

ATHE Newsletter

Issue 1.

June 2003.

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first ATHE newsletter, which is designed to keep you informed with the association's key activities and concerns throughout the year. We hope to produce 3 newsletters each year, although for 2003 we will have just two, the next one will cover the period July - December 2003. The newsletter will be circulated to all institutions which have paid their subscription fees for the year. This issue, however, is going out to all member institutions 2002-03. Additionally, the newsletter will be mailed to other Subject Associations. The Executive are aware that institutions would like to be kept up to date with ATHE's activities throughout the year, as well as at the Annual Conference, usually held in December. If you feel that there are issues which the newsletter could usefully include, please do not hesitate to contact me. The newsletters will include a number of standing items, including Key Issues (as discussed at Executive Committee Meetings), Special Reports (which will offer further details about these issues, Future Diary Dates and Reminders.

As this is ATHE's first newsletter, this seems like an appropriate time to remind members of the organisation's objectives:

Objectives:

1. to act as the Subject Association for tourism in higher education in the UK;
2. to promote the development and recognition of tourism as a subject of study in the UK and liaise as appropriate with other European Union countries and internationally;
3. to encourage high standards in learning, teaching and research;
4. to identify and communicate 'good practice', statistics and other information about first degrees and postgraduate qualifications in tourism;
5. to support, undertake and disseminate research to further these objectives;
6. to maintain links between education on the one hand and employers and other interested bodies on the other

For full details of ATHE's activities and of the current elected and co-opted Executive Committee members please go to our website : www.athe.org.uk

For the year 2002-03 there were ?? paid up members of ATHE, and we hope to continue to increase membership levels in the next year. It is hoped that issues raised and

discussed at the Executive Committees meetings (which are held 6 times a year) reflect these objectives and the interests of all member institutions.

Dr. Marion Stuart-Hoyle – Communications Officer.
Email: m.stuart@cant.ac.uk.

Key Issues for 2003

(as discussed at Executive Committee Meetings) as follows:

17th January 2003 – Canterbury Christ Church University College

Essentially the first meeting of the year is used to sort out elections/co-options and to set the agenda for the year.

Tourism – State of the Art 2 2004 (Glasgow) chosen conference – ATHE support students.

Agenda priorities for 2003 set – RAE Review; raising profile of tourism (political lobbying); Communication with member!; History of Tourism Studies pre and post 1980s; White Paper response; Guidelines

7th March 2003 – University of Wales Institute, Cardiff.

Knowledge Exchange Centres – KECTOUR proposal – see Special Reports below

Compendium of Guidelines and Guidelines 10 and 11 – see Special Reports below

Developing an agenda for the Joint SA Conference – see Special Reports below.

12th May 2003 – Bournemouth University

Annual Conference Plans 2003 (see Special Reports); ICOMOS meeting – attended by John Tribe – an interesting meeting and well worth keeping in touch with ICOMOS in the future; the Joint Subject Association Conference (a Special Report for this event will appear in Issue 2 of the newsletter)

Special Reports

'Quality in Tourism in HE': Conference Report: Doncaster Castle View Conference Centre: Earth Centre: 5–6th December 2002

ATHE's Annual Conference for 2002 'Quality in Tourism in HE' took place at the Doncaster Earth Centre for the first time (the previous two Annual Conferences were held at the Bromsgrove Hilton Hotel. The first morning included talks from Wendy Stubbs of QAA about Institutional Review, and Derek Robbins (Bournemouth University)

about an Overview of Unit 25. The early part of the afternoon was given over to 'activities', which ranged from tackling the climbing wall, to the zip wire, to just strolling around the immediate countryside. Later in the afternoon the ATHE AGM was held, at the outset of which the Chair, Keith Wilkes (Bournemouth University) outlined the key issues of the year (see below) and welcomed the new Secretary, Teri Vincent, who took over from Sue Kitching in Summer 2002. The second day commenced with David Botterill's (UWIC) thoughts about Research Assessment Quality – (see JoHLSSTE Vol 1 Issue 2 below and ATHE Guideline No 11) which was followed by talks from Keith Wilkes about Widening Access and Recruitment (Foundation Degrees in the South West) and Lyn Bibbings (Oxford Brookes University) on the implication of the Disability Discrimination Act for Tourism in HE.

