



Survey re Future of GLHC

A. Introduction

1. this paper accompanies the questionnaire which I have submitted on behalf of the Society
2. the response period did not give us time to hold a committee meeting so I sent round a paper outlining my responses and asked for comments from interested members. The three who have had so form of direct experience of the committee did respond. However, the views are those of me as President. As one valued member expressed: *“I feel that THS members in general are not interested in anything remotely outside of the 3 streets of Tewkesbury which makes things very difficult when trying to involve them County wide!”*

B. Paper to accompany Questionnaire

1. **Yes:** but it is important to decide upon a structure which will continue to inspire but which will be relatively cheap to administer. **See conclusion**
2. Activities
 - a. Local History Afternoon **Doubtful** (October annually): This is an afternoon I have loved and hated.
 - i. It was very hard work to produce a display which is not my forte; we never won but afterwards I felt it **worth-while as the one opportunity to sell the society and meet fellow society activists**
 - ii. I was difficult to obtain successful speakers – I would have liked to see far more involvement of societies using their own speakers to contribute to county themes. **Our members agree that the quality of speakers has been disappointing.**
 - iii. The afternoon seems to attract a clientele more elderly than I who appreciated the concept of lectures; I feel that generation is passing and I do not think my age group (and younger?) is so passive. **It has to pay and for this reason we do not feel it is viable.** If it does continue it should avoid June, September, October & January – possibly school holidays best time as attendees cannot afford then to be absent on holiday.
 - b. Jerrard Award: **YES** this makes the History afternoon worthwhile.
 - i. **I do find the Award an incentive when undertaking my own research and writing and when editing our own Bulletin. The success we have attained makes it worthwhile even if we have not won the award enough times.** The criterion of making it relevant to outside issues does not always coexist with some historical research but that is not important when we have our own Woodard Award which does not contain this criterion.
 - ii. **Any tangible prize should be awarded only annually with a medal to keep – mainly it is the kudos which counts. Judgement can be done by email and the winning Society would I am sure pay the travel expences of the Chairman to present the medal at a Society meeting – even to pay for the medal!**
 - iii. **It should be awarded in 2012 on this basis**

- c. **Regional Afternoon:** **YES IF IT PAYS or the Host Society will subsidize** We also hosted the afternoon ourselves many years ago new and I felt that was very beneficial for the Society in the numbers involved and the cooperation with the Methodist Church who provided the vital excellent afternoon tea. I also enjoyed attending but held in times of cheaper holidays.

Conclusion: As President of the Society I value these three parts of the work on the committee but I am conscious that our members (except for one or two) would not attend unless under some form of “duress”. **I feel they need reviewing with view to updating them and making far more active use of local members.** Timing ought to be more sensitive to the price of holidays for the retired and perhaps hold events in school holidays. However in 10 years time, life styles will have changed for the worse.

- d. **Quarterly Newsletter:** **YES if re-evaluated again best on line**

This needs evaluation because I am not aware of it – but I do value Wendy’s notes on the meeting

- e. **Glos. History** **NO** – I do not really value because of the fundamental problem with our subject in that it has to be local to be interesting unless articles serve a wider purpose which will enrich our local studies.¹ I always regretted that the Jerrard winner was not always published, “pour encourager les autres”. **Just received this year's and besides Jerrard information, there is only the Holst article which might attract me. Because it is paper produced, it will be expensive for us to circulate.**

Conclusion: Thus unless this journal is radically altered and can stand on its own financing, **I would not regret its passing.** It might be more valuable as an on-line publication.

- f. **Local History Speaker’s List** YES **on-line and if charged**. I do find this very valuable but, as it is advertising for speakers who charge, **then we should follow WI example and charge speakers to advertise.** (WI charges £25 pa for 4 entries. I do not mind the fee but do not like the restriction. WI also ought to publish on line.

Conclusion; maintain, charge “advertisers; no restrictions

3. **any additional activities:** **Websites and Computers:** it is interesting that this issue is omitted from the discussion. There used to be a regular meeting of computer users on a Monday night and this generated

- a. at least **two annual afternoons offering tuition in use of computers in local and family history.** These had varying degrees of success.
- b. **A website competition** which only lasted one year. I thought this a sad lapse bearing in mind how important our websites and the use of computing in local history. When I became a councillor in 2007 I had to cease attending those meetings because of the clash. I suspect they have now lapsed. **Our webmaster would not wish to attend at present.**

¹ **BALH** has the same problem in relating to local societies such as THS. **BUT** it does provide insurance in its subscription of £58 pa (which never seems to change!)

4-7: YES if open

Our representative: *“I personally find the meetings quite uplifting to hear about what other Societies are doing and I try to convey information on the various interesting Speakers and / or visits they have found in my notes.*

Over the years we have learnt about funding grants and tapped computer expertise all for free and it would be a shame to lose the contact with all this as the next thing required we will either have to “reinvent the wheel” or pay for help.”

President: *“not that I like the consequences, but it was this committee which raised issue of Copyright and so we must be grateful for that?”*

8. as on questionnaire

9 & 10. YES

individual for speakers;

Society £20 p.a. at first thought depending on what was agreed as a county and what costings are needed. **We must bear in mind that our present finances are under strain because of increased costs. At our January meeting we shall have to consider raising both meeting charges and member subs.**

11: YES but only when it is agreed what is wanted as a county, then we should advertise for help; **I and possibly other members might help if we saw value and it was mainly online with no expensive meetings** (in terms of time and travel costs) involved.

14. Overall Conclusion:

A. I feel that the existence of the County Committee has helped individual societies to raise standards, however in current circumstances it can only continue with widespread support which means:

- A thorough review based upon responses to this questionnaire
- Societies need to be willing to guarantee a annual subscription
- Activities need to be self-supporting financially or be allowed to lapse
- Much more emphasis on use of the internet and website
- More use of native talent

B. Also Glos. History have been lucky to have **Naomi** - who has given more time than she should to help out but now it seems that funding is finished completely so other means has to be found if it is to continue.

<p style="text-align: center;">It would be a long-term shame if individual societies just became isolated islands of endeavour.</p>

*John Dixon,
28 November 2011.*