



**Notes on the History of the
British Association for Applied
Linguistics**

1967–2017

**Produced on the Occasion of the 50th BAAL Annual
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1. Introduction

This short historical pamphlet has been produced on behalf of the Executive Committee to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL). Rosamond Mitchell wrote the original history in 1997, and Greg Myers updated it in 2017, following her model. Our aim was to document key steps and events in the development of the Association, and the major issues which have preoccupied it over five decades. We felt this would be helpful to the membership both in maintaining a collective memory, in promoting a positive understanding of BAAL's achievements to date, and in evaluating possible future directions for the Association.

The production of the pamphlet was complicated by the fact that BAAL records are somewhat incomplete, particularly for the early years. An Archive was held at Exeter University and then the University of Birmingham, and it is now housed within the larger archive of language teaching materials assembled by Richard Smith at the Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick. The archive includes material mainly from the mid 1970s onwards. The founding of the *BAAL Newsletter* in 1976 meant that the activities of the Association began to be more regularly documented, and the Newsletter has been an increasingly important formal and informal record of BAAL activities and preoccupations. In particular, at the 10th Annual Meeting in 1977, a "Chairman's Forum" was held at which the first three Chairmen of the Association (Pit Corder, Peter Strevens, Walter Grauberg) presented their reflections on the origins and prospects of the Association; these were published in *BAAL Newsletter* 4, in March 1978. Similarly at the 20th Annual Meeting, the then Chairperson John Trim gave an extended account of the founding of the Association, which was published in *British Studies in Applied Linguistics* 3, in 1988. Obviously these authoritative accounts are central to any account of BAAL's early development. The Newsletter has also published informative obituary notices for Chairs who served in the earlier years of BAAL (Pit Corder, Peter Strevens, Sam Spicer, Walter Grauberg, Alan Davies, Christopher Brumfit, and John Trim), which are included within this pamphlet as Appendix 3. All Chairs were interviewed for the preparation of this document and its revision. Finally, for later years, papers from Annual Meetings and Annual General Meetings have been consulted (though there are some gaps). Many issues of the *Newsletter* are now available on-line at <https://baal.org.uk/publications>.

We would be grateful for any corrections and amplifications which readers can supply. Richard Smith at the University of Warwick would also be grateful to hear from any member who holds early records, which may be useful in enhancing/completing the Archive collection.

Rosamond Mitchell
BAAL Chair 1994–97

Greg Myers
BAAL Chair 2012–15

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2. Founding of BAAL

The first formal proposal for the creation of a “British Applied Linguistics Association” was made in 1965 by Peter Strevens, then recently appointed to a new Chair in Applied Linguistics at Essex, and also Secretary of the newly-formed Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée. John Trim provides an account of the general background to the formation of AILA itself, in advance of any individual national Association of applied linguistics, and shows how its roots lay in postwar moves towards reconstruction and unification in (Western) Europe:

“Following the signature of the European Convention for Cultural Cooperation, meetings were held in Strasbourg and in Stockholm to consider a programme for the promotion of language learning in the states signatory to the Convention. It was clear even at that time, that the ever closer cultural cooperation among European countries to be expected with the development of increasingly close social, economic and political links intended by the Council of Europe and the Treaty of Rome, would require a great increase in the quantity and quality of language teaching in all member countries and at all levels. It was at first hoped that a European Language Institute could be established, but this project foundered owing to the non-availability of finances and, at that early stage, the absence of the necessary political will...

“...It was decided instead to launch a 10-year major Project under the aegis of the Council of Europe, with the objectives of establishing good working relations among institutions in different member countries concerned with language teaching, promoting the adoption of the (at that time) new audio-visual methodology and, more generally, encouraging the close cooperation between academic linguists and practising language teachers. To this end AILA was founded, and throughout the 60s a series of *stages* were organised in different member countries, in which a European policy on language teaching was gradually evolved, culminating in Recommendation (69)2 of the Committee of Ministers, which had a powerful influence on the language policies of the member states of the Council of Europe. It was customary to hold meetings of the AILA committee in connection with the Council of Europe *stages* and to use the occasion to encourage the foundation of national affiliates or to strengthen those already in existence... In 1964, a first small-scale International Colloquy on Applied Linguistics was organised by the Association Française de Linguistique Appliquée in Nancy. The second was to be held in Britain...” (Trim 1988, pp. 7–8).

