

**Nineteenth Meeting of the Working Group on UK Literary Heritage
held on Tuesday 9 March 2010
at the British Library**

Minutes

Present:

Alan Howarth (Chair), Jamie Andrews, Chris Fletcher, Scot McKendrick, Ferdinand Mount, Cate Newton, Chris Sheppard, David Sutton, Joan Winterkorn, Anna Grundy (minutes).

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Richard Charkin, Max Egremont, Warwick Gould, Nick Kingsley and Andrew Motion.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of 24 November 2009 were agreed with one amendment to item 5.2. The name authority files for the Location Register of Literary Manuscripts will be updated to include 3,000 authors.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 There were no matters arising that were not covered by subsequent agenda items.

4. UPDATE ON GROUP FOR LITERARY ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS (GLAM)

- 4.1. CS reported that whilst there had not been a full meeting of GLAM since the previous UKLH meeting, the cataloguing sub-group had met and continues to be very active. The sub-group is working on lists of authors' names and a number of other tasks, which will relate to DS' work on the Location Register of Literary Manuscripts in the future.
- 4.2. The next full GLAM meeting will be held on 25 March and will focus on the digitisation of literary material. The programme for the meeting includes a presentation from John Rylands University Library, Manchester, on a partnership project they are leading with a number of northern universities, to digitise Middle English manuscripts. There will be a second presentation from the University of Nottingham regarding the digitisation of D H Lawrence material in the library's collection specifically for the purpose of enhancing undergraduate teaching. The meeting will explore the range of possibilities created by digitisation projects.
- 4.3. GLAM had been approached for advice regarding where the archive of Christy Brown might be offered. The GLAM committee is encouraged that GLAM should be considered a helpful source of advice in such matters and made a number of suggestions.
- 4.4. The committee had also been approached to determine whether GLAM might have a formal role in relation to advice to the MLA's Export Licensing Unit (ELU). It was felt that GLAM could not take a formal role in this process. However, the Export Advisers are aware of the expertise and knowledge of the group. SM confirmed that BL advisors would consult with GLAM when appropriate. It was agreed that no further action was required in relation to this matter.
- 4.5. GLAM is taking a very direct interest in DS' work on the Location Register and is strongly encouraging GLAM members to participate.
- 4.6. AH asked whether the GLAM meeting would look at the financial requirements of digitisation projects? For example, what scope is there for private or commercial investment in digitisation given the potential for reductions in grant in aid and higher education?
- 4.7. CS noted that financial circumstances have an impact on all digitisation projects, not just those with a literary focus. CS advised that a major barrier to securing commercial funding for digitisation is copyright. In the cases of the two projects that will be presented to GLAM, the Middle English manuscripts are obviously copyright free, and D H Lawrence material is subject to a single copyright, the owner of which

- 4.8. JW asked whether the material digitised by the GLAM projects would be freely available online. CS confirmed that the Middle English manuscripts project is JISC funded and that the outcome would be a free resource. The D H Lawrence project has a more specific focus. CS hoped to learn more about how the digitised material would be made available at the GLAM meeting.
- 4.9. CN noted that the 'free at the point of access' ethos of libraries and archives in the UK conflicts with commercial interests and is a major issue for libraries for the future. CN added that not all resources created by JISC funded projects are available to the public free of charge. They are available in HE libraries, but public libraries and individuals are required to buy licences in some cases.
- 4.10. SM explained that a number of models for digitisation have been adopted by the BL.
- 4.11. DS suggested that there is an opportunity for GLAM and UKLH to advocate collaboration between repositories that hold collection items for the same author, for example, the University of Nottingham and the Harry Ransom Center for D H Lawrence. There are a number of existing examples of international collaborations to create a single virtual archive of an author's work, for example, the work to create unified online access to archives of Samuel Beckett's work.
- 4.12. AH raised the question of how UKLH might take this suggestion forward. DS advised that a conference is being held in the US in July by the rare books and manuscripts section of the American Library Association, at which DS will talk on GLAM and the emergence of GLAM North America. This might provide an opportunity for discussion of greater collaboration on digitisation.
- 4.13. AH asked whether workable suggestions for the UK might result from this given UK organisations' greater dependence on public funding, which will be significantly depleted in years to come.
- 4.14. FM queried whether the commercial model is dependent on the purchase of licences, suggesting that this may not be a huge issue since the majority of scholars belong to organisations that purchase institutional licences. The cost of subscribing to digital resources is also offset by reducing the need to travel to consult collection items.
- 4.15. SM cautioned that commercial funders may want to cherry pick the projects they support, which leaves organisations with fundraising issues for some of the less obvious collections.
- 4.16. JA commented on the Google model, for which some have doubted the benefits to libraries due to Google's right to retain files for future use. We should investigate further the US model of trying to acquire rights to an archive when we are purchasing it, although the owner of the archive does not necessarily own all the rights to material held within it.
- 4.17. JW noted that both GLAM and the BL are constantly revisiting what should be expected when an archive is purchased, for example, in relation to rights for publication. This landscape is changing very quickly and the more there is a mutual understanding between libraries and the trade, the sooner these models will become a part of the dialogue regarding acquisitions from the outset of negotiations.
- 4.18. FM asked whether a standard contract could address this. JW replied that there is potential for this. Increasingly, both parties are considering the implications with regard to rights before a sale is made.
- 4.19. CN suggested there could be a role for UKLH in producing a set of key strategic principles outlining how this issue can best be approached. The guidelines could then be made available to authors and collecting institutions alike via the UKLH website. AH suggested CN consult GLAM on this. JW recommended contacting Mark Le Fanu, Society of Authors, for the authors' rights perspective. CS added that the National Council on Archives could be consulted via Nick Kingsley.