ATHE AGM 2002: CHAIR'S REPORT

Executive Committee meetings were held as follows in 2002:

1 st February	Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
18 th March	University of Birmingham
22 nd May	University of Luton
17 th July	Bournemouth University
13 th September	Bolton Institute
1 st November	Oxford Brookes University

The Chair reported the following issues as those which focused the minds' of the Executive throughout 2002:

- NLG/ATHE Guidelines 1–9
- ATHE Guidelines 10
- RAE 2001
- Membership
- Collaboration with LSA
- Membership of ALSSS
- Response to ALSSS: Health of UK Research in the Social Sciences: RAE 2001
- ALSSS AGM
- Retirement of Secretary – Sue Kitching
- New Secretary – Teri Vincent
- Involvement with Tourism Alliance
- ALTIS
- Financial support for 5 postgraduate students presenting papers at Tourism 2002, Cardiff
- ATHE Expenses
- Links with ICOMOS

- Closure of PG Tourism provision at University of Birmingham
- Plans for 'Unit 25' joint activities with LSA, BASES, CHME
- Response to HEFCE: Joint Funding Bodies' Review of Research Assessment.

Dr Keith Wilkes , Chair.

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Response of ATHE to White Paper "The Future of Higher Education"

Preamble

ATHE felt it was important that the organisation respond directly to the Government's White Paper and the following (drafted by John Tribe) was sent to the Department for Education and Skills (Consolidation Unit) after discussions with the Executive Committee. (See <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/highereducation/hestrategy/pdfs/DfES-HigherEducation.pdf> for a full copy of the paper)

Response

The Association for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE) is the subject association for Tourism in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK. Its membership of approximately 40 HEIs enables it to speak with authority on behalf of this sector. The Association wishes to stress the importance of tourism as a subject of study at UK HEIs where there are currently approximately 10,500 undergraduate and 700 postgraduate students enrolled. Furthermore there are approximately 3000 students following higher education courses in tourism at FEIs (Further Education Institutions). ATHE would also like to stress the significance of tourism as an economic, social and cultural activity and make the following comments regarding the White Paper which are attached as a separate sheet.

Keith Wilkes, Chair.

Proposal	Comment
Funding of Research: Increased research selectivity	
"The government will ... encourage and reward research	The RAE results demonstrated that, apart from isolated individuals, the majority of tourism research was rated at 4 or

<p>in larger units ... [and] invest more in our leading research departments" (p6).</p> <p>"The government intends to improve the position of research by focusing resources more effectively on the best research performers" (p28)</p>	<p>below. The intention to concentrate research funding on the highest rated research departments will cause a major funding crisis for tourism research in UK HEIs., with a reduction in research capacity and deterioration of the research infrastructure that has developed in this important area..</p> <p>Proposal: see below</p>
<p>Funding of Research: Support for emerging areas</p>	
<p>"The government will develop new incentives to support emerging and improving research" (p6)</p> <p>"We propose ... to create a network of around 20 Knowledge Exchanges." (p39)</p>	<p>Tourism is a clear example of an emerging and improving research area that would benefit from targeted incentives. Additionally, Tourism would seem to be an ideal focus for a Knowledge Exchange Centre. ATHE proposes to lead a consortium to develop proposals for such a centre and would welcome government support for such a move.</p> <p>Proposal: Tourism research is explicitly identified as an area of emerging and improving research and appropriate support and funding is identified to build capacity and develop excellence in this significant area. Targets for emerging and improving areas for the next RAE should be appropriate and realistic (i.e. an improved score of 1 or 2 or its equivalent in the next RAE, rather than a 5/5* threshold).</p>
<p>PhD students</p>	
<p>"larger graduate schools in fewer HEIs"</p> <p>"a model where postgraduate degree awarding powers are restricted to successful research consortia" (p33)</p>	<p>Tourism supports a small but growing number of PhD students. This programme would be threatened by proposals to restrict supervision of PhD students in the short / medium term.</p> <p>Proposal: Areas of emerging and improving research (including Tourism) are exempt from this restriction.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>	
<p>"Collaboration should be encouraged" (p29)</p>	<p>The absence of established 5 / 5* research groups in Tourism makes it difficult to link emerging research centres to established / excellent ones.</p> <p>Proposal: Consideration should be given about how best to encourage collaboration in areas of emerging and improving research such as Tourism</p>
<p>Centres of Teaching Excellence</p>	
<p>"Centres of Excellence in teaching will be established" (p47)</p>	<p>The Subject LTSN works well in promoting good practice in tourism teaching. There is scope for confusion, conflict and competition over funding with Centres of Excellence.</p> <p>Proposal: Successful LTSNs should be given a clear role in working with Centres of Excellence.</p>

