

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

It's that time of year again. You will be pleased to note that we have been able to hold the annual subscription at £100 per institution for another year. Please could members ensure that payment is made as speedily as possible. An invoice has been enclosed with your Newsletter. NAMHE representatives are reminded that it is the responsibility of institutions to keep the Secretary, John Irving (j.irving@bris.ac.uk) informed of any changes of departmental contacts or heads of department.

## ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2003

Two members of the current NAMHE Committee complete their term of office at the end of 2002. They are:

**Dr Amanda Glauert, Royal Academy of Music**  
**Dr John Irving, University of Bristol**

There are two further vacancies to be filled, which have been covered in 2002 by the co-options of Professor Nigel Osborne (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Amanda Bayley (University of Wolverhampton). We should like to thank them for their service to the Committee.

Nominations are now invited to fill these vacancies (3 for 3 years and 1 for 2 years) and nomination papers have been sent to your NAMHE representative. The deadline for nominations is Friday 1 November.

## NOTICE

**Federation of British Conservatoires  
Good Management Practice Project:  
The Employment of Musical  
Instrument Teaching Specialists**

You may remember being notified about this project, via NAMHE, shortly after it began in January 2001. With funding from HEFCE, we are researching the employment practice – including pay, conditions, contracts, recognition and professional development – of instrumental teachers in HE. We started by focusing on the nine UK conservatoires, and are now working with a total of 24 HE institutions. If you are not involved, but think that you might like to be, please contact Janet Mills (Project Director) or Jan Smith (Project Officer) on 020 7591 4392, or email at jmills@rcm.ac.uk, as soon as possible – and certainly by the end of September 2002 [Editorial note: I have contacted Janet to say that readers might not see this until a little after her stated deadline – do contact her if interested].

We shall be holding our dissemination conference at the end of February 2003, and publishing a project report shortly afterwards.

**Janet Mills**  
**Royal College of Music**

## WELCOME

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Newsletter. Most of the Newsletter is given over to reports from NAMHE's Annual Conference, which took place this year in May at the Royal College of Music. The conference was a shared platform with LiTMus and almost inevitably the main areas of discussion were the RAE and Teaching and Learning. Hopefully the following reports will remind colleagues who attended of the main points raised and will also help to inform those who were unable to be there.

Two other items in this Newsletter will be of particular interest to members and demonstrate the importance and influence of your subject committee. Dai Griffiths writes about the attempted closure of the Music Department at Oxford Brookes, which followed hard upon a similar attempt at the University of Exeter. Then Stephen Banfield writes about a meeting with Emma Robinson, University Librarian at the University of London, concerning the proposed changes to provision at the Library. In both cases NAMHE made strong representations on behalf of the departments and without doubt these made an important contribution to the subsequent rejection of the closure proposals by both Universities.

These events alone demonstrate the need for a strong subject voice representing the whole music community in HE, and NAMHE will continue to represent the interests of its members and the community as a whole in such matters.

**Richard McGregor**  
**Newsletter Editor**  
**St Martin's College, Lancaster**

**NAMHE CONFERENCE**  
**May 2002**

Professor Nicholas Cook (University of Southampton) gave a keynote lecture on the recent RAE. The main points that he discussed (either in his presentation, or in questioning afterwards) are summarised below:

The RAE has had positive benefits for the discipline in certain measurable respects, including the delivery of higher levels of research output (at least quantitatively), the empowering of music departments within their own institutions, and more broadly in terms of national research activity in the arts and humanities, and the recognition that excellence is possible within any institution.

However, there have also been drawbacks, for example the emergence of a 'publish or perish' culture, an imbalance between the relative significance of teaching and research within university departments, excessive pressure on junior staff, and a mentality according to which rewards (including research funding) tend to be directed at already successful research departments rather than spread equitably across all sectors of the discipline.

The 2000 RAE introduced several new factors compared to previous exercises, including a bigger panel, fuller criteria, co-ordinated assessment of practice-based research, an outputs sourcing system and non-UK based experts (from Europe and the USA). There were 59 submissions (compared to 57 in 1996), 487 university staff graded at A or A\* (421 in 1996) and returns from 180 conservatoire staff (108 in 1996).

