to Professor Andress in partial remuneration for his excellent podcast on the French Revolution. The President encouraged anyone who wanted to put forward a proposal for a podcast to do so, and that the Society would do what it could to provide financial compensation for the huge

investment in time that this represented. Stephen Tyre noted that it might be useful to undertake a review of the effectiveness of this. There followed some discussion about the popularity of French History at A-Level, and whether providing better resources might do something to encourage teachers to take the subject on. Some publicity for the French Revolution podcast had been generated by Andrew Smith who had promoted it on social media and in *H-France* (also noting that it was very useful in driving traffic to the Society's website), while the President noted that some publicity would be appearing shortly (in *Teaching History*).

There was a call from Stephen Tyre for the committee to look again at the Society's funding schemes with a view to encouraging more applications. The President also requested that the value of the funding programmes be raised by 10% to take account of inflation. There appeared to be unanimous support for both these proposals.

The President thanked Chris for all of his work.

Action Point: Committee – to encourage proposals for further podcasts on French History. The Society is willing to offer some financial remuneration for this.

Action Point: Committee – to consider the Society's funding schemes to see whether these might be expanded in a way that would encourage more applications.

Action Point: The Secretary to bring a proposal to the AGM in July for a 10% increase on all funding programmes, rounded up to the nearest £50. This should apply to programmes from the current academic year forward.

6. Report from the Website Editor (presented by the Secretary):

The website editor, Kevin Gould, reported that the development of the new and updated website structure and format has proven successful, and its content continues to grow. This year has seen new resources hosted by the site - these include Society multimedia (Douglas Johnson lectures; Annual Conference pod and vid-casts, Workshops), and external material (David Andress French Revolution site; French History special issues).

In technical terms, the hosting of the site on NTU servers is proving secure and effective, with no immediate threat of removal. He suggested that the Society

maintain its presence there for the time being; reflections on the next phase of web development can shape its needs and positioning.

Kevin indicated that he remained open to suggestions from the committee about our web presence, and was happy to make amendments, updates and additions as required. He also proposed that the Society offer an online list of members, their contact details and research focus (much like the Catholic Reformation Research Network which has proven useful in allowing researchers to see fellow interests groups, and in facilitating external interest in fields and expertise (e.g. BBC news seeking an expert). It may even be possible to group these by chronology/field etc in the listing. We do not have such a community identity or clear statement of the breadth of French History scholarship within this site - thus academia and the outside world will not connect with it - and there can't be many of us who could name too many of our membership and their research interests. Surely this would be an advantage to all.

In response to this report, the committee suggested that Kevin make contact with OUP to collect this information when members renew / sign up, and to seek their permission to use the information in this way.

Tim Baycroft suggested that Kevin start in the first instance by collating this information for the committee.

The President thanked Kevin for all of his work.

Action Point: Kevin Gould to make contact with OUP to establish whether information on members' interests can be collected during renewal/sign-up, and whether they can seek the permission of members to publish this information on the website. He might also email members directly.

Action Point: Committee to furnish Kevin with any news / updates to put on the website.

7. Report from the Social Media Officer, Andrew Smith

Andrew reported that the Society's social media presence was fully active on Twitter and Facebook. He also reported the growing reach of this medium, especially amongst the postgraduate community.

The President thanked Andrew for all of his work.

Action Point: Penny Roberts to direct material to Andrew for Journal's Facebook account.

8. Report from the Membership Secretary (presented by the Secretary):

The Membership Secretary, Noelle Plack, reported that the Society has only 70 members, significantly down from last year. However, many people have yet to renew their membership/subscription. This may be partly due to OUP inefficiency.

There was some discussion amongst the committee about whether to impose a requirement that those presenting papers at the annual conference be members of the Society. Stephen Tyre noted that it was very hard to sell the membership of the Society. Nonetheless, there seemed to be a consensus that introducing a price differential for the conference fee would be a good idea. Going forward, it should certainly be implemented for 2014. Karine might look, however, at the practicalities of its implementation for 2013 in Cardiff.

Action Point: Membership Secretary to email reminding last year's members to be sure to renew. It may also worth contacting OUP – the President reported that he had received a renewal letter but had paid in November, while Professor Greengrass had difficulties in renewing online.

Action Point: Conference Organiser, Karine Varley, to liaise with Membership Secretary, so we might also target those who attended the conference in York last year.