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AS mentioned in ATHE's response to the White Paper, Tourism would seem to be an ideal focus for a Knowledge Exchange Centre (see pages 43-44 in the White Paper). ATHE proposes to lead a consortium to develop proposals for such a centre and would welcome government support for such a move. John Tribe has circulated Executive Committee members with a draft paper outlining the possible format of such a KEC. Subsequently, he has emailed all member institutions to gauge their support for such a venture and to see if any institutions already work within such a network. A number of useful replies were received regarding support for the idea and details of existing networks in place. HEFCE have been approached in order to gauge their views as to the appropriateness of such a KEC. On a positive note, they highlighted the importance of RDA involvement, the fact that sectoral knowledge exchanges are not ruled out and the fact that KECs are likely to be led by less research-intensive institutions. Most importantly, the HEFCE consultation document on Knowledge Exchanges is soon to be published and the final guidelines will be produced in September; bids for the 1st round of funding will be solicited in November. In view of this, it is suggested that ATHE awaits the publication of the document and interested institutions meet after this.

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**GUIDELINES UPDATE: COMPENDIUM Nos 1-9
Nos 10 and 11 published April 2003
No 12 forthcoming**

For some time now we have been awaiting the publication of ATHE's Guideline No 10 by Shirley Eber 'Integrating Sustainability into the Undergraduate Curriculum: Leisure and Tourism'. This is now available and all institutions who paid their subscriptions for 2002-03 will have received a copy by now, together with No 11 by David Botterill and Claire Haven titles 'Tourism Studies and the Research Assessment Exercise 2001. Both Guidelines can now be uploaded from ATHE's website. The Compendium of NLG Guidelines (January 2002) which includes all 9 NLG Guidelines is now also available and has been distributed to fully paid up members for 2002-03. In conjunction with the forthcoming Annual Conference 2003 (see below) Guideline No 12 is currently being prepared by Marion Stuart-Hoyle, and will focus upon the NLG/ATHEs' first ten years of activity and the key issues which have faced Tourism in HE during this period (2003 marks the ten year anniversary of NLG-ATHE). If you do require any further copies of the above mentioned published guidelines, please contact the ATHE secretary, Teri Vincent on teri.vincent@virgin.com

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ATHE's response to the Joint Funding Bodies' Review of Research Assessment

In November 2002, the ATHE Executive felt it was important for the Subject Association to respond to the above on behalf of its members. Claire Wellings penned the following to the Joint Funding Bodies on behalf of ATHE (If you would like to read the original invitation to respond, please go to: <http://www.ra-review.ac.uk/invite/invit.doc>)

ATHE welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this review and wishes to be actively involved in future stages of the consultation process. At this stage of the process the Association wishes to respond to points raised in Annex B, Groups One and Five.

Group One – Expert Review

Q7. e. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

While generally supporting the approach of expert or peer review over the other methods available, ATHE would wish to seek clarification on the process by which expert or peer reviewers would be selected. In addition, ATHE would welcome greater transparency concerning the selection of expert advice from beyond normal panel membership.

In the absence of a discrete and separate Unit of Assessment for tourism and related subjects, the tourism research community has to submit its research across several other Units. Given the breadth of subject coverage in these Units, the selection of appropriate expert or peer reviewers able to make judgements on the quality of the tourism research submitted is a matter of concern. This is an issue which affects all interdisciplinary subjects submitting across multiple Units of Assessment (or any future equivalent to the UoA). Similar issues arise in terms of the relationships between leisure and sports science research in Unit of Assessment 69.