Individual research outputs submitted in RA2 were assigned to two members of the panel, approximately 75% of nominated publications being read and provisionally graded on a scale of 1-7. Institutional statements were considered by two members of the panel who made comments on RA3-6, initially based

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on an indicative rating of RA2, and passed to the full panel for discussion at a 2-day meeting. At each stage reference was made to published rating descriptors before the final grade (on the scale 1-5\*) was determined. Staff who had migrated between institutions were handled carefully (i) looking at the resulting grade for their 'new' department if they were included and (ii) without them, a final decision being made on the basis of a comparison of these.

Compared to all disciplines combined, Music had more 5\* departments, roughly comparable 5s, 4s and 3s, but also more 2s.

Performance was treated as research 'where it applies or embodies new or substantially improved knowledge or insights' (e.g. performance practice, interpretation or technical innovation). Practice-based research was deemed to include innovation in the interpretation of any repertory, recording of works with no history of performance, performance or recording of contemporary works and historically-informed performance. For RAE purposes, documentation of the research process is seen as an integral element of practice-based research in other disciplines such as the Performing Arts, and Music arguably needs to give this aspect more detailed consideration in the preparation for any future RAE.

Professor Cook offered a number of reflections on the exercise:

- RAE2 is crucial (this was emphasised very strongly)
- Defining a research strategy is important, though we should remember that we are primarily researchers, not managers
- Principles for measuring the relative importance of formative as well as summative assessment need to be developed
- Principles for measuring the relative importance of retrospective as well as prospective assessment also need to be developed
- RAE is now probably unwieldy in its present form and future exercises ought perhaps to go for a 'lighter touch'

A broad review of the last RAE will begin in late 2002, in which a wide spectrum of views will be canvassed, followed by an announcement of the timing of any future RAE (possibly to be held in 2008).

**John Irving**  
University of Bristol

## INSTITUTE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The conference started with a session on the Institute of Learning and Teaching (ILT) presented, very clearly and professionally, by Dr Liz Eldridge, Academic Staff Development Officer at Cambridge. I learned an awful lot from her presentation. I'd vaguely heard of the ILT since some staff at Brookes have been made 'fellows' of the Institute - nice, woody terms for something that's been in existence only since 1999. But I had no idea what it involved for ordinary Chris Lecturer.

What happens apparently is that you as an individual apply, for some reason, to join the Institute, as recognition of your capability as a teacher in Higher Education, but then you pay eighty-five pounds a year for the privilege. A born skinflint, I'm sure to measure this against the books and records I already purchase and which feed directly into the work, and also set it alongside the price of annual professional spending I'm already committed to - membership of a trade union. However, rather shadily, some institutions seem to be making membership of ILT a condition for promotion - an inspired way of ensuring membership, I'd have thought. In fact, I think I heard Dr Eldridge say that she runs little courses on how to do an ILT application.

Members of NAMHE raised many interesting questions, among which the tension between a regional approach (which the ILT is seemingly keen to foster) and a thematic or subject-based one; the point about trying to reduce experience as a practical musician to language-based evidence; the relation of teaching to research. The biggest tension I picked up on was one I didn't really understand, between the ILT and the LTSN - that's the Learning and Teaching Support Network, which in Music's case is Palatine at Lancaster. I picked up that the latter is at least government sponsored, whereas ILT (largely because of the subscription) has the air of private enterprise. But I could well be wrong.

**Dai Griffiths**  
Oxford Brookes University

rarely seem to be involved or consulted about library collection and sharing policies, which the internet communications revolution can make, and are making, far-reaching. At the meeting I talked myself into having a chat with Clive Field (British Library; ex-University of Birmingham) about this on behalf of NAMHE; I have not yet done so. The five of us also stressed the need for Mrs Robinson and her team to recognise and support the disparate range of subject areas and sub-disciplines within Music, and suggestions were made as to how they might do so in future.

On behalf of NAMHE and the entire Music community, I should like to take this opportunity to thank Ruth Darton for her many years of service as Music Subject Librarian at Senate House. Ruth has now left the Library as a result of the organisational and staffing changes implemented by Mrs Robinson, and there have been strong representations on her behalf both individually and collectively. It is no exaggeration to say that the Music Collection has flourished under her excellent stewardship and that all of us owe her a significant debt of gratitude. We are more than sorry to see her go but wish her well in her current work at the British Library, where no doubt we shall continue to benefit from the expertise and wisdom she has shown for such a long time at Senate House.