Action Point: Conference Organiser, Karine Varley, to liaise with Cardiff to see whether they can implement a price deferential for members/non-members at this year's conference.

9. Report from the Editors of *French History*

Penny Roberts reported on behalf of herself and her fellow editor Julian Wright. The Journal was in good health, with a steady increase in submissions. The Modern period was swamped, especially for the nineteenth century; there is potential here for the development of a special issue. Penny indicated that her preference was for a chronologically broad spread of articles, and wished in particular to encourage medieval contributions. According to a recent report, Antipodean input had gone up exponentially – especially from Australia. The number of book reviews was also healthy. The Journal had engaged two special issues – Animals in French History and France (likely publication in 2014) and the Mediterranean World (likely publication in 2015-2016).

The President thanked Penny and Julian for their substantial efforts in editing the journal – the flagship of the Society.

Action Point: Committee to encourage colleagues to submit articles to the Journal. Committee to submit items to Jessica Wardhaugh for 'Society News' section.

10. Conferences:

The Conference Organiser, Karine Varley, expressed her thanks to Cardiff for hosting this year's annual conference at such short notice. The theme will be *Solidarities, Entanglements and Conflict in French History*. The Call for Papers had been extended to 10 January. To date, 75 proposals had been received, slightly down from the figure of 90 for York. However, this was still a good number. The President reported that, in discussion with Kevin Passmore at Cardiff, that a large number of the proposals had come from postgraduate students (50/75). There were also a large number from France. The committee agreed that, in many respects, this was a good result.

The President reported that he would try to renew the relationship with the French Embassy, via the cultural attaché, to secure funding for the conference.

The 2014 conference will be held in Durham, while in 2015 it will be hosted by St Andrews. The Committee agreed that since Chichester had seemed keen to help out, that the Secretary would approach the Head of History, Hugo Frey, about hosting the conference in 2016.

Action Point: President to attempt to renew relationship with the cultural attaché to secure contribution for the annual conference.

Action Point: Secretary to make contact with Dr Hugo Frey at the University of Chichester to see whether they might be willing to host the Society's conference in 2016.

11. Postgraduate representatives:

Joanna reported on the joint postgraduate conference with the ASMCF to be held on 2 March 2013. Whilst there had been a recent exchange of communications about the value of a conference on impact, there was support from the committee for what the objectives of the conference as set out, and for the fact that the term was to be understood broadly. There was some discussion on

finances, and how the costs of the event would be paid. Chris signaled his preference for writing a single cheque.

There was discussion about the possibilities of putting documentation online – guides to archives.

Action Point: Andrew and Karine to advertise the event to postgraduate students.

Action Point: Joanna to liaise with Chris over how the practicalities of funding the workshop.

Action Point: Joanna to liaise with Kevin about putting up guide to particular archives (esp: Aix archives on Algerian sources).

12. Douglas Johnson Lecture

The consensus of the committee was very much in favour of the current timing of the Douglas Johnson Lecture, not least since the last few years had witnessed robust attendance. Several potential speakers were discussed.

Action Point: President to decide on speaker for the Douglas Johnson Lecture 2014.

13. OPEN ACCESS

There was a robust discussion about the proposed open access policy. It was agreed that in financial terms, the plans would not affect the Society's finances as there was no economic threat to the journal. There are more profound issues affecting the profession, and the feeling of the committee was that the President should communicate our more general anxieties via the Royal Historical Society. Penny Roberts indicated that French History, along with a number of other leading journals in the field, had drafted a joint response to the proposed changes. Their position was that the journal would accept a combination of the new Author Processing Charge while permitting normal research repository archiving after an embargo period of three years. The Author Processing Charge would not affect any editorial decision making.

Action Point: Dan Power to report back to committee the outcome of the meeting on Open Access.

Action Point: Penny Roberts to circulate joint response of OUP journals to Open Access proposals.

14. Date of Next January Meeting and Douglas Johnson Lecture

The date for the next winter meeting was set for 15 January 2014.

15. AOB

Tim Baycroft reported that he had received emails from the Chinese Association for French Historians who were eager to establish links. He will write up what they do and put it in the Society's newsletter, and on social media. There may well be opportunities here for future collaborations and exchanges.

The President noted that the editors of the MUP series were keen to attract submissions. While the first publications have been theses, it will be important in the longer term for the series to attract more mature scholars.

Action Point: President to write back formally to the Chinese Association on behalf of Society

Action Point: To write something on the Chinese Association for circulation to members of the Society.