**Minutes of the AGS Business Meeting**

**77th Meeting, University of Manchester**

**10 April 2014, 3pm**

Committee present: Pól Ó Dochartaigh (president), Mathew Philpotts (treasurer), Frauke Matthes (conference), Ben Schofield (publicity), Anna Saunders (membership)

Apologies: Sarah Colvin (vice-president)

1. **Welcome**

PÓD welcomed all present, and noted that the minutes from the Business Meeting 2013 were available online.

**2. President’s Business**

a. Conference Date

The results of the online poll concerning future conference dates were reported: early September 43%; just before Easter 41%; just after Easter 39%; late September 27% (members could give multiple options). The option of alternating between September and Easter met with a resounding ‘no’ vote.

Views from the membership were presented from both perspectives: Easter is not family friendly, but neither is necessarily early September. Mid September would be difficult for Scottish and southern Irish universities, but the first week of September was feasible. The point was made that those present would be most likely to prefer April, as they were able to be there.

Mary Immaculate College, which is hosting the 2015 conference, is unable to host at Easter due to a late teaching schedule (meaning no rooms would be available), and the College then closing over Easter week. Their preferred dates are 2-4 September 2015. Given that Newcastle would also be able to host in September 2016, it was decided to trial the next three years in early September, and then to make a decision. Warwick has offered to host in 2017; offers for 2018 and beyond are welcome.

b. Appointments, promotions, retirements and deaths for the academic period 2013-14 were announced.

**3. Committee’s reports**

a. Treasurer’s report

i. The Euro balance is healthy and the sterling account has run its normal deficit. Hidden within the sterling surplus is the money from AMGS, which formally merged with AGS two years ago. The sum amounts to £5,500, and is earmarked for activities with a pedagogical emphasis. A call will go out in the coming year for activities of this kind.

 ii. It is hoped that the number of scholarships awarded will increase in the coming year. This falls under the role of the Vice-President, who will in future fix several dates in the year to replace the previously more ad-hoc system.

b. Membership

i. Membership is currently in a healthy state, with a good number of new postgraduate members.

ii. Members who pay by standing order should please check that they now pay £30; a large number of standing orders for £25 are still coming in.

c. Publicity

i. BS thanked the team of postgraduates who had been tweeting the conference; AGS has 91 followers. Members were encouraged to like / follow / retweet etc.

ii. The intention to move the website to Wordpress was announced, in order to make it a more friendly format for ipads / mobile devices, and to make it easier to implement Paypal mechanisms. A new site would also be much easier to handle for the next publicity officer.

iii. BS is working with Sarah Colvin and Sean Williams (as temporary PG committee member) to plot out the role of an AGS PG representative (or possibly PG/PostDoc rep), who would also be able to help with publicity and campaigning for German Studies. A formal election process for this post will take place.

d. Conferences

i. The Manchester team was thanked for hosting the conference.

ii. Proposals for future venues should be sent to FM. Members were also encouraged to send in proposals for special panels in addition to the conference theme and standing panels. There is currently no known theme for Limerick; the proposed theme for Newcastle is ‘Contemporary Women’s Writing’.

**4. Other Business**

a. There will be a number of changes to the committee over the coming year, as PÓD is stepping down as President, and will be replaced be SC. There are two further vacancies on the committee: Vice-President (nomination: Margaret Littler) and Treasurer (nomination: Steffan Davies). Nominations remained open until the following morning. [By closing business the following day, no other nominations had been received, and the two candidates were confirmed in post.]

b. A gift was presented to PÓD for his time and energy as AGS President over the past three years. In the closing business, a gift was also presented to MP for his work as Treasurer over the previous six years.

c. Thanks were especially extended to Eva Broomer, Eva Adelseck and Michelle Magin for their organisation on the ground.

**5. Association Reports**

**a. DAAD (Andreas Hoeschen)**

i. The London DAAD office has just launched a third round of project funding for British Universities, to which applications are invited. Projects should concern contemporary German Studies, and may claim up to 37,500 EUR per year. Flexible conditions; details on website.

ii. HoGMeet will take place on 19 May.

iii. The ‘Germany in the World’ workshop will take place on 2 June.

**b. IMLR (Godela Weiss-Sussex)**

i. The Institute is in a much better position than previously, and its future now looks more secure.

ii. The advertisement for the directorship is open until next Sunday; this can be taken as a secondment.

iii. IMLR activities such as research training, fellowships and publications (in particular the dissertations series, which is now back in the Institute’s hands) continue. It is now possible to order books from the library online, and a number of new collaborative ventures with colleagues in other institutions have sparked new networks and events (e.g. ‘literature and biology’; ‘Shakespeare adaptations, performance and reviewing’).

iv. The workshop ‘German in the World’ on 2 June will be hosted by the Institute. Sparked by last year’s HoGMeet, it will ask where German Studies is as a discipline, and examine questions of interdisciplinarity, international perspectives and engagement outside of the academy. An open invitation was extended.

**c. WIGS (Henrike Lähnemann)**

i. The 25th anniversary celebrations in Sheffield were very successful, with Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly as keynote.

ii. The next conference will be held in Cambridge, where the first postgraduate essay prize will be awarded, in conjunction with *German Life and Letters*.

iii. Part-time representative Simone Schroth has started a collective blog on German Studies Nachwuchs. Please send any comments to Simone. A postgraduate workshop will be held in November.

**d. FGLS (George Walkden)**

i. The most recent conference took place in Cambridge in January 2014; it was particularly encouraging to see a large number of new members. The next conference will be in Aston in January 2016.

ii. A new committee is now in place, which is happy to hear new ideas and suggestions.

**e. UCML (Margaret Littler)**

i. Discussions continue concerning the catalyst funding bid to HEFCE to promote the study of German in English universities.

ii. The UCML Plenary took place on 17 January. Colin Riordan gave the plenary address on making languages central to university strategy, and presentations from different universities addressed individual language strategies and internationalisation policies. The vast majority stressed the importance of non-specialist language teaching (e.g. ‘Languages for All’ programmes), which raised the problem of how to defend specialist language study. The HEFCE bid intends to address this.

iii. The theme for the July meeting will concern the celebration of languages and successful partnerships, an area in which German Studies is traditionally very strong.

**f. HEFCE catalyst funding (Liz Anderson)**

i. The bid is led by Newcastle, in conjunction with Southampton. 42 universities turned up to the meeting in January and expressed interest. There is a second bid being developed by the Open University, although following discussions with them in February, it was decided not to merge the two, but to remain in contact and to act as critical friends.

ii. The structure of the bid, ‘A New Landscape for Languages’, was shown, with three strands: ‘The Transnational Graduate’, ‘Modes of Delivery’ and ‘Progression and Recognition’. The bid intends to address the needs of specialist as well as non-specialist language teaching.

iii. Time schedule: a draft is now with HEFCE for comment. The aim is to submit by 18 June. If successful, funding would begin in September. It would constitute £6.5 million over a 5 year period.

**g. German Embassy (Susanne Frane)**

The regional German Networks initiative was explained: these are to raise the profile of German language and culture across the UK, and follow the example of the Oxford German Network. The universities themselves are the key players, in collaboration with a number of partners, such as the DAAD, Goethe-Institut, German Embassy and UK German Connection. There are currently 9 submissions for Regional Networks, and it is hoped that a launch event will take place on 3 July, to coincide with the German Teacher Awards.