

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR JAPANESE STUDIES**

Held at University of Sheffield

07 September 2018

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair: Dr Christopher Hood

Council Members

Dr Erica Baffelli (Honorary Secretary)

Dr Peter Matanle (Honorary Treasurer)

Dr Gitte Hansen

Dr Andrew Cobbing

Dr Christopher Gerteis (Editor of *Japan Forum*)

Dr Helen Macnaughtan (Chair of the JRC at SOAS)

Dr Mara Patessio (Secretariat)

26 BAJS members in attendance

1. MINUTES OF THE 2017 AGM:

Minutes from the previous AGM held at SOAS, University of London, 08 September 2017 were accepted as a true record.

2. MATTERS ARISING:

With regards to point 3 (*BAJS scholarships and funded projects*) of the 2017 President's Report, Dr Hood explained that during the past twelve months, rather than larger projects, BAJS has concentrated on supporting as many postgraduate students as possible. BAJS is receiving a number of applications from postgraduate students also because The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation funds the first three years of their degrees, so students often turn to BAJS to get funding for the last months of their research.

BAJS is also supporting postgraduate students' presentations at national and international conferences. Many applied to present at the BAJS Annual Conference in Sheffield, and Sheffield had a separate fund for non-UK Postgraduate students presenting at the Conference.

Streamlining and clarifying what BAJS funds has also helped to define the differences between BAJS and other associations, for example the JFEC, that instead concentrates on funding field trips.

BAJS has also decided to support events organised by BAJS members who have already received funding from elsewhere but need up to £1000 to top-up their funds.

Finally, the process of BAJS settling in at SOAS, its new institutional home, has been a smooth one, and Dr Patessio's role as secretary of the association has developed and expanded if compared with Ms Baird's.

There were no other matters arising that were not covered within the agenda items.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

3.1 Professor Ian Reader, Professor Glenn Hook, and Heidi Potter have accepted the award of BAJS Emeriti Fellows, the former two for their contribution to Japanese Studies and the latter for her contribution to Anglo-Japanese relations. One more award had been made but no reply has been received yet. Dr Hood asked the audience to suggest the names of scholars for future awards.

3.2 The BAJS Council would like to make changes to the BAJS Constitution. This is due to the fact that the way BAJS operates now, with more than 500 members and in a digital era, is very different from how the Association was in 2002, when the Constitution was last revised and when BAJS had 150 members. For example, during the 2017 AGM it was decided that the Chair of the JRC at SOAS would become a Council member. However this, strictly speaking, was a Constitutional change and as such should have been ratified by the Membership through a postal vote. As there are more streamlined and cost effective ways of asking for membership's views (sending out a letter to all Members, as the current Constitution requires, would cost in the region of £600, the equivalent of a 3-month John Crump Studentship for one student), Council Members want to propose a better system.

Following discussion with those present at the AGM, it was agreed that an electronic vote also be allowed, with the information being sent to all members via email, potentially using an online voting system, and via postal mail for those members for whom BAJS does not have an email address.

It was also noted that there are a few issues to be resolved, namely a) the changes proposed to the Constitution, b) the need to remind members that fees cannot be paid by Direct Debit anymore, and c) that Japan Forum will be offered by default as an e-journal from 2019. All this information will be sent out in one email/letter before the end of 2018.

It was also noted that the Constitution has previously been changed in 2002 and also that the changes proposed do not substantially change the nature of the Association and its' values. However, BAJS will check with the Charity Commission that this is effectively the case.

3.3 Dr Hood concluded by commenting on how the nature of the BAJS Conference has changed, hosting so many more panels and people (about 200 at Sheffield), and therefore involving larger costs. Despite this, the BAJS Conference at Sheffield was a

huge success when considering the quality of the papers presented, the level of organisation, and even the food, and thanked Thomas MacAuley, Mark Pendleton and Anna Vainio, together with the rest of the Sheffield team, for all their hard work.

4. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT:

4.1 BAJs currently has 572 members on its database, in various categories:

108 Tier 1 members
44 Tier 2 members
79 Tier 3 members
30 honorary members
311 students/unwaged members

4.2 With regards to the 2021 REF, nominations for the panels are done by subject organisations. BAJs nominated three members and one, Professor Hugo Dobson, was appointed to the Area Studies panel. There might be another call before 2021, but in the meantime many thanks to those who put their names forward.

4.3 Finally, UKRI and AHRC have called for a consultation, now closed, on how these organisations should support the Humanities in general and Modern Languages in particular. Dr Baffelli drafted and sent out the response, and thanked those who responded to the email by BAJs on this matter.

5. HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

5.1 BAJs funds are down from £113,000 to £98,000. This has been a deliberate move as the Charity Commission prefers small charities to hold less than £100,000, instead spending the money to fund the projects they were set up for. As such, BAJs has concentrated on funding postgraduate students.

5.2 Dr Matanle announced that he is stepping down as Honorary Treasurer and commented that the new Treasurer will need to make sure that such 'over-spending' does not happen every year, or that BAJs finds other ways of earning money for its activities.

6. JAPAN FORUM

6.1 *Japan Forum* is the primary source of income for BAJs, and both support scholarly endeavour and graduate students. The editorial team of *Japan Forum* has evolved, with now Emily Chapman, Bill Mihalopoulos, Helen MacNaughtan, and Christopher Gerteis working for it. During the past year, together with publishing great scholarship, *Japan Forum* also organised workshops, hands-on events with early career academics, and outreach work.

6.2 The 2017 Ian Nish Prize, established to promote young scholars, was awarded to Christopher Smith (University of Florida at Gainesville) for his article 'Who said that? Textuality in eighteenth century kibyoshi', that was published by *Japan Forum* in 2017 (29-2: 279-298). Dr Smith is also awarded a one-year membership to BAJS.

6.3 Institutional subscribers have gone up, from 1927 in 2012 to 2532 in 2017. These are mostly North American libraries. This trend does not translate in an increase in revenue due to the Pound Sterling doing poorly, yet it does mean that the journal is getting more readers, and that is important too.

EBSCO subscribers access it mostly from the U.S., and there has been a persistent increase in the number of digital readers; they were 40,455 in 2017, even better than *JS* and *Critical Asian Studies*. The top downloading countries are the U.S. with 8179 downloads, the UK with 8005, Japan with 4330, and Australia with 3371. Downloads mainly show the cyclical movement of the North American academic term. Philip Seaton and Takayoshi Yamamura's article, published in 2015, is the most downloaded article in *JF* and Taylor and Francis.

6.4 *JF* is reaching out to European partners, and although it is not currently listing and tracking in impact factor, when the editors run mock trials the figures are getting better and better.

6.5 From 2019 the journal's default format will be digital. This will help reduce costs to increase the amount of money used for students, and also reduce waste.

6.5 Dr Gerteis concluded by saying that he will read any article sent for review. However, he is also a 'gatekeeper', and as such *JF* has a high rejection rate to ensure that the readership can access the best scholarship. Please do send in your manuscripts.

7. BAJS JAPAN CHAPTER:

Dr Philip Seaton stated that no events were held in Japan for the BAJS Japan Chapter during the past 18 months because he had been too busy to be able to concentrate on it. Dr Seaton asked to officialise the BAJS Japan Chapter within BAJS and also to decide what the Japan Chapter should do through a mission statement and with an institutional structure. The BAJS Japan Chapter needs formal standing within BAJS, he concluded.

With regards to this point, Dr Hood asked also to consider what members in Japan would like and expected from the BAJS Japan Chapter. Dr Seaton will prepare an email to be sent to the membership before the end of November 2018 to get BAJS members' views on the BAJS Japan Chapter so that these can be discussed at the next BAJS Council Meeting.

8. IVAN MORRIS PRIZE

8.1 The 2017 Ivan Morris First Prize (£200) went to Amy Dafnis (Oxford) whose submission was entitled 'Peasant Rebellions and the Tokugawa Judicial System: A study of illegal petitions in the context of seventeenth and eighteenth-century social protest'.

Kit Laurence (Manchester) received the Second Prize (£125) for the submission 'Special Education Needs: Complications in the Japanese Context'.

8.2 A judge has been appointed for the 2018 Prize, and winners will be notified shortly.

9. CONFERENCES:

The next conference will be the Joint East Asian Studies Conference in Edinburgh next September, but dates are yet to be confirmed. A call for papers will come out soon.

The EAJS will be held in Ghent in 2020. BAJS members will be present at the EAJS and tag the AGM on to a workshop. A call for interest in hosting the AGM will go out in due course.

The next BAJS Conference will be in 2021. BAJS will send out a call for a host institution next year.

10. COUNCIL ELECTIONS:

Dr Matanle is resigning from Honorary Treasurer. Dr Ian Rapley, from Cardiff, will take his place. However, Dr Matanle will remain in the Council as coopted member.

The President and the audience thanked Dr Matanle and Dr Andrew Cobbing, who is at the end of his term, for their work for BAJS.

Given that no one replied to the email sent out during the summer asking for volunteers for the Council, Council members have agreed to consider the option of adding one coopted postgraduate student or early career academic to the Council.