**Stephen Banfield**  
The University of Birmingham

## MUSIC DEPARTMENT CLOSURE: Where Next?

The four weeks between 28 January and 25 February 2002 were particularly memorable for the Music Department at Oxford Brookes since for that period, as part of an extensive internal review of programmes at the University, the Department was in danger of being closed down. That Music survived was a good thing, if characterized more by a sense of relief than celebration, especially since it was an outcome denied some other Departments and their members of staff. During that difficult period, many colleagues in other Music Departments rode to the rescue - in all, over 200 letters of support were received in ten working days - and a letter composed by Professor John Rink

for NAMHE served as one of our keynote addresses. NAMHE played a part as decisive as the trade union - which is in no way to denigrate the union's vital role and support.

We have followed with grim interest news of similar stories in Music and other subject areas elsewhere, and what follows is addressed to any colleagues who may be thinking, 'Department closure: where next?' Disclaimers, disclaimers: it is far too early to draw conclusions and the circumstances of each institution and subject area vary. Insofar as what follows could be interpreted (not least by our own institution) as an unhelpful parading of dirty laundry, we should be clear that we welcome critical self-reflection and see it, in fact, as something positively to be fostered, not least in the students we teach. Here are some possible features at work in the closure landscape, five in all, the first two music-specific, the third broader, the last two general, all containing elements both old and new:

- the relation between general music-making at an institution (and its locality) and the specific work of the music department.
- the joys and perils of plurality: the re-branding of 'music' by means of a number of other terms, for example through some divisions of the term itself (e.g. popular music, music technology, university department and conservatoire), or through an interdisciplinary term in which music is, or can be, a key component (e.g. performing arts, cultural studies, humanities, various groupings with 'media' in the title). That said, what then becomes of the singularity, 'music', when such fragmentation occurs?
- the downgrading of 'knowledge' or 'content' (seemingly purposeless and, deepened by changes in technology, very much 'available') in favour of immediate applicability to employment, narrowly defined.
- the size and sustainability of departments and the relation between permanent and casual labour.
- dealing with current conditions of employment: targets, audit, indicators, downsize, merger, league tables, press and publicity, and so on.

Perhaps colleagues may find this list interesting and suggestive. Certainly, if any department does find itself in similar circumstances, we should be happy to pass on any advice based upon our experience.

**Dai Griffiths**  
Oxford Brookes University

only. Entering (or not) junior researchers is a gamble but they are sympathetically dealt with by the panel.

- a) Practice-based staff  
Assessing practice-based research poses especial challenges to conservatoires, but it should be remembered that this is a research exercise. Departments should learn how to approach this area from the experience of other Arts disciplines, from their institutions, and from AHRB criteria and submission experience. Input about particular practices is actively welcomed from staff. It was said that we are in a game here and ought to play it.
- a) There was some discussion of the nature and role of external assessors and the use of other panels. Professor Cook referred people to the report, but said that the panel's own conclusions were paramount. Finally he stressed that departments should endeavour to protect solo research and direct funding. Some sort of RAE is, however, probably still needed.

**Teacher accreditation and LiTMus**

While some of the group were sympathetic to the aims of the scheme, there was a feeling of 'Is it possible?' rather than 'Is it necessary?' Many familiar problems were voiced: cost, time, payment, apathy, professional pride. It was felt by some that full-time staff should be dealt with before part-time tutors, and the role of Palatine was mentioned, but homogeneity was probably not the answer, even though continuing professional development should ideally be the aim of all.

**Report on the Senate House Library**

In May, proposed changes to the Music provision in the Senate House Library, University of London, were brought to the attention of the NAMHE committee. Music staff of the various University of London colleges were worried that the changes might be far-reaching and that they themselves had not been consulted. In addition to launching a vigorous campaign within the University, they asked NAMHE to

get involved, because for many decades the Senate House Library has been widely used by scholars throughout the country, including myself, in the course of their research; it is *de facto* a national resource.

I therefore wrote to the University Librarian, Emma Robinson, expressing NAMHE's concern about the lack of consultation and clarity over what the changes in the Music Library's staffing basis, subject organisation and collection profile might mean. She invited me to a meeting at the library on 26 June along with four University of London staff, namely John Rink and David Charlton [Editor's note: John Rink was representing Royal Holloway rather than NAMHE on this occasion], and Michael Fend and Robert Keeley (representing KCL). At that meeting she tried to reassure us that Music's provision will be enhanced and in no way shrink under the new organisation, which will be interdisciplinary with a team leader under the heading of Performance, Communication, Media and Film. There will be a cataloguer with specific responsibility for music and new or previously separate subject areas, such as film and cultural memory, which will be integrated with the familiar music holdings.

