

EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ARCHIVE COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held 6 December 2005

Cambridge Assessment Buildings, Cambridge

Present: John Alban (EASA) (Chairman), David Short (co-opted), Gwyn Thomas (SoA), Gillian Cooke (CAG), Margaret Elbro (HA), Michael Farrar (BALH), Clare Fleck (HHAG), Richard Harris (EEHoR), Victor Morgan (RHS), Derek Palgrave (FFHS), M V Roberts (BRA), Anthony Smith (TNA), Elizabeth Stazicker (ACALG)

In attendance: Liz Hughes (Living East – for Item 1), Ruth Savage (The National Archives – for Item 5), Gordon Chancellor and Erica Dupuy (EEMLAC)

An address of welcome was given by the Andrew Watts, the Director of Cambridge Assessment, along with a brief background of the institution and its recent name change.

1 Living East Cultural Strategy

Liz Hughes gave an introduction to the Living East Cultural Strategy and some background to the strategy and Living East itself.

A discussion followed where the following points were raised:

- Demographic changes over a number of years have had an impact in the way archives are used
- The 'self-improvement' cult has given opportunities to archive services
- Culture seems to never be mentioned by strategic or executive bodies but has impacts across a number of areas
- Tourism can be local as well as from outside the region
- Activities in archives are not usually recognised for having a direct 'fit' into strategies but many of actions are already being carried out
- Archives and Libraries are the unseen underpinning for most heritage-based activity
- Archives can play a key role in most of the areas in the strategy document
- It was felt that, compared with museums and libraries, there was scant mention of archives *per se* in the text of the strategy
- Case studies from archives are needed for the document (particularly with photographs)

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Jane Alvey (EAFA), Kevin Schürer (UKDA), Frances Willmoth (CAG), Patrick Zutshi (SCONUL), Tim Heathcote (EEMLAC)

3 Minutes from the meeting of 23 September 2005

These were accepted as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting, except that 'advisor' should read 'adviser' (point 1, bullet-point 7) and 'follow' should read 'following' (point 8.1).

It was agreed that draft minutes would be watermarked so as to avoid confusion with the final version..

4 Matters Arising

6.1 DARP

A further meeting to discuss to finalise the DARP project will take place in Chelmsford on 20 December 2005.

6.2 Community Archives

GC reported that the seminar on Community Archives had been arranged for February 2006 at The Archive Centre in Norwich; a timetable of the day had been circulated to all EERAC members.

8.4 Cambridge Heritage Services

LS reported that the wording should read: 'Cambridgeshire Archives have moved from Heritage Services to Libraries and Archives Services. Therefore, the Head of Service who was County Archivist will be leaving, since the County Archivist's post is being reshaped as Manager of Archives and Library Studies'. The post has been advertised in *ARC*.

8.2 EERAC Minutes

ED reported that she had agreed to form a distribution list for those who requested to be circulated the EERAC minutes. Ruth Savage agreed that, if she were sent the minutes from the previous minutes, she would post them on the NCA website. GC also agreed to write a summary of the EERAC minutes to take to RAAG meetings.

5 National Council on Archives

RS extended her thanks to EERAC for inviting her to attend the meeting and gave an introduction to the NCA Strategy, 2006 – 2009. She explained that the National Council on Archives was formed in 1988 by a group of archive professionals with a view to developing and delivering a number of key objectives for archives. RS reported that this strategy was the first high-level strategy developed by NCA to identify what are considered to be the most important issues facing archives at present. This strategy has no identified actions or deliverables but it is intended that it will form the basis of the business plan, following its ratification in January.

RS drew attention to the Funding and Fundraising section, explaining that a brochure had been produced and sent to all MPs drawing attention to the lack of funding dedicated to archive development, in the same way that Framework for Future or Renaissance in the Regions had done. The brochure encourages MPs to visit their local archives to see the great work that is already being done in a bid to encourage Central Government to improve the funding that that goes into archives. As well as this brochure, there is a petition on the NCA website and a paper-based kit for archives to collect signatures themselves. These signatures will be taken to Tessa

Jowell, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, by representatives of the NCA in early 2006.

A discussion followed where the following points were made:

- Archives should be seen as populist, not representing a small special interest group
- Family history has raised the profile of archives, particularly following the BBC series
- Archives are essential in underpinning the outcomes of cultural activity
- Archives are not just historic, scientific archives are essential to scientific research
- Historical records are essential for future planning

RS reported that, following the news that a large number of archives are currently closed for stock-taking, the deadline for signatures for the petition will be extended to the end of February.

GC and JRA agreed to develop a formal response on behalf of EERAC.

6 EERAC Constitution and Membership

6.1 Constitution

JRA reported that the working group had met on 1 November. He explained that the EERAC constitution was formed from an NCA template and had not been reviewed since it was originally agreed in 2003, apart from a subsequent agreement to create the position of Vice-Chairman.

6.2 Membership

JRA reported that the Membership of EERAC consisted of:

- Full Members - Organisations who were full members of the NCA
- Co-opted Members – Up to 10 organisations can be co-opted
- Observers – Invited organisations who do not have a vote

It was agreed that the Historical Association should be moved from Full to Co-opted members (proposed ES, seconded DS).

It was agreed that other bodies who might be interested in being on EERAC were

- Association for Manuscripts and Archives in Research
- Business Archives Council
- Advisory Council of Public Records (as observers)

It was also agreed to find a new representative for the Standing Council on Archives in Museums.

JRA reported that next year, his three years as Chairman of EERAC would be coming to an end and that he would not be carrying on as Chairman. Serious thought needed to be given now as to who his successor would be.

It was agreed that a formal report and recommendations would be drafted for the next meeting.

8 RADO Report

GC spoke to his report, elaborating on detail where necessary and answering questions:

8.1 Community Archives (points 2.5 & 3.6)

The programme for the community archives event was agreed and GC reported that it would be sent out to the archives community before Christmas. It was suggested that the CAG and RAAG groups were invited.

JRA declared an interest in point 2.5 of the report and vacated the Chair, handing it to ES while the allocation of the funding for the pump-priming of community archive projects was being discussed.

ES in the Chair.

After a lengthy discussion, a decision was made to allocate up to 10 sums of £500 (totalling £5000) to be administered through archive services for developing or pump-priming community archives through archive services. (Proposed ES, seconded DS). It was agreed that letters claiming the money should be sent to DS.

JRA resumed the Chair.

8.2 Designation (point 3.8)

GC congratulated the archives in the East whose collections had received designated status.

JRA extended his thanks to GC for the report.

9 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report showed a balance on 28 November of £18,776.24.

JRA suggested that in future, it might be useful to show the balance from the previous quarter on the report, for comparison. He then thanked DS for his report.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 Elizabeth Stazicker

ES reported that, as she was leaving Cambridgeshire County Council in December 2005, she would no longer be a Member of EERAC. JRA thanked ES on behalf of the council for her time with them.

11 Dates of Future Meetings

7 March, at Britten-Pears Library, Aldeburgh
6 June, venue TBC
12 September, venue TBC
5 December, Aviva, Norwich

JRA extended his thanks to Andrew Watts, Gillian Cooke and all at Cambridge Assessment for hosting the meeting.