

The Society for the Study of French History

**Agenda Meeting of the SSFH Committee,**

**Institut français du Royaume-Uni, London**

**Monday 8th January 2017**

**2 p.m.**

## Agenda

In attendance:

David Andress, Jackie Clarke, Claire Eldridge, Andrew Smith, Mark Greengrass, Karine Varley, Daniel Power, Emily Hooke, Anais Pedron, Susannah Owen, Joe Bergin, Malcolm Crook, David Hopkin, Julian Wright, Máire Cross

1. Apologies for absence

Glenn Richardson, Penny Roberts, Will Pooley, Joseph Clarke, Laure Humbert, Munro Price, Sam Wilkinson

1. Minutes of previous committee meeting

The meetings of the previous committee meeting and AGM were made available for consultation in advance, and provided in hard copy at the meeting.

The committee approved the minutes.

1. Matters arising & Chair comments

DA noted that he would continue to explore creating more of a ‘network’ with sister organisations in other countries, notably the Society for French Historical Studies and the French Colonial History Society. This would allow for co-funding exchanges and the sharing of ideas.

DA noted that the process to update the society’s banking procedures was underway, and would be addressed in KV’s report

DA noted that new PG Reps had been appointed and were in place, to be welcomed officially later in the meeting.

DA noted that the issue of Journal Editorship was to be discussed

DA also raised the issues of the next Annual Douglas Johnson Memorial Lecture in 2019. He officially asked MCross if she would consider giving the lecture

1. Committee Appointments

*New PG Reps*

Emily Hooke (Southampton), Susannah Owen (QMUL)

*Discussion of Reviews Editor Applications*

2 applications (Stewart McCain & Jack Rhoden), JW withdrew

*Conference Officer*

No applications

The committee held a broader discussion of agenda items 4, 5 and 6. PR finishing her role, had advertised for expressions of interest (and also Reviews Editor). Difficulty that applicants were all men, and society found difficulty in balancing commitment to equality with filling the vacancies. Need to look at what can be done in terms of mentoring and so on to practically improve the situation. JW updated about the process of advertising and re-advertising the posts relating to the journal. Suggested we could either extend the search, or seek other medium-term solutions. MC asked about timescales for re-advertising. JW said that we need to liaise with OUP, and that there was not a lot of time to re-advertise. JW updated on Joe Clarke’s candidacy as co-editor. JW outlined his qualifications for the role including previous service and involvement with the journal. JW suggested having ‘associate editors’ for 2-3 years as a way of mentoring mid-career people, to help bring a better medium-term result. JC suggested expanding the editorial team would help to balance competing requirements of period coverage and gender balance.

JB clarified the nature of the associate editorial role, its function as a progression to the ‘senior editor’ role and whether it would be a standing role. JC asked about the need for period coverage, MCrook suggested it was useful to have variety of coverage in co-editors. JW discussed editor role as balancing reports etc required period knowledge. MC suggested broadening the search to focus on the editorial function rather than the period specificity. MG talked about the need for training the next generation and also ensuring continuity. Strongly supported idea for preferably 2 associate-editor roles.

DA suggested accepting Joe Clarke’s application, and then also creating associate-editor roles. JW said they could take Joe’s application forward to OUP. DA suggested creating process and context to reach out to broader audience in associate-editor roles. JW suggested running open applications while also targeting under-represented groups individually. KV discussed the ASMCF editorial board procedures, and supported the idea of bringing through people to be developed as a way of broadening the range of candidates. DA discussed the idea of the editorial board having pedagogical as well as editorial functions. General assent.

Reviews Editor: JW introduced the 2 applications. DH mentioned SMcCain’s admin role at St Mary’s as positive point. DA asked about job sharing. JW said OUP need it to be clear that one person was in charge, so there needed to be clarity there. MC said it made sense to have one person in charge. DA thanked committee for comments and would take selection forward with editorial board, JW etc to choose a candidate.

