

Meeting of the GLAM Committee
10.45 am on Friday 16 March at Cambridge University Library

Minutes

Present: Chris Sheppard (CS; Chair); Fran Baker (FB); Chris Fletcher (CF); Jess Gardner (JG); Stella Halkyard (SH); John Wells (JW).

Apologies: David Sutton.

Agenda items:

1. Manuscripts Matter Conference

It was agreed that CS would report briefly on the conference at the afternoon's AGM and ask Jamie Andrews for further input.

CF reported that the UK Literary Heritage Group is now chaired by Alan Robert, Lord Howarth of Newport; and that Clive Field has now been replaced by Ronald Milne of the BL.

2. The UKLH Group and information on acquisitions from the GLAM survey

CS obtained permission from some GLAM survey respondents to forward their information on recent acquisitions to Jamie Andrews for inclusion in the UKLH Group website. Some of this has already been added to the site, although Jamie will be contacting some institutions direct to clarify dates for some of the acquisitions. The aim is to provide a selective overview of acquisitions which gives an impression of the geographical spread and significance of literary archives and manuscripts recently acquired by UK institutions; it does not aim to form a comprehensive record of acquisitions, as this is already done by the NRA.

3. GLAM survey: progress and next steps

JW has been administering the Cambridge University batch of survey questionnaires since January: he reported that to date he has received 17 responses – 11 completed survey forms, and 6 reports of nil returns. He plans to follow up the remainder shortly.

CF agreed to undertake the Oxford University batch of the survey; FB will forward him the relevant information.

After some discussion, it was decided that the best method of surveying local authority archives and public libraries would be via a posting to the archives-nra and library-related listservs, inviting institutions to respond to the survey. JG will send out postings in April.

CF suggested surveying some of the major public schools, a number of which hold the archives of former pupils who subsequently became writers. It was decided that Fiona Courage (who had volunteered assistance at the last GLAM meeting) would be asked to undertake this element of the survey.

It was agreed that the overall forward-plan for the survey should be as follows:

- To complete the surveying by the end of June.
- The survey analysers (CS, SH and JG) to produce some results for consideration at a summer committee meeting.
- To produce a report with recommendations (both practical recommendations which can be carried out by GLAM, and higher-level recommendations for the UKLH Group) by late August. The format of the report and its recommendations will depend on the final survey results.
- Report to be circulated to membership for comment, and discussed at early September GLAM meeting.
- Final report, and executive summary, to be produced by 19 October (marking a year since the MSS Matter Conference).
- Survey respondents to be sent a copy of the report; and report to be publicised more generally, e.g. by means of an article for the Society of Archivists.

4. Suggestions for speakers/topics for next general meeting

Various topics had previously been highlighted as areas of interest by GLAM members. It was decided that DPA/FOI/copyright might form the focus of the next meeting; the most appropriate speakers on these topics are based at TNA, and it was agreed that James Travers would be asked to identify and approach speakers, and to look into whether TNA could host the next GLAM meeting.

5. Publicity

Following September's GLAM meeting, Fiona Courage had expressed willingness to join the committee and take on responsibility for publicity. It was agreed that Fiona would be formally invited to take on this role before the afternoon's AGM. Publicity will become a priority when the survey report is produced.

On a related topic, JG reported that the GLAM website isn't easily picked up by a Google search. FB will contact the Systems staff at JRUL about this.

6. Archives in Museums SSN

FB had forwarded committee members some papers produced by Heather Boyns of the National Motor Museum, who has been involved in establishing (and putting together an MLA grant application for) an 'Archives in Museums' Subject Specialist Network which aims to provide advice, support and training to museum staff and volunteers who have responsibility for archive collections held in museums. The SSN will develop a comprehensive skills sharing programme, drawn from a broad cross-domain membership. In its first year (2007-8) the SSN plans to focus on producing and delivering a training package of basic archive skills. The GLAM committee support this initiative, and it was agreed that FB should contact Heather indicating that GLAM is willing to provide the SSN with any necessary assistance in relation to literary archives (e.g. by acting as a point of contact on the projected 'information gateway' envisaged as a possible aim of the SSN); and that information about the SSN can be circulated to

GLAM members (a number of whom are drawn from the museums community) for information.

7. A.O.B.

FB passed on Maureen Watry's thanks to the committee for their support of Liverpool University Library's HLF funding application to purchase the papers of the Liverpool Poets.