Minutes Annual General Meeting of ABIL

Friday, 8 September 2017, University of Sheffield,

The Edge Hub, room High Tor 2 (5 pm).

Present: Chair Philip Rothwell (President), Catarina Fouto (Secretary), Mark Sabine (Treasurer), Carmen Ramos Villar (Conference Secretary), and approximately 40 delegates.

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| 1.1  1. | Welcome to new members  Philip Rothwell welcomed members who had joined since the last Meeting in Exeter in 2015 |
| 2. | Apologies for absence  PR announced he had received no apologies for absence. |
| 3. | Minutes of the last Meeting  The minutes of the last meeting were circulated to the membership in advance of the AGM, and were approved by those present. |
| 4. | Matters arising  There were no matters arising that would not be dealt with later in the agenda. |
| 5. | Reports of Officers  President  Phillip Rothwell (PR) extended his thanks to Dr Carmen Ramos Villar for an exceptionally well-organized conference and for the long months of hard work that she invested in bringing our meeting to fruition. PR also thanked the Instituto Camões for its generous support and, in particular, its UK representative Dr Regina Duarte, who was in attendance.  PR expressed ABIL’s gratitude to Debbie Madden, Katie Stewart, Paddy Scott, and Morrigan Auxland, students at Sheffield University, for their assistance with the conference logistics; to Iain Staves who provided technical support; to Michelle Ord, Ally Teale, Caroline Worldey, Sandra Henryand Janine Wilson for their office support, and to Profesor Roel Wismaus, the Head of School at Sheffield for facilitating the conference. ABIL is also grateful to Dani Vallalba for his assistance with the conference website and to Alicia, for lending us her mother (Carmen Ramos Villar).  PR informed the AGM that he and Dr Catarina Fouto (the ABIL secretary) had represented the association at the meetings of the UCML. Thanks to the results of the survey into the presence of Portuguese & Brazilian Studies at Higher Education level and to the active lobbying by the association, Luso-Brazilian studies now has a permanent representative on the UCML, and the position has been assumed by Professor Hilary Owen (University of Manchester/Oxford). In the UCML elections for Hispanic Representative, ABIL cast its vote for Dr Jaine Beswick (University of Southampton).  PR noted the following retirements of faculty members who have given long service to the profession and furthered the interests of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies in the UK: Professor Bernard McGuirk (University of Nottingham); Dr Patricia Obder de Baubeta (University of Birmingham); and Professor Hilary Owen (University of Manchester, who has also assumed a research fellowship at the University of Oxford).  PR particularly highlighted the enormous contributions that Professor Owen has made to ABIL. One of our association’s founding members, she served as the treasurer, gave a truly memorable keynote that once again was a testament to her capacity for theoretical sophistication combined with originality and sensitive reading skills, including when looking at visual culture. Her scholarship has been phenomenal. Her works on women writers from Portugal and Mozambique are groundbreaking and seminal. She has an exceptional capacity to bring texts and culture to life, and to digest theoretical assumptions in a way that brings both nuance and clarity to what she analyses. As an academic, she is one of a kind, but she is also one whose intellectual generosity has made her a natural collaborator. Many of us have had the good fortune to work with Professor Owen on projects in which she has honed our thinking and shown that the best kind of knowledge is the one that is shared and never owned.  PR congratulated Professor Cláudia Pazos Alonso on her promotion to Professor of Portuguese and Gender Studies at the University of Oxford and Professor Stephanie Dennison on her promotion to Professor of Brazilian Studies at the University of Leeds.  PR congratulated the following on their recent appointments in the field:  David Bailey was appointed Lecturer in Portuguese Cultural Studies at the University of Manchester; Anneliese Hatton was appointed as a teaching fellow in Portuguese at the University of Birmingham; Dr Eleanor Jones was appointed Lecturer in Portuguese and Lusophone Studies at the University of Southampton; Dr Simon Park was appointed to the Camões Associate Professorship in Early Modern Portuguese at the University of Oxford; Paulo Pepe was appointed to a lectureship in Portuguese at Queen’s University, Belfast; Dr Emanuelle Santos has been appointed Lecturer in Portuguese Studies at the University of Birmingham; Dr Simão Valente has been appointed to a teaching fellowship at the University of Lisbon; Dr Rachel Randall has been appointed to a lectureship in Film Studies at Bristol University.  PR ended by thanking the outgoing members of the ABIL executive committee for their service to the association: Dr Tori Holmes, Dr Carmen Ramos Villar, Dr Mark Sabine and Dr David Frier.  