Group Five – Crosscutting themes

Q17. f. Should each subject or group of cognate subjects be assessed in the same way?

The key concerns here relate to ensuring the equitable treatment of both interdisciplinary and single discipline subjects.

It is felt that interdisciplinary subjects such as tourism are not best served by a discipline-based system. Such a system results in the splitting of tourism submissions across several Units, and thus the relative 'invisibility' of the strength of the total submission in the subject area.

The issue of making qualitative judgements based on submission to journals also arises here, as it has been suggested that interdisciplinary subject journals are not viewed in the same way as single discipline journals for the purposes of the RAE. This may disadvantage interdisciplinary researchers

who have to make strategic decisions on whether to submit their work to tourism subject journals or to journals from other more well-established and recognised academic disciplines such as geography or management. This issue will need to be considered when designing any future review system.

Q 17. h. How can a research assessment process be designed to support equality of treatment for all groups of staff in Higher Education?

It is of fundamental importance that any research assessment process seeks not only to reward and recognise the quality of existing research, but also to create an environment in which new research and new researchers may be developed. Within the current system newly emerging or 'young' academic subjects, which by their nature will have larger population of researchers at this developmental stage in their careers, may be disadvantaged or insufficiently recognised and rewarded.

It is apparent that a 'catch 22' situation has emerged for the existing process of research assessment. Funding in some developing subject areas is not awarded because the existing research base is not yet strong enough, and the institutions concerned then find it difficult to support new and developing research areas due to lack of funding. From the institutions' point of view, such new and developing areas represent a higher risk than mature and well-established fields, which attract external funding more easily.

Mechanisms for encouraging new and developmental research areas and researchers must therefore be designed in to any future research assessment process.

Q17. i. Priorities: what are the most important features of an assessment process?

It is considered that the most important element of any assessment process is clarity and transparency. While institutional 'game playing' (Section 5 of the 'Invitation to Contribute') will always be evident to some extent in any funding allocation system, much of this can be avoided by being absolutely clear and explicit about the process and about how decisions and judgements will be made.

It is also vital that the application of the criteria by which such judgements are made is consistent across all units (or their equivalents). The aim should be for *equitable*, if not *identical*, treatment of all subject areas (with reference to the response concerning new and developing subject areas in Q17h above).

Future dates for your diary

ATHE'S Annual Conference 2003 is set for the **4th/5th December 2003**, again to be held at the Doncaster Earth Centre. During the May Executive Committee Meeting it was felt

that the key focus of the Conference should reflect the fact that the NLG, and now ATHE, had been operational for ten years, and that this would be an opportune time to reflect back on the last 30 years or so of Tourism in HE, and to think seriously about what the key issues in the coming years are likely to be. The intention is to invite key individuals from the history of the subject area to act as a panel for discussion and learning during the Thursday afternoon session. ATHE would like to stress the fact that the Annual Conference is both a social and an informative event, during which delegates have the opportunity to catch up with colleagues from other institutions (and their own!) and to keep abreast of subject related developments. Other topics for the Annual Conference might include ATHE's options for collaboration (subject associations, HE/FE institutions) and HE in FE. The conference will be promoted as widely as possible to encourage attendance, including in key calendars of events (e.g. Insights, Tourism Concern (In Focus), Tourism@jisc.co.uk).

Future Executive Committee Meetings:

For your information, the next three meetings are as follows:

11th July 2003 – Buckinghamshire Chilterns University

28th September 2003 – Strathclyde University

31st October – Luton University

Congratulations to Teri who is expecting her first baby in October!

Reminders

A brief reminder to those of you who have yet to pay your subscriptions for 2003–04! Teri did send out the invoices in early April – if your institutions has not received one, please contact her as soon as possible. We are keen to encourage as many existing and new members as possible to join, to ensure that ATHE really is representative of the Tourism in HE Community across the UK.

Links

The Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism is an online journal which can be found at: <http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/johlste>

More specifically, if you would like to see David Botterill's recent report on entitled 'Tourism Studies and Research Quality Assessment in UK Universities' please go to:

<http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/johlste/vol1no2/perspective/contents.html>