- 4.20. DS added that GLAM is seeking consent from its wider membership for the committee to give a collective view on behalf of members, which will make GLAM much more practical as a consultable body in circumstances such as these.
- 4.21. Finally, JA advised that the first meeting of GLAM North America will be held on 30 June 2010.

ACTION: CN to draft suggested guidelines on the acquisition of rights as part of the broader acquisition process for discussion at the next meeting.

5. UPDATE ON LOCATION REGISTER OF ENGLISH LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS

- 5.1. DS reported that the project is on schedule, although completion of the work is subject to funding being secured.
- 5.2. Applications to the Arts Council and the Pilgrim Trust had both been successful. The Pilgrim Trust has awarded a grant of £12,000, to match the grant received from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Decisions on a number of funding applications are still pending.
- 5.3. The project is working on three fronts throughout 2010:
 - 5.3.1. Collecting and collating the list of 3,000 names of British and Irish literary authors, including a brief note for each on what is known about their manuscripts and the details of the repository at which they are held. This piece of work is supported by the Arts Council grant and needs to be completed by the end of 2010. The list will be made available via the GLAM website in December 2010/January 2011. The annotated list will be an invaluable resource for the researchers to work from as they visit repositories around the country.
 - 5.3.2. Preparation and sampling of material added to collections since 2002. There are examples of very substantial archives being added to repositories, such as the addition of Sue Townsend's archive of c. 40 metres of material to the University of Leicester's collections. Top-level sampling of such additions is being undertaken. The work is not restricted to Higher Education libraries, but extends to record offices and other libraries, such as the Morrab Library, Penzance, demonstrating an encouraging spread of literary archives.
 - 5.3.3. The International strand of the survey of literary manuscripts is creating a list of collections held internationally. A survey of Australia has been completed, which found that the largest collection of literary manuscripts is held by the Australian National Defence Academy, which used the collection as a resource for broadening the horizons of its cadets. The project is also listing manuscripts that are found outside their country of origin. For example, Indiana University Library has a collection of 6,700 manuscripts from South African writer Nadine Gordimer. It is hoped that US institutions will want to contribute to the resource and the project will seek not to overload it with examples of British and Irish authors', rather it will show that the acquisition of authors' collections outside their home country is an international phenomenon. Collections of US authors held outside the US will be included, for example those of Ezra Pound. The resource is intended as a description of how literary manuscripts have travelled around the world.
- 5.4. JA asked how the Arts Council would use the list of authors. DS replied that the list would be disseminated via GLAM, although the University of Reading could host the files and provide links via GLAM, the BL, etc.
- 5.5. FM asked whether the Royal Literary Fund (RLF) had made a grant to the project at this stage. DS explained that the RLF is very reluctant to make grants to individual projects and the Location Register work would have to be squeezed into a programme already funded by the RLF.
- 5.6. DS added that from 2011 the project needs to raise an additional £60 - £70,000.
- 5.7. CS asked how much data will lie behind the list of names, for example, would thematic descriptions be created? DS replied that unfortunately the project does not have sufficient resources to be able to do this at present. However, the register will include notes where we do not know of significant collections or manuscripts.
- 5.8. JW asked whether it would be worth writing to the Royal Society of Literature and the Society of Authors for additional information for the register. DS replied that the list would need to be closed at some point. Once the list has been completed it will be

6. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 6.1. AH reported that colleagues in the School of Advanced Study had been due to discuss the support of a UKLH related lecture at a meeting in February. WG had not been able to provide an update due to ill health. AG would follow this up with SAS.
- 6.2. JA and AG had met with Anne Chisholm and Maggie Fergusson to discuss the joint Royal Society of Literature/UKLH event. The event will be held in the British Library Conference Centre on Wednesday 9 June, 6:30 – 8:30pm. The programme for the evening has been agreed and a number of high profile speakers and panellists have kindly agreed to participate.
- 6.3. AH drew the group's attention to the Conservative Party's policy document on culture, which introduces the prospect of Acceptance in Lieu being reformed. However, the details have not yet been fleshed out and work in this area could be long deferred. The issue had not so far been addressed by the other parties to date.
- 6.4. AH reported the disappointing news that funding for NHMF would be cut by half in 2010/11. Taking into consideration the funding already committed to the Titian acquisitions, this will leave only c.£1.7m uncommitted in the next financial year. This represents an extraordinary reduction from the £20m per annum allocated to the fund when it was first established.
- 6.5. JW commented that she was already aware of sufficient prospective applications that would absorb the £1.7m remaining budget and warned that the cut would create a very real danger of archives being split up for sale and lost to overseas buyers. AH said that DCMS had been under enormous pressure from the Treasury, where the priorities are to protect the spending plans for the health service, schools and overseas development.
- 6.6. CN advised that DCMS had just closed a public consultation on the extension to the Legal Deposit Libraries Act, which extends the principle of legal deposit to cover material published digitally and online.

ACTION: AG to contact SAS re potential UKLH lecture

7. PRESS AND PR

- 7.1. JW reported that Cambridge University Library's acquisition of the Sassoon archive had received very good coverage in the press. An exhibition is being planned by Cambridge, which will include Sassoon material from other collections, such as the Royal Society of Literature. Therefore the archive will continue to generate interest.
- 7.2. JA reported that the BL had created an exhibition of Alice in Wonderland manuscripts, other archival and printed material in the Treasures Gallery to coincide with the release of Tim Burton's film. A number of loans were displayed as part of the exhibition, including draft designs for the costumes used in Burton's film.
- 7.3. AG advised that work to update the UKLH website so that it is compatible with the latest editions of web browsers, including Internet Explorer 7, have been commissioned. Once complete the website will be updated.

8. UPDATE ON RECENT ACQUISITIONS

- 8.1. CS reported that Leeds University Library had received the literary archive of Melvyn Bragg, Chancellor of the university. It is a large archive, spanning fifty years of work and consisting of twenty novels, including some that are unpublished, material written for film and stage, and non-fiction. The author's broadcasting material is not included as the ownership of this is more complex. The donation received excellent publicity.
- 8.2. Leeds University Library has also acquired the archive of John Wainwright, a prolific crime novelist who also collaborated with Alan Ayckbourn on material for radio and TV.

- 8.3. JA reported that the BL had partly acquired and partly accepted donation of material from Carmen Callil, the publisher, writer and critic who founded Virago. The acquisition/donation complements very well the BL's existing holdings of material relating to Virago, in addition to Angela Carter's archives.
- 8.4. In addition, the BL has completed fundraising to enable the complete archive of Mervyn Peake to be acquired. Funding included a grant from the Art Fund, due to the inclusion of many of Peake's original illustrations in the archive. An anniversary publication for 2011 is under discussion, which would include papers that were previously on deposit in other institutions, and some that were privately held.
- 8.5. CF reported that in addition to the donation of Sir Roy Strong's papers which had been noted at the group's previous meeting, the Bodleian has also recently acquired some Edmund Blunden material and Ray Edgeworth's correspondence.
- 8.6. CN reported that NLS had recently acquired a couple of sets of George Mackay Brown letters, and the typescripts of *Greenvoe* and *Hawkfall*, some Ian Hamilton Finlay letters from 1960-1998 to Katy Gardiner, and the science fiction archive of J T McIntosh, an Aberdeen writer who published much of his work in the US.

9. AOB

- 9.1. SM advised the group that the Scholarship and Collections Directorate within the British Library is being restructured and that the library is currently consulting with staff and the trade unions regarding proposals.
- 9.2. AH asked members of the group to suggest agenda items for future meetings to avoid the agenda becoming too routine.
- 9.3. Referring back to the agenda item on the Location Register, FM queried whether there was a process in place for approaching living writers for which the register has recorded 'no papers known.' DS confirmed that there is. In the first edition of the register, some of the responses given by living authors were published. However, there may not be sufficient resources available to the project to do the same this year.
- 9.4. AH wondered whether there are concerns amongst living writers regarding how they should archive. JW suggested that a future RSL workshop for authors could focus on how to archive materials in preparation for their deposit with a repository.

ACTION: ALL to submit proposals for future agenda items to AG.

10. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 The group was asked to note the following remaining meeting dates for 2010:

Tuesday 6 July
Tuesday 9 November

The meetings will be held at the British Library.