Committee: DA introduced Olivette Otele’s candidancy. DA suggested inviting to join committee as an excellent candidate to be involved with the committee (and JW suggested the editorial board also)

Conference Officer: DA introduced situation – no applications, nobody in post. DA suggested abolishing role and establishing more direct role between President and Secretary. MC suggested this was already the practice. General assent

ACTION:

Take Joe Clarke application forward for editorship

Get Associate-editor job roles written up by Easter, for conclusions to be presented by easter

Take forward Olivette Otele’s candidacy

1. Equality and Diversity

DA mentioned need for conference Code of Conduct. JW supported the idea, and talked about current work on panel chairing being done elsewhere that could serve as a guide. Talked about society’s heritage of encouraging younger colleagues and suggested it was positive to continue to improve this. KV talked about experience of Strathclyde conference, and suggested it would be helpful to say there should not be ‘all-male’ panels in the call for papers. CE suggested being explicit about ideas such as accessibility would be helpful. MG asked whether this would be submitted round attendees. Emily Hooke said receiving such a document makes attendees feel more comfortable. Susannah Owen said her own experience had been positive, but formalising and being explicit about this was positive. DA said he thought the conference was a friendly place, but this was not a given and to prevent problematic behaviour it would be helpful to make clear statements on boundaries of behaviour (ref. sexual harassment, politeness, general behaviour) as well as building in requirements about accessibility. MC said there was a key responsibility for organisers to address these and this should be made clear to future organisers. MG suggested this should be a document in the conference pack (and that recording content without permission was something to be on this), also should stress acceptability of French and English as languages of communication. DA suggested things like live tweeting of papers etc should be included as well.

CE mentioned the conference advice needed updating. DA asked CE to update it, send it to him with comments, then he would lead on reforming the document.

CE mentioned potential for professional support as a way of increasing diversity, and suggested society could fund. DA welcomed additional suggestions to become part of the write up.

ACTION:

Draft Conference Code of Conduct  
Update Conference advice document

1. Suggestions for New Activities

(see previous)

1. Update on lobbying on French Archive reform

DA updated on the petition which had been circulating in relation to proposed changes around the way that the French state deposited archival material – proposal to stop archiving a lot of newly produced material from administration. Jennifer Sessions drafted joint statement which was co-signed by a number of other society’s protesting the proposed changes. DA indicated that he had signed that joint letter on behalf of the society. Kevin Passmore making same feelings known at the French Archives user panel at the end of next week on behalf of the Society.

ACTION:

Kevin Passmore to report back

1. Report from the Journal Editors

JW presented a report included in the appendices.

Dan Power asked about if there was yet any impact of REF2021 on the journal. JW said he would speak to other OUP editors to discuss and plan the journal’s approach accordingly.

The committee issued its thanks to both Penny Roberts and Tim Baycroft for their work as Reviews Editor

1. Report from the Secretary

AS presented a report included in the appendices.

Note term ending, ask for applicants

ACTION:

Ralph Gibson prize readers – need to be renewed. Issue call to membership

1. Report from the Treasurer

KV presented a report included in the appendices.

KV noted that her was term ending, and the committee welcomed expressions of interest

MCrook checked that investment account still active, KV confirmed yes, though the Post Office’s communication remained poor.

MCross mentioned importance of conference organisers applying for Institut funding and inviting the HE Liaison. Also in potentially connecting the HE Liaison to the Institut and Embassy.

DA said as soon as the new banking arrangements were set up, the President & Secretary should review the account with the Treasurer to ensure stability and regularity of in/out if the society is to move towards having a lower cash holding in the bank.

MG said it would be good to devise an analysis of where the society’s key objectives could be met – financial and moral planning

ACTION:

Report to be produced on future actions in line with financial affair

1. Report from Postgraduate representatives

DA welcomed new PG Reps, Susannah and Emily

Anais Pedron presented a report included in the appendices.

Susannah Owen talked about acquiring video equipment to produce content. DA suggested renting equipment would be better. SO suggested the Society could produce interviews and so on. DA suggested this would be acceptable if a worked proposal came through.