Subject budgets are apparently to be protected under this plan (although there have been recent spending freezes and other obstacles to collection development), and clearly the Music area stands to gain from the multi-media facelift which the interdisciplinary fusion will entail (although at the expense of the listening areas currently available to users). But the five of us expressed fears that new subject and staff groupings and site configuration can - inevitably will? - lead to new priorities and pressures. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it needs watching, as indeed it does in my own institution, where something similar has been developing.

Another thing that in my view needs watching is the national rationalisation of music library provision. London has long been subject to the metropolitan version of this, with policies in place to avoid duplication of certain material between the Senate House and the British Library, for example. Mrs Robinson referred to various comparable music initiatives with which she had been involved. Again, these are probably sensible, but the users at the top of the subject pyramid, namely academic music staff,

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**A view of the afternoon break-out sessions**

by Nikki Dibben

The afternoon break-out session on **teacher accreditation and ILT** consisted of a presentation by Louise Gibbs on the LiTMus programme. LiTMus is a distance learning scheme of professional development for musician teachers working in higher education, based at the Royal College of Music. One major concern raised by the discussion group was the feasibility of the scheme for instrumental teachers: many felt that instrumental teachers would lack motivation to participate in any scheme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) due to their part-time status and the demands of professional and teaching careers outside of HE institutions (this is perhaps confirmed by a take-up of 15 in three years). A number of people pointed out that this could be mitigated by paying for instrumental teachers' CPD; however, no separate funding exists for this at present. Many expressed the concern that Teaching Quality Assessment of Music would increasingly demand documentary evidence of teaching quality of instrumental staff but that within present constraints of funding this would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to fulfil using schemes of CPD.

It was a pity there was not more time for discussion of teacher accreditation since the morning and informal discussion revealed dissent about ILT membership: first, many had joined the ILT using the fast route because they felt that, although it was a paper-pushing exercise, it was inevitably going to become a requirement and that it was better to join via the least time-consuming route; second, some felt that, if they were going to be accredited, they should get as much out of it as possible and had taken a teaching certificate at the cost of their research time (these were more junior staff members); third, some hadn't joined because they felt that to do so was too time-consuming, and it was recognising them for something they knew they could do anyway and so on (no doubt there were other views, but these were not voiced to me). Given this apparent dissent, it was frustrating that there was not a more frank discussion. Granted, there was a lack of time for discussion, but the lack of sustained debate could well have been due to apathy, a few heads in the sand and a resignation to 'the inevitable' which is easier in the short-term than questioning the whole premise of a situation.

The discussion session on the **RAE** ('What happened? What next?') was primarily a question-answer session with Nicholas Cook (Chair of the RAE 2001 Music Panel). This focused on clarification of the assessment procedure: meanings of criteria terms 'international' and 'impact'; the central importance of the RA2 submissions; use of specialist assessors; the status of web-based publications; the wish for more feedback to Department Heads. Some time was also spent considering desirable features of any future exercise, with a view to contributing to the consultation process due to take place in late 2002. Professor Cook highlighted the need for the subject community to decide what it understands by 'practice-based' research. In RAE 2001, comparable UoAs viewed discourse and articulation of process as intrinsic to practice. This is not the case for music at present and there was discussion of the need for the subject community to come to a (shared) understanding of what it might mean by 'performance or composition as research'. Other desirable aspects of any future RAE voiced by group members included: the need for dissemination of research to a wider audience; more detailed feedback to departments; nomination of non-UK based assessors by NAMHE or other organisations in addition to nominations by the subject panel. Other issues raised included: the case for single-source funding versus the current system of funding from both the RAE and research grants; the funding gradient across the 7 categories (1 to 5\*); whether to consider 'value-for-money', i.e. measuring outcomes of funding and ability to attract external funding rather than outputs; the future disciplinary boundaries of UoAs.

**A view of the afternoon break-out sessions**

by Hilary Bracefield

**Research Assessment Exercise**

The group focused on three main areas

- a) The numbers entered from each department  
It was felt that the assessment might be by department (eg. if 10 staff, 40 items by whomever) or individually based, rather than by selection. Professor Cook had sympathy with departments wishing to appoint staff for teaching

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