

Minutes
British Association for Applied Linguistics
Annual General Meeting 2007
(Approved at the AGM 2008)

University of Edinburgh
7th September, 2007

The meeting began at 5.30pm.

37 people were present at the outset, reducing to 27 by the end of the meeting.

1. Introduction and apologies

Members of the Executive committee who were present introduced themselves. Apologies were received from Ron Carter, John Field, Sarah Lawson and Tope Omoniyi.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the BAAL AGM held at the University of Cork on 6th September 2006 were received and accepted with two amendments:

- a. Item 7: The wording was corrected to ‘BAAL *proposed to offer* £600 per event.’
- b. Item 11: The line which reads ‘Co-opted: Catherine Coffin, Ron Carter’ was deleted.

3. Matters arising

The following matter arose from the Minutes of the 2006 AGM:

3.1 (re 7) Richard Kiely reported that CUP had not agreed to increasing its funding of the BAAL/CUP Seminars and so the level of financial support would be unchanged for 2007-8.

4. Reports from officers

4.1 Chair

Susan Hunston (SH) took members through her written report. The Chair highlighted

- BAAL’s role in nominating representative figures to participate in bodies such as the Academy for Social Science, which are of growing importance in the community,
- Correspondence on behalf of BAAL with figures such as Ruth Kelly (about proposals to test the English skills of migrants to this country) and Bill Rammell (about the proposed withdrawal of the right to free ESOL provision from certain groups),
- Ongoing investigation by the EC of the possibility of creating a Press List to respond to events in the public eye which relate to BAAL’s interests,

- Thanks to Ron Carter (RC: previous BAAL Chair) for his quiet support to the new Chair.

4.2 Secretary

Graham Turner (GT) spoke to his written report, highlighting the Association's thanks to Richard Barwell for his invaluable work on revising the 'Good Practice' guidelines published by BAAL. The Chair thanked the Secretary who stepped down from the EC at this meeting.

4.3 Treasurer

Richard Badger (RB) tabled the latest BAAL accounts, thanking Esther Daborn (previous Treasurer) for her assistance. The Treasurer reported that the position was healthier than at the 2006 AGM, thanks partly to the outcomes of the Cork conference, for which BAAL's gratitude was due to the Cork local organising committee (LOC) and to Maeve Conrick in particular. Member numbers have also increased (see below). Expenditure has been relatively high because BAAL has printed two sets of conference proceedings during the year. Ben Rampton (BR) asked what 'Accumulated fund with Special Interest Groups' means; the Treasurer explained that this referred to the SIG accounts. Paul Meara (PM) asked why the conference figures were built into these accounts; the Treasurer stated that the LOC kept the conference books until matters were resolved and that the resulting 'bottom line' was then built back into the Association's accounts. PM asked why there was so little interest showing; RB explained that most of the money is not in the account all through the year to earn any interest. BR noted that assets of over £70,000 seemed high and wondered whether BAAL was actively looking at how to use this money; Catherine Walter (CW) and RB noted that the EC is reviewing how BAAL uses the available funds. Ros Mitchell (RM) asked whether BAAL could insure its conferences, given their significance to the Association's finances, against disaster; the Chair replied that this had been explored in the past, but the insurance tends not to cover the very things we would need.

4.4 Meetings Secretary

Joan Cutting (JC) thanked the EC for supporting her for the past three years, this being her final AGM as Meetings Secretary. From her report, JC highlighted

- The LOC Handbook which, as a result of years of input from many contributors, was now a very useful document and one which should continue to be extended and improved indefinitely,
- BAAL's thanks to the 2007 LOC; numbers attending this event were as good as usual; the number of submissions was up; the rate of acceptances was down to 40%,
- The number of applications for scholarships was down from 34 last year to 21, with only eight accepted,
- The 2008 (Swansea) conference plans were moving ahead.

RM asked about the cost of international scholarships; JC reported that these were worth £1000 each. Liz Hamp-Lyons (LHL) noted that whilst individual papers had dropped in number, despite a rise in submissions, colloquia appeared to have a 100% success rate; JC confirmed that this reflected the quality of colloquium proposals, since the papers for these go through the same review procedure. Heather Hewitt noted that the LOC had, in fact, rejected one out of four colloquium proposals this year. LHL noted that SIGs seemed to have a lower success rate; again, JC confirmed

that individual SIG papers were also rated in the same way, recording that John Field (JF), as SIG Officer, was writing a SIG Handbook and aiming for a meeting with all SIG Heads during 2007-8.

4.5 Membership Secretary

Svenja Adolphs presented her report, drawing members' attention to the facts that

- Membership figures were still rising, and could be expected to approach 900 by the end of 2007-8,
- The rise in numbers had come despite an increase in non-student fees.

