

**Meeting of the GLAM Committee
Tuesday 2 December 2008 at the British Library**

Minutes

Present: Chris Sheppard (CS, chair), Jamie Andrews (JA), Fran Baker (FB), Fiona Courage (FC), Chris Fletcher (CF), Jess Gardner (JG), Stella Halkyard (SH), David Sutton (DS), James Travers (JT), John Wells (JW).

2. Minutes of the committee meeting held on 10 March 2008 at Seven Stories: approved.

3. Survey report and dissemination

CS presented his survey report, which had been circulated in advance, for discussion.

General points:

FC suggested being more specific about who or what the term 'GLAM' refers to in each recommendation, e.g. membership or committee. It was ultimately decided that the recommendations would be restructured slightly and divided into those which are priorities for the committee to act on, and those which are essentially advice to GLAM members.

CF praised the document as a clear articulation of what GLAM is trying to do.

More specific points:

Para 4: SH queried the stated number of institutions surveyed; FB will check the survey records and confirm numbers.

Para 19 (re. loan agreements): JT pointed out that TNA guidance is against 'permanent' loans; fixed-term loans are important in maintaining relationships with depositors.

Recommendation 1 (re. mounting headline statements of literary collections on website): DS suggested that if the Location Register is successful in obtaining further funding, this might be something they can help with. FB will look into getting existing statements mounted on the website.

Recommendation 3 (gaps in collecting): SH suggested that this should be broadened out, e.g. to include gender and sexuality.

Recommendations 5 and 12: JW pointed out that these need to be more specific as they make sense in the context of the report but not in isolation.

Recommendation 5: CF queried the term 'collections analysis'; SH reported that this is an established approach in the US for examining collection strengths and establishing collecting priorities. She suggested that the term should be amended to 'collections and content analysis'.

Recommendation 6 (re. preservation of born-digital literary archives/MSS) will be addressed by linking to, and building relationships with, projects undertaking work in these areas, e.g. Digital Lives, as well as pointing to useful resources, and identifying potential collaborations.

Recommendation 14 (re. VAT concessions) will be taken to the UKLH Group.

Recommendation 15 (re. valuations): JT asked for this to be reworded because it implies GLAM are recommending that formal valuations should be avoided (which is not the case).

Recommendation 16 (re. gathering data on acquisition and use from members): DS stressed that data gathering like this would have to be initiated by GLAM as relying on voluntary provision of data would not achieve results. It was pointed out that work on gathering data about acquisitions is already being done by TNA, and it was ultimately decided that GLAM could simply link to the Literary Digest/Accessions to Repositories pages, as well as encourage members to submit annual returns. JT reported that annual accessions data is usually live by the following summer. He also reported that TNA are currently doing a survey of university collections, which aren't always well-represented in annual returns. DS queried whether GLAM could have access to TNA's survey and extract information on literary holdings for the GLAM website.

FB suggested gathering data on use of literary archives/MSS through an annual call to members to submit information. This ties in with agenda item 6 (Reports from Members), which she had suggested in light of the numerous responses to the call for contributions for the GLAM issue of ARC; the aim would be to gather data on literary archive-related projects/activities of all kinds that member institutions are engaged in. Responses would be collated and added to the website.

After some discussion it was decided that Recommendations 3-5 (re. identifying gaps in collecting, identifying 'virtual collections', and advising on collections analysis) should be rolled together into one. CF stressed the importance of taking user demand for different genres/types of literary MSS into account, i.e. monitoring research trends. SH also stressed the importance of anticipating future research trends. JG suggested addressing Recommendations 3-5 by means of a workshop or symposium involving archivists and researchers (possibly making use of the Archive Fervour delegate list). JT suggested that uses other than purely academic research should also be taken into account.

CF suggested that archive students might be able to help achieve some of the report's recommendations. SKH also suggested the possibility of applying for AHRC funding to undertake a comprehensive collections/content analysis project.

After some discussion it was decided that committee members should forward their comments on the report by email to CS by Friday 12 December. The report will be updated and mounted on the website as soon as possible after that date, and backed up with an email to members. It will also go to the UKLH Group as soon as amendments are made. There will be a consultation period of two months, and any substantial suggestions for amendments or additions will be considered by the committee.

The report will also be drawn to the attention of archive courses (e.g. Aberystwyth, Dundee, Liverpool) with a view to dissertation students working on some of the recommended activities.

JA reported that he is running a training day for archive students in autumn 2009, and it may be useful for a GLAM panel to be included in this event.

4. Access event, 2009

FC has begun planning this event, which has the following objectives:

- To bring GLAM members together with representatives from potential audiences to discuss how sectors can work together.
- To provide the opportunity for GLAM members to share experiences of widening access to their literary collections.
- To build on the work done in the 2006 survey of institutions and to draw a more current picture of widening access activities in the UK.
- To encourage members to participate in a national drive to widen accessibility to literary archives & manuscripts.

The workshop will be a full-day event, divided into four sections, each devoted to a particular type of audience; each section will be opened by a case study opening up into a discussion session for the whole group.

There will be a GLAM meeting either the afternoon before, or the morning following, the event. FC has identified some cheap accommodation for delegates, and hopes to hold the event in early April before Easter.

There is likely to be some charge attached to the event because the conference centre will be required if there are more than 20 delegates. FC will confirm dates/costs by early January.

5. Cataloguing working party

FB reported that there are 12 volunteers for this group, including archivists, librarians and academics. She will look into holding an initial meeting at the John Rylands, although she does not envisage chairing the group for the entire project, and is keen to rotate this role; it is likely that most of the work can be done remotely anyway (e.g. via a wiki). She will contact volunteers before Christmas to arrange a meeting for the new year.

JG suggested that Christine Fauch from Exeter may be able to provide a copy of the dissertation on cataloguing literary papers that an Exeter-based archive student recently completed.

6. Reports from members

This item was covered under item 3 (see p. 2).

7. Literary archives regional network in the South West

JG reported that a literary research network is being set up in the south-west region, covering six counties. Exeter Special Collections is hoping to set up a parallel literary archives network to work alongside the research group; currently the level of interest from archive institutions is unclear, but Exeter will definitely be taking this forward.

8. Potential Dundee archive course module on literary archives

FB had been in touch with the director of the Dundee MLitt distance-learning course in archive studies about the possibility of establishing a module focusing on literary archives.

It was ultimately decided that the best way for GLAM to work with archive courses is by means of mentoring students and encouraging course tutors to suggest dissertation topics focusing on literary archives.

9. A.O.B.: none

10. Date of next committee and general meetings

Both meetings will coincide with the access event at Sussex University, probably in early April; precise date to be confirmed.

The next work for the committee will be organising a symposium on collections analysis etc in order to achieve recommendations 3-5 of the survey report.