Within Britain, of course, there were other substantial impulses towards the development of applied linguistics, which had already led to the creation of several university departments, starting with the University of Edinburgh in 1957. As Trim explains, these were partly to do with policy needs relating to English as a second/foreign language, partly to do with the postwar need to promote foreign language learning within the UK itself:

“Starting with the School of Applied Linguistics in Edinburgh, a number of universities had set up departments of applied linguistics, largely to provide the professionalisation of the teaching of English as a foreign language which the British Council considered to be necessary in the national interest, especially at a time when the common use of English was seen to be an important factor in the survival of the Commonwealth as an effective

political and economic partnership. The first attempts to join the Common Market had encountered resistance, and led the British Government to stimulate increased proficiency in foreign languages. The Committee on Research and Development in Modern Languages was set up and commissioned research in that field on a substantial scale... Language Centres were established in universities and polytechnics. Language laboratories were set up in schools, involving substantial investment, and the Nuffield Foundation (later Schools Council) projects for the development of audio-visual language courses were generously funded, with the intention of stiffening the modern languages provision in comprehensive secondary schools and in primary schools... It was at this time (1966) that the Centre for Information on Language Teaching was instituted. As a result there was a great swell of interest on the part of teachers in the help they might receive from linguists in the difficult yet promising situation they were facing..." (Trim 1988 p8).

In response to these growing demands, a language teaching section was set up within the Linguistics Association of Great Britain (LAGB), but this was felt to be an inadequate forum for the development of a new interdisciplinary area, in a consistent and principled way.

In July 1965, therefore, a preliminary meeting of interested parties was convened by Peter Strevens at Birkbeck College, and a working party was set up to formulate the aims of the proposed British Applied Linguistics Association. The invited working party membership reflected interests in theoretical linguistics, in the teaching of English as a mother tongue, and in bilingualism, as well as English as a foreign language, and the teaching of foreign languages within the UK; it included James Britton, Michael Halliday, Glyn Lewis, Donald Riddy, Frank Palmer, George Perren, David Stern, Peter Strevens, John Trim, and Jean Ure. The founding meeting for the British Association for Applied Linguistics followed at Reading, in 1967, and elected a first Executive Committee, whose members were: Pit Corder (Chairman), David Wilkins (Secretary), John Trim (Treasurer), Norman Denison, Eric Hawkins, Brian Gomes da Costa, George Perren, and Peter Strevens.

There was some initial debate over the scope of the Association's objectives, and in particular, whether it should concern itself primarily/exclusively with matters to do with language teaching, and machine translation (then the stated objectives of AILA, which were to be imitated). At the Reading meeting, however, a wider brief was agreed, accepting that the Association could legitimately concern itself with applications of linguistics much more broadly. In the 1974 version of the Constitution (formalised at that time to meet Charity Commissioners' requirements), the aims of BAAL were finalised to read:

"The Objects of the Association are the advancement of education by fostering and promoting, by any lawful charitable means, the study of language use, language acquisition and language teaching, and the fostering of interdisciplinary collaboration in this study..."

Brumfit 1996 provides an overview of background debates in the 1960s and 1970s on the nature of applied linguistics: pp. 3–11. (See also de Bot 2015, Cook 2015, and the special issue on definitions of applied linguistics of which Cook's article is a part.).

3. BAAL membership

The founders of BAAL saw themselves as creating “a professional association of specialists in applied linguistics” (minutes of preliminary meeting, 5.7.65). They were concerned to establish the academic credentials of the Association, and to ensure that it maintained a distinct character as a learned society rather than becoming yet another language teachers’ organisation. At the beginning, therefore, individual membership was restricted to those who could “demonstrate either by formal qualification, published work or research in train a tangible connection with linguistics” (EC minutes, 26.9.68). In practice, the usual formal qualification expected was one of the new diplomas/ masters degrees in applied linguistics, which from the 1960s onwards were producing dozens of graduates each year. Applicants had to be sponsored by existing members of the Association; a Membership Subcommittee scrutinised applications, and brought debatable cases to the EC.

By 1973, the “narrowness of recruitment” was already being commented on, and the membership subcommittee asked to report to the AGM on admissions policy (EC mins 9.2.73). Important founder members were concerned to maintain academic controls on entry to membership (e.g. EC mins 13.9.74); however the criteria were evidently operated fairly flexibly, with the EC accepting at an early stage that absence of formal qualifications was not necessarily a bar to membership (EC mins 7.2.75). By 1985, with the membership already standing at 453 people, there was a clear feeling that the character of the Association as a learned society was now secure, and the formal controls on membership were dropped from the constitution.