Jill Bourne asked who the 12 'institutional' members were and why 'associate' member numbers had dropped; SA replied that institutions were mainly University departments while associates were mainly publishers, and that the two categories secured different benefits for members. BR noted that the increases had, to some extent, been attributed to the rise of the SIGs and that these should therefore not be squeezed for time at the annual conference. Guy Cook (GC) asked why membership fees were not simply increased again, since this seemed a productive strategy; RB noted that BAAL should be and was reviewing its familiar balance between conference income and member income, and GT noted that member numbers might have risen yet faster were it not for the fact that fees had increased a little already. RM asked whether BAAL knew who all of these members *were*, ie what had brought them into BAAL; SA replied that there were more student members; that SIG membership and Annual Meeting attendance pulled some new faces into the frame; that the move to direct debit was helping to retain members; and that the Membership Secretary had written directly to all of the 'lapsed' members and encouraged them back. The Chair thanked the Membership Secretary who completed her period within the EC at this meeting.

4.6 Postgraduate Liaison & Development Officer

Catherine Xiang presented her report. CX noted that the PG Colloquium was different in format for 2007 and this change had been very well received. This was CX's fourth and final year in the role; she thanked BAAL for the opportunity to serve the Association and, declaring that she had learned a lot from the experience, noted that she had written a handbook for the benefit of the incoming PG Officer. BR asked whether material from the 2007 PG Colloquium could be made available on the BAAL website; CX replied that if the presenter(s) agreed, this could readily be done. CX was thanked profusely for her work on behalf of BAAL.

4.7 Publications Secretary

Veronika Koller reported on a busy year, thanking EC colleagues and Goodith White for invaluable support.

- 11 publishers had submitted 27 titles for the Book Prize, which was about average. Each book was reviewed twice and four were shortlisted.
- The Book Prize award session would be held at an evening reception at future conferences.
- 'Leftover' books (50-60 in this case) would go to the British Council (at their expense) to be delivered to Eritrea.
- It was decided not to publish the Cork (2006) conference proceedings with the previous publisher, because the terms and conditions were deemed unacceptable to BAAL.

- YK said that publishers were ‘reluctant if not downright discouraging’ on the idea of publishing print proceedings in future.
- For Cork, therefore, 200 print copies had been made at Birmingham University, plus a CD-ROM overseen by Martin Edwardes.
- For Edinburgh (2007), the LOC were seeking a publisher and aimed to produce a CD-ROM again.
- VK described the present proceedings arrangements as ‘transitional’; in future, BAAL would produce a CD-ROM and ask the LOC to find a publisher if they wished

PM noted that EUROSLA had had the same discussion, *mutatis mutandis*. VK asked to be given their details to seek advice. BR questioned whether the CD-ROM might seem too much for people to bother looking through; SH reported that the EC had discussed this at length – and felt that it would not be fair to ask the LOC to edit the text on this basis. One positive benefit of the CD-ROM is that BAAL can easily produce a large written record of proceedings in future: if a book were to be made of the 2007 proceedings, added Heather Hewitt (HH), it would be an edited selection, as usual. ME pointed out that, in terms of usability, CD-ROM navigation would be just like using a website. GC asked whether the CD-ROM would have an ISBN; ME confirmed that it would. VK added that – while there was space for the material on the BAAL website – the proceedings were seen as a benefit of BAAL membership and therefore not for open access. ME noted that web access may be possible in the future but was also too expensive at present, so that – while the EC was actively considering its options for the future – the CD-ROM was seen as the best option for now.

4.8 Newsletter Editor

Sarah Lawson’s written report was circulated to those present. Members were asked to continue to send comments to the Newsletter Editor on the digital format. The Chair thanked Sarah Lawson (in absentia) for her service in this post.

4.9 Web Editor

Martin Edwardes presented his report, highlighting

- New web design
- New ‘concept’ pages have been introduced
- BAAL Newsletter is on-line too
- Where BAAL conferences are concerned, LOCs can either prepare and run their own websites or the Web Editor can do it for them
- ME noted that he was handing on two problems to his successor: firstly, he had tried to move the site to a new provider and ended up where he had started; secondly, BAAL’s URL ‘got hijacked’ at one point in 2006-7 – not an attack (incompetence rather than malice), but something about which we must stay vigilant.

ME was thanked for his work, this being his last day in the post. There could be no doubt that BAAL’s website has a higher profile than ever before.

4.10 SIGs Officer

John Field’s report was presented: BAAL now had six SIGs, with the Gender & Language SIG awaiting ratification. An Assessment SIG had been proposed: the proposal recognised that the BAAL-SIG relationship was a two-way street, exactly

coinciding with the EC's view of what should be sought through the establishment of SIGs. Meanwhile, a SIG Handbook was also in production. RM noted, as a point of correction to JF's written report, that Martin Bygate was now the LLT SIG convenor.