Secretary  Catarina Fouto (CF) reported that she has been circulating information to the ABIL mailing list on a regular basis and, with the Treasurer, updating the membership list. The membership list stands at 140 members with a significant proportion of Postgraduate Students.  CF requested that former Postgraduate students who have since gained employment update their membership status by submitting a new form with updated information and new payment details.  She encouraged members to check the Association’s website, in particular the Useful Links sections, which presents a list of institutions of use to Postgraduate students, and also of Higher Education units where Lusophone Studies are present. Any amendments or updated information should be emailed to her.  Finally, she informed the membership that she had attended two UCML (University Council of Modern Languages) plenary meetings in January and July, representing ABIL, noting that the impact of Brexit on Modern Languages is yet uncertain, and is likely to pose significant challenges especially at Erasmus exchange programme levels, but also for research grant applicants.  Treasurer  Mark Sabine (MS) tabled the Statement of Accounts (checked by a Chartered Accountant), which showed the Association in credit with a balance of £5,851.91. This was approved by the membership.  MS also made further points regarding the need for ABIL to encourage lapsed members to re-join, and charm or shame current members who are behind with membership fees to pay up: he aclnowledged that he hadn’t been as successful as he'd hoped to be with the latter task (in large part because the failure of NatWest to either provide regular statements as promised, or to facilitate setting up on-line banking, made it tricky to identify who was or wasn't paying regularly).  The second point raise by MS was the rampant inflation of the costs of hosting a large academic conference; this combined with the increasing inflexibility of UK university conference hosting facilities poses a medium-term threat to ABIL's finances. It's highly ambitious, if not unrealistic, for ABIL to attempt to make its biennial conference cost-neutral, but another three conferences that run as big a deficit as did Sheffield would wipe out the Association's finances. Ana Margarida Martins and her colleagues at Exeter managed to keep the cost to ABIL of the 2015 conference astonishingly low, and I'd strongly recommend that the committee ask her advice about how she achieved this, and start to explore imaginative responses to the extremely problematic impact that the privatisation or marketisation of so many universities' conference services has had on associations like ABIL.  Conference Secretary  Carmen Ramos Villar thanked everybody behind the scenes to make the conference possible, and all participants and attendees to the conference, in particular the three keynote speakers, Professor Thomas Earle, Professor Hilary Owen, and Professor Lisa Shaw, and also to those who served as chairs to the conference sessions. She noted that there was a good number of postgraduate attendees, and a wide range of subjects covered in the different sessions. She also stated that it was extremely positive to see have received proposals for panels, adding that in the future this would make organising the conference programme much easier for the Conference Secretary.  CRV informed the membership of the difficulties she encountered in the process of putting the conference together due to the increasing marketisation of universities, and thanked the financial support she received from ABIL and the Instituto Camões. |
| 6. | Election of new Officers  CF stated that nominations and endorsements as per the ABIL Constitution had been received prior to the AGM for all positions except Secretary. During the AGM, the following Officers were elected: Professor Stephanie Dennison for President; Dr Catarina Fouto for Secretary, Dr Maria Tavares for Treasurer; Dr Raquel Ribeiro for Conference Secretary; Gui Perdigão for Postgraduate Representative; Dr Dorothee Boulanger (to liaise on Early-Career Researcher matters), Dr Simon Park and Dr Gustavo Infante (members without portfolio). |
| 7. | A.O.B.  The AGM welcomed a presentation by Dr Regina Duarte on TROPO UK – The Association of Teachers and Researchers of Portuguese Language in the UK, encouraging colleagues to apply and a short presentation of their work among UK educational institutions.  Stefan Tobler from *And Other Stories* made a short presentation on the publisher which speacialises in literature from across the world, highlighting the strong presence of Lusophone writers in their catalogue, and promoting the publisher’s reading group in the UK and US.  *Portuguese Studies*, the MHRA journal, welcomes scholarly contributions are invited on all subjects within the fields of the literature, culture, and history of Portugal, Brazil and the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa. The journal publishes a combination of general issues and themed numbers and is particularly interested in increasing the number of submissions on Brazilian Studies, and on developing further its review section, which is curated by Dr Paul Melo e Castro (Glasgow).  With no other business, the chair declared the meeting closed at 6.15 pm. |