The issue of corporate/ institutional membership was under discussion by 1970, and even before this had been formally approved by an AGM, the EC agreed to offer “a unique Corporate Associate Membership” to CILT (EC mins 1.4.70). In 1971 the EC agreed to formally recommend establishment of a category of Associate Membership. By 1972, there were several “corporate members”, mostly publishers, who dominated this category for many years. In 1997, there were 23 Associate Members, including a number of academic institutions and organisations including publishers, CILT, and the British Council. In 2016, there were 10 Associate Members (all publishers) and 28 Institutional Members (mostly departments supporting their staff members)

In 1971 membership was reported to the EC as “running about 160” (EC mins 25.1.71), and in the following year the Association had over 200 individual members. Steady growth continued, and by 1976, a total of 369 members was reported, including 44 overseas members (EC mins 14.9.76). Numbers then fell back a little, but in the 1980s the 400+ mark was passed, and in the 1990s, the 500+ mark. The June 1997 List of Members included 655 names. From 1997, the number of individual members continued to grow, from 487 in 1998 to 892 in 2016. These numbers included 131 reduced fee memberships (mostly students) in 1996, increasing to 356 in 2016. A new category of ‘Supporting Member’ was introduced in 2002; those who chose this option could pay a higher subscription as a contribution to scholarship funds. The category was dropped in 2007. Institutional Members (departments with multiple memberships for students and staff) increased to 28, meaning that the total number of all forms of members in 2016 was 1047. A comparison of membership lists at the beginning and end of the period shows that members giving an address outside the UK increased from 99 in 1997 to 200 in 2016, with the numbers from Japan alone increasing from 8 to 58.

The BAAL e-mail list has been on a listserv at Leeds since the 1990s, established first by Lynne Cameron, and later maintained by Dovetail as part of the membership records. In an age of social media, it retains the same in technology; members can post e-mails to a server that sends them to everyone to the list. There are typically between ten and fifteen messages a week, most of them announcements of conferences, programmes, and jobs. Some researchers have found it useful for distributing surveys or consulting members on norms within the profession. Every two or three years there has been an intense period of wider discussion of a controversy within BAAL or of a public or political issue; some of these are discussed in section 6. The list is not moderated; any member can post a message without it being checked. Since 2012 the web site has had a statement on 'BAALmail Etiquette' that suggests the range of topics and asks members to avoid 'announcements about non-linguistics matters' and 'gossip, and discussions of a non-professional nature'.

4. BAAL publications

The first major publication arising from a BAAL-sponsored activity was the three-volume Proceedings of the 1969 AILA Congress held at Cambridge, published by Cambridge University Press in 1971; the volume titled *Applications of Linguistics* was edited by John Trim and George Perren.

The seminar programme, held regularly in the first thirty years of the organisation, naturally also gave rise to publishable material, which individual seminar organisers wanted to see in print. In 1972 the EC “noted with satisfaction” that “some BAAL seminar papers had been published” (EC mins 21.1.72). The notion of publication by BAAL of an occasional series was explored with various publishers during the 1970s, with negative results however; seminar organisers had to be left free to make their own publication arrangements (e.g. EC mins 7.5.73).

A Publications Subcommittee was established in the mid 1970s however, and exceptionally, it undertook to sponsor fully the publication of one particular set of seminar papers. This was the volume “English for Academic Purposes”, the outcome of a joint BAAL/SELMOUS seminar organised in 1975 at Birmingham, by J Heaton and A Cowie. Keith Morrow undertook to manage publication and distribution through Reading University, and the venture proved successful, with good sales and a number of reprints through the late 1970s. In addition, the Publications Subcommittee provided small subsidies for publications of suitable quality produced by others (e.g. some volumes in the “Exeter Linguistics Studies” series edited by Reinhard Hartmann).

Publication of Annual Meetings proceedings followed more slowly. The first to appear formally was a selection of papers from the 1982 Annual Meeting (Newcastle), edited by Christopher Brumfit under the title *Learning and Teaching Languages for Communication*. This was published by CILT on BAAL’s behalf, in 1983. This was the forerunner of the regular series *British Studies in Applied Linguistics*, which appeared annually from 1986 to 2005, with a selection of papers from the previous year’s Annual Meeting, usually edited by the local conference organisers. The volumes had several publishers, the Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CILT) for volumes 1 (from the 1985 Annual Meeting) to 6 (1990); Multilingual Matters for volumes 7 (1991) to 15 (1999); Continuum for volumes 16 (2000) to 18 (2002), and finally Equinox for volumes 19 (2003) to 21 (2005). The 2006 proceedings were issued in book form by the University of Cork and published on the website in pdf format. The 2007, 2008 and 2009 proceedings were published by Scitsiugnil Press on CD, and the 2010 through 2016 proceedings were published by Scitsiugnil Press on the website in pdf format. Almost every year since 2005 there have been discussions at the Executive Committee about reviving the *Proceedings* as a printed volume. Proponents argue that it is useful for some contributors, particularly those early in their careers. But it became increasingly difficult to find a publisher willing to take it on, or to justify the costs of producing it in paper form, and it became increasingly difficult to persuade UK linguists to contribute their papers.

