



British Association of Film,  
Television and Screen Studies

## **Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting**

Sunday 9 October 2011, 2pm

New Academic Building (NAB) room 302 at Goldsmiths, University of London

Present: Stefano Baschiera, Chris Berry, James Chapman, Anna Claydon, Rachael Keene, Yosefa Loshitsky, Paul McDonald (Chair), Alex Marlow-Mann (Minutes), Andrew Moor, Lucia Nagib, Brian Winston

Apologies: Joe Andrew, Tim Bergfelder, Rajinder Dudrah, Paul Elliot, Dina Iordanova, Victoria Kearley, Sarah Street

### **1. OPERATION OF IEC**

- It was discussed whether or not it would be preferable to have clearly defined roles, as MeCCSA does, or a more open steering group, as does NECS. It was felt that the former was preferable, as stipulated in the Constitution. Since this is only an interim arrangement it was felt that we could quite simply appoint volunteers to the key posts (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasure, PG Coordinator) and that, once appointed, these could then help define and shape the job descriptions of these roles. After some discussion the following positions were appointed:

Chair: Brian Winston

Vice-chair: Paul McDonald

Secretary: Chris Berry

Treasurer: Dina Iordanova (in absentia)

PG Coordinators: Rachael Keene and Victoria Kearley

- It was agreed that the appointment of sub-committees and officers would be agreed at later date once the roles of the main positions were more clearly defined and the priorities for the year were settled. There was some discussion about who would take on the role of Communications Officer and it was proposed that AMM continue this role; AMM expressed concern that the organisation was closely identified with him and that it might be better if somebody else took over the role, but that if nobody was forthcoming he would be willing to continue in the position. SS offered, in absentia, to take on an advisory role on questions relating to research. SB offered to work on the website.
- AMM said that an info@baftss address had already been set up for use by the Communications Officer and that it would be simply to set-up and assign other addresses (Chair@baftss.org, etc.).

### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

- It was agreed, as per the AGM, that the system of fees envisaged in the Constitution could not be implemented until the organisation was fully operational and was able to offer something in return to proposed members. There was discussion about what should happen in the interim.
- PM reported on the structure of fees employed by MeCCSA, revealing that almost all of their fees came from institutions rather than individuals. BW suggested that approaching institutions for membership at this stage would be politically fraught and seen as a direct challenge to MeCCSA. It was also felt that many institutions with a media studies focus would be unlikely to sign up to both. It was felt that, for this year, it was preferable to concentrate on recruiting individuals.

- There was discussion about whether individual membership should be free for this first year, or whether it should be at a reduced, nominal fee. It was agreed that a nominal fee would probably be preferable as no serious organisation offers anything for free and that that free membership would merely replicate those that had already signed up to the discussion list and that many of these would not take out full membership once fees were introduced.
- AMM offered to approach potential members by posting to the discussion list and also emailing the wider list of film academics previously compiled (since there would be data protection issues involved in passing the addresses to anyone else). The same message would then be circulated via SCMS, DocNow, Film Philosophy and the like. It was felt that no such approach should be made until we had clearly identified what we could offer members.

### 3. ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITIES

**3.1. Politics and lobbying.** BW questioned whether the political agenda should be placed on a back burner until the organisation had established other activities, rather than approaching them head-on straight away. However, it was felt that this had always been the principal rationale for setting up the organisation and therefore ought to remain a priority. BW also stated that we would need to develop a strategy for developing networking contacts and that this should be a priority. He also warned that if MeCCSA remained hostile and simply told governmental and other institutional representatives not to engage with BAFTSS then it would be extremely difficult to perform this function.

#### 3.2. Conference.

- The discussion of whether or not we should stage a conference was raised again. The idea of attempting to link to an existing conference such as Screen was mooted but rejected. It was felt that the staging of an additional conference risked alienating Screen and NECS, which would only weaken our position. SB proposed a PG conference instead, but BW and RK both felt that we would need to be able to provide significant funding to support such an event and that this would not be possible.
- JC proposed a smaller one-day symposium next summer, in combination with the AGM. For a fee delegates would receive both membership of BAFTSS and attendance at the event (membership would, of course, also be open to non-attendees at a similar price). Everyone felt that this was the best idea as it would encourage attendance at the AGM, help form a sense of community around BAFTSS, and would not be seen as a challenge by existing conferences like Screen and NECS.

**3.3. Website.** SB proposed that the website should contain a members' section which would collate job adverts, CFPs and the like. JC felt it should also contain a section aimed primarily at (potential) students and outsiders, with a 'discipline mission statement' outlining why the discipline is of value and what it can offer in terms of career potential; he offered to draft such a statement and circulate to the IEC for approval. Both of these were felt to be good ideas.

**3.4. Journal.** The idea of publishing a journal or newsletter was raised again but not thought to be feasible at this stage. BW proposed establishing deals with existing journals whereby BAFTSS membership would include a discount on subscription to existing journal(s). This was felt to be a preferable option.

**3.5 Awards.** BW reminded everybody that the BFI used to stage annual awards for best film studies book and the like (other international organisations like SCMS do similar, but there is nothing

currently in the UK). It was felt that BAFTSS should establish a panel of experts and do similar, possibly in time for the 2012 AGM/one-day symposium.

#### **4. RESPONSE TO REF AND DCMS CONSULTATIONS**

- PM noted that the REF consultation had just concluded and that, had BAFTSS been in a more advanced state, we would have issued a response. He noted that MeCCSA had responded and identified two key points they raised: the position of women on maternity leave and the proposal that a concession should be made for staff with considerable administrative burdens so that they didn't have to submit four items.
- PM also reported on the DCMS consultation meeting at the BFI which raised the question of the purpose of screen education. He said we should be aware that a statement will be issued in due course and that we should be ready to respond to it.

#### **5. POSTGRADUATE NETWORK**

- RK reported on the establishment of a Facebook page and the possibility of other social networking initiatives. She also said that an administrative structure would be set up during the course of the year and that this would probably mirror the structure of the main Executive.
- The idea of staging a small, PG training event at the beginning of the next academic year was also seen as a good idea as similar events have been very successful in the past; this would also encourage both Institutional and PG membership. Moreover, this would be politically advantageous as other similar organisations are not currently offering anything similar, and this could strengthen our position that BAFTSS actually complements, rather than challenges, existing organisations like MeCCSA.
- RK also proposed trying to establish links with the BFI to organise PG visits to the library, archive, etc. This was felt to be a good idea. However, JC warned that relations with the BFI would be important, but potentially even more problematic than MeCCSA; CB added that the BFI would probably only be interested in how much we would be likely to pay for offering such services.

#### **6. AOB/ ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

- AC offered the premises of Leicester for the next IEC. It was agreed that the next meeting should be for a full-day and should take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> January. PM proposed Nottingham for the following meeting, with the date to be set in due course.
- BW proposed an informal interim meeting of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, possibly in November. AMM agreed to contact those in question regarding this.