DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE AGM, 2019.

Members: Steve Bramall, Richard Davies, Patricia Hannan, Mary Healy, Ruth Heilbron (Chair), Judith Suisse, Janet Orchard, Doret de Ruyter, Claire Skea, Adrian Skilbeck, Carrie Winstanley

1. Teacher Education

Andrea English began her term as Teacher Education Coordinator at last year’s conference where she welcomed and supported the teacher scholarships winners. These scholarships fund successful candidates to attend conference. The recipients were George Dublys, Nick Heal, Malcolm Richards and Anne Marie Roche. Their reports are available on www.philosophy-of-education.org/news/reflections-on-the-peszgb-conference. We are welcoming five further teachers on this initiative at this year’s conference. They are Cieran Caulfield, Molly Janz, Sonny Johnson, Greg McGuinness and Paul Moore. (Their reports will be posted on the website in due course.)

Andrea has launched an initiative directed at branch secretaries, to seek feedback on the idea of including in the seminar series at least 1 seminar per year that is particularly relevant to teachers in schools and there has been an encouraging response.

In previous years we have reported on Philosophy for Teachers (P4T), developed by Janet Orchard, which organised retreats and seminars from 2013-17. P4T was launched and sustained with PESGB funding and was judged to be very valuable by those who took part. The initiative has now extended internationally and taken place in South Africa, Hong Kong and at PESA last year. Accordingly, funding is being sought through other sources and more sustainable strategies are being pursued.

2. Student Pre-conference

2018 - This was attended by more than 40 people and the topic was ‘After the PhD what next?’ Speakers were Emma Williams on the academic route into HE and Steve Bramall on the many possibilities of community philosophy. Adrian Skilbeck chaired and there was plenty of discussion and interactivity. Preferred topics for the next pre-conference were considered:

- How to start a PhD (very popular topic)
- Pluralism, intercultural and inter-disciplinary contexts of philosophy of education
- Doing philosophical research for a Masters, before a PhD
- The value of philosophy – ‘manifesto material’. Relationships between philosophical research and teaching in schools
- Tracing topics taken by students over the last few years in philosophy of education.

2019 - Taking account of the popularity of the various themes discussed, the 2019 pre-conference relates to transition from Masters to PhD and once on a PhD programme, the importance of the REF in the English context. The speakers are: Sarah Smith on writing a research proposal, Richard Pring on supervision and Richard Smith on the REF.

3. Writing Retreat

A mid-career writing retreat is again on the programme for this year. It is scheduled for early September for a small group of people to help them kick-start projects, or complete some reading, thinking or writing in a congenial and scholarly atmosphere. Full details and application form at http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/events/writing-retreat

4. BERA conference and SIG

The Philosophy of Education Special Interest Group has a new convenor, Janet Orchard who took over from David Aldridge who has retired as he is now part of the BERJ editorial team. Richard Davies continues as co-convenor.

The 2018 conference was held at Northumbria University in Newcastle from the 11 – 13 September. This was preceded by the BERA AGM and a meeting of SIG convenors and BERA Council members. PESGB members led and participated in a number of symposia, hot topic and alternative sessions which engaged audiences who would not usually attend philosophical papers or events. SIG members presented a range of individual papers with strong philosophical content both within the PoE SIG and in other SIGs. This is in line with our strategic policy to seek to engage with non-philosophers as part of this broad educational conference. Feedback from the conference has been positive. There remains an issue of the opportunities for detailed discussion of papers, but this is not the intention of the BERA conference.

PESGB has supported the attendance of speakers from the P4T Hong Kong symposium at the BERA Conference who took part in a panel discussion. These were talented PhD students in philosophy of education Luying Wei (University of Glasgow) and Rowena Azada-Palacios (UCL Institute of Education), whose papers were very well received in Hong Kong.

2019 conference takes place in Manchester 10-12 September.
5. Philosophy in the Community

Graeme Tiffany and Carrie Winstanley ran a workshop on philosophy in the community at the 2018 Annual Conference which was well-attended and stimulated lively discussion particularly on the question of how best the society might benefit the public, in the light of our constitution’s stated aim to promote philosophy of education for the public benefit. This is an area for development.


The final event in the series of conferences was held in Belfast in October 2018, organised by Alison McKenzie and Judith Suissa. It has been a successful initiative with much positive feedback from the students and new researchers who attended. A special issue of the European Journal of Education Policy is in press, with contributions from NRiPOE participants from the past 2 years.

We’d like to record a special thanks to Alison MacKenzie who has done an excellent job organizing and hosting the conference in Queens University Belfast in the past 2 years, and who has taken the lead in coordinating and editing the Special Issue.

7. Philosophy of Education abroad.

CEUPES - Following previous support for delegates from the Central European Philosophy of Education Society (CEUPES) (report at http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/files/publications/PESGB%20Newsletter%202017.pdf pp 37-38) Andrea English and Paul Standish attended the Polish Philosophy of Education Society Conference in September 2018, as invited speakers representing PESGB. Andrea writes: ‘Our talks were in general sessions, with close to 50 delegates in attendance including many students from the University of Warsaw. There were several audience questions and the talk topics went out on Twitter. Rafal Godon who hosted the conference provided excellent hospitality. There were many European colleagues who were interested in coming to PESGB Oxford and expressed gratitude that we had come and could tell them about the Society meetings. The conference was held with parallel sessions in Polish or English, as some participants preferred remaining in Polish and of course for us, it was great to have the English sessions to hear about colleagues’ work. The Conference programme was given to the Development committee for archiving’

APEN - African Philosophy of Education Network (Eli Glevey) Eli has set up a website - www.africanpen.org with the aim of encouraging closer engagement among the African scholars with whom he is working. He writes ‘I am hoping that doing so would help us build the digital resources that we need as I try to populate the site with current educational news items. It has not been easy and continue to be difficult but will carry on. Thank you for your encouragement, it means a lot’.

Ruth Heilbronn
March 2019