The idea of associating BAAL in some way with the publication of a journal of applied linguistics was evidently under discussion from early on, though the EC minutes recorded in 1973 that the time was “not yet ripe for regular journal publication” (EC mins 21.9.73). In

1975 however, Oxford University Press produced a “Statement of Intent” to publish an applied linguistics journal, in association with BAAL and a suitable North American body, perhaps the Center for Applied Linguistics. (There was as yet no Association in the United States.) The aims of the proposed journal were to “publish papers in the general area of applied linguistics...; to publish serious and critical reviews of recent publications in the field...; to promote transatlantic awareness and cross-thinking in the field...” (Draft Statement of Intent). After some delay, and tentative discussions with another publisher (Pergamon), it was confirmed in 1978 that Oxford University Press were going ahead with the proposed journal, with the first volume to appear in 1980. The sponsoring bodies would now be BAAL and the newly-formed American Association for Applied Linguistics (founded 1977). The proposed Editors were Patrick Allen (Canada), Bernard Spolsky (USA) and Henry Widdowson (UK); John Trim was nominated by the EC as the first BAAL representative on the Editorial Board.

The first volume of the journal *Applied Linguistics* duly appeared in 1980, and it has been published regularly and successfully ever since. (The number of editors was reduced from three to two, with BAAL and AAAL being consulted on the appointment of successive editors based in the UK and the USA respectively; a Reviews Editor was appointed, in consultation with AILA.) BAAL has normally been represented on the Editorial Board by the current Chair, and a reduced rate individual subscription has been available to BAAL members. In 2013, AAAL withdrew from participation in the journal. Oxford University Press, the publisher, revised the journal constitution so that it is published in cooperation with BAAL and AILA, without each association directly nominating an editor. *Applied Linguistics* has become a major journal in the field; its Thomson Reuters Web of Science impact factor in 2016 was 3.593, highest in the category of Linguistics.

A longstanding, vital part of BAAL’s internal communication with its membership has been the *BAAL Newsletter*, which first appeared in March 1976 in gestetnered form (that is, produced from a typed, inked stencil). This has continued as a regular series with 2–3 issues per year ever since. The first issue contained two brief literature surveys (on clinical linguistics and on discourse analysis); one book review; and a list of other recent books. The contents expanded over the years to include reports on a wide range of BAAL’s internal and external activities, as well as debates on policy matters, and the *Newsletter* became an important document of record for the Association. The thrice-yearly mailings, with the Newsletter, announcements, and advertisements, became a major feature of BAAL membership, and a source of income from advertising; it was also a great deal of work (later contracted out to Multilingual Matters and then Dovetail) stuffing the envelopes. The paper form stopped in 2010, leaving a publication on the web, and in 2013 it reduced to two issues a year, but it still carries reports of BAAL Seminars. The summer 2017 *BAAL News* is issue 111.

It could be argued that many of the functions served for 30 years by the *Newsletter* are now served by the website. A web page was first set up by Paul Meara (then Treasurer) at Swansea in 1995. In the first years, the EC made suggestions about additions to its contents, such as the short list for the Book Prize. Paul Thompson was elected as the first Web Editor in 2000, and he reconstructed the site on a commercial server, with a more professional design. Martin Edwardes offered assistance, and then served three terms as Web Editor (2004–2007, and 2010–2016). Valerie Hobbs was the third Web Editor (2007–2010), and moved the website to a new commercial server. The whole site was redesigned in 2005, 2006, 2010 and 2012. In 2017 it was again redesigned, with more of a blog-like layout, after

Richard Smith took over as the Web Editor in 2016. The web site (now at <https://baalweb.files.wordpress.com>) is where people now look for news of the conferences and workshops, information about the Executive Committee and the administration of BAAL, current documents such as the *Good Practice Guide* and statements on public issues, and, less obviously, for a record of past conferences and events. In 2016, it consisted of 670 separate files, and it had 194,000 visits (up from 75,000 in 2012).

In addition to working directly to promote the various kinds of publication detailed above, BAAL established a Book Prize scheme in the mid 1980s, to give recognition to high quality publications across the applied linguistic field. The scheme has attracted strong support from publishers, and one or more Book Prizes have been awarded annually since 1986. Books nominated by the publishers all receive two full reviews, and then a committee chooses the winner (or winners) from the highest ranked books. The awarding of the prize is a major event at the Annual Meeting.

Alongside its academic and organisational publications, BAAL also tries to reengage with the constant stream of discussion about language issues, in the press