5. Reports from delegates on outside bodies

5.1 AILA

SA reported the preparations for AILA 2008 and the 'bedding down' of AILA's changed structures (ReNs, etc). SA drew attention to the development of NEAL, an issue which was likely to continue to be important to BAAL.

5.2 UCML

JF had recorded that there was nothing to report on this item.

5.3 LLAS

JF's report highlighted the 'Routes into Languages' programme; support being offered to secondary school teachers, international students and their lecturers, GCHQ and new academic staff. LLAS continued to offer pre-designed workshops, eg on pedagogical research, and hoped to visit a few institutions to canvass opinion on how it could support them better. LLAS was keen to establish contact with professional bodies such as BAAL.

5.4 AfSS

SH presented Catherine Walter's report from the AfSS AGM. Key points were that AfSS would be working on a Knowledge Transfer project this year (2007-8). The Academy was keen to have more practitioner Academicians; CW felt BAAL might wish to bear this in mind when nominating Academicians. SH reiterated that BAAL regularly sought suggestions from members when it was invited to nominate potential Academicians, and asked members to respond energetically to such calls.

6. CLIE report

CLIE, it was noted, is a joint BAAL/LAGB committee, not an 'outside body'. As current CLIE Chair, CW reported on the committee. CW noted that CLIE had provided comments to the Teacher Development Authority and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority during the year, as well as communicating with HE institutions who provide English PGCEs. CLIE had developed its on-line advice on school-teaching as a career for linguists as well as contributing significantly to other websites, discussing responses to future government initiatives and issuing relevant press release information. Presentations had been made on sign language and deaf education, and on language delay intervention. CW noted that CLIE minutes and materials are at www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/ec/clietop.htm

RM asked whether CLIE was engaged with the discussion about the 11-14 curriculum. CW answered that the issues would be looked at for the next CLIE meeting. RM asked about the current state of CILT and whether CLIE or BAAL could or should be doing anything about that. CW agreed that this was a worry, one about which the field had only recently learned. CW noted that there may be little to be done, but that it would indeed be considered, including with reference to CILT Scotland and Wales.

7. BAAL/CUP Seminars Report

RK reported that several events had taken place in June 2007, reports of which would appear in BAAL News. The Call for Proposals was in the present conference delegate pack and would soon be circulated via BAALmail. RK was thanked for his contribution as he handed over to a successor.

8. Applied Linguistics Journal Report

GC reported steady progress with the journal. Approximately 20 submissions were received per month. Acceptance stood at c.13% with a typical turnaround of 3-4 months. GC asked referees not to be slow in sending reviews: 'just say *no* if you won't have time' was the advice. No Special Issues were intended for 2007-8. GC was pleased to report that AL now had advanced on-line access to pre-prints as soon as papers were accepted. There was to be a new US Editor in the next year; GC would remain in post for a further year. Finally, GC noted his disappointment that papers were never received from some countries represented at BAAL, and that some areas of the AL field (eg translation studies) were very rarely represented.

9. Amendments to BAAL Constitution

The amendment proposed last year, to change BAAL's financial year, was approved nem con. The revised constitution should be made available via www.baal.org.uk.

Action: Secretary/Web Editor.

10. Elections to EC

Elections were held to fill those EC positions becoming vacant after the AGM. Since some positions were contested, the results could not be announced at the AGM. The incoming Secretary was asked to check the BAAL Constitution to decide whether the same proposer and seconder could legitimately nominate two candidates for any one post. **Action: Secretary**

11. Any other business

- a. Tess Fitzpatrick (TF) asked for clarification, in the light of earlier discussion (item 4.7), as to the benefits to members of joining BAAL. SH replied that this would indeed need to be made clear. If the proceedings book does *not* go to all members, then it will be even *less* interesting to potential publishers. SH underlined that members would receive the 2006 CD-ROM free of charge, and that the Cork proceedings arrangements were transitional, ie would occur in this way once only.
- b. Constant Leung (CL) asked whether there would be a search facility on the 2006 Proceedings CD-ROM. ME replied that this could be done, and would use the technology wisely (though he would prefer a standard index).
- c. TF asked how much the CD-ROM and book versions would each cost and what would BAAL do with any money saved. ME and VK replied that books cost about £10 each. The CD-ROM would cost under £1 plus inexpensive distribution costs. CW pointed out that conference costs currently subsidise other BAAL activities: the EC was looking at the idea of treating member benefits and conference benefits as independent 'zero sum' arrangements.
- d. CL suggested that BAAL might consider offering members the choice, when they renew their membership, of a print or digital copy of the conference proceedings.

The next AGM of BAAL will be held during the Annual Conference to be held at the University of Swansea in September 2008.

Graham Turner
Hon Sec BAAL
Sept 2007