Anais Pedron asked about the feasibility of a list for PG members. CE suggested she could ask OUP if this was possible, as at present it was not possible. DA said that in the next membership communication, PG members could opt in to a comms list.

ACTION:

PG reps to work proposals for creating content

1. Report from the Society News Editor

DA presented a report submitted by JW and included in the appendices.

The committee noted its thanks for JW’s continued great work in the post

1. Report from Website Editor

AS presented a report submitted by WP, and included in the appendices.

WP’s report noted his term ending. Committee discussed wisdom of splitting roles as per report: MCross suggested potentially one person with professional help? DA stressed the role should be integrated and not separated out.

MG stated the society needed to ensure that people not at the meeting were also involved to increase the talent base.

1. Report from the Membership Secretary

CE presented a report included in the appendices.

Noted term coming to an end, to begin discussion.

MCrook asked about chasing the standing order list. CE updated the committee on chasing down older members.

1. Report on ‘Studies in Modern French History’ Series at MUP

DH updated the committee on the health of the series.

DH stressed the strength of the series, pointing to 2017 Gladstone Prize – CE winner, AS shortlisted. Committee congratulated CE on award. Noted both moving to paperback in next 6 months. New title by A O’Connor, and another due in March, E Macknight (returning author). Not much in the pipeline, and would appreciate more coming through. Asked committee to speak to friends, colleagues, students about the series.

ACTION:

DH to produce short report as a call to action for the series on social media

1. Announcement of Undergraduate Dissertation Prize winners

DA announced the winner of the UG Dissertation Prize to the committee. As indicated at the last committee meeting, the winner had been invited to attend the Annual lecture to be presented with their prize.

1. Conference Matters

DA presented a report from PR, included in the appendices.

DA indicated that a formal expression of interest had been received from Leeds (included at appendix X), supplied copies of this to the committee, and invited CE to update the committee on plans. DP asked about potentially bringing closer to

AS informed the committee of contact with the ‘Centre Franco-Britanique’ in Ouistreham (near Caen) and their offer to host our annual conference in 2020 in their newly built centre. He had met with the mayor of Ouistreham and his team on behalf of the committee, to discuss whether the society could support their project, and had co-signed a letter with DA encouraging the heritage project.

At the meeting, they raised the possibility of hosting our conference, and believed the centre would serve well for this purpose. They have 2 teaching rooms which can accommodate c30 people, 1 lecture theatre with a capacity of around 400, and also a temporary exhibition space which could be turned over to the conference (as extra capacity of as an exhibition). They had also indicated that they would be able to offer/arrange guided visits to nearby historical sites (Caen, D-Day beaches, Bayeux tapestry). They said there was a lot of capacity in local hotels, which were notably less expensive than Paris, and good transport links.

A colloque international is being organised by the centre Franco-Britannique at Caen on 19-20 April, entitled ‘Mirror images: France – United Kingdom, a shared history’. A full programme is to be released this month, but the society had been invited to attend. This may be a useful moment to speak further with them

MG is on the academic advisory. MG said the building is underway and confirmed. MG said the accommodation was not as great as suggested, and the rooms were unlikely to be sufficient according to the plans. Also transport was likely to be a problem. DP suggested a partnership with the University of Caen might be a good idea. MG suggested an auxiliary conference to the annual conference would be good, though we would need to put money behind it. DA mentioned that Portsmouth was developing partnerships with Caen about planning Franco-British links and so this might be a possibility.

1. Date of next Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting will take place at our annual conference in Warwick, between 8 - 10 July 2018

1. Any Other Business

Nominations for REF sub-panel members. Opened Autumn, closed September. DA and Kevin Passmore nominated by the society after scrutiny by panel.

CE asked about plans for Routledge Handbook. DA said that call for proposals ends at the end of the month, and he will issue a reminder.

MCross asked about claims forms and signatories. KV updated on the banking process and signatories.

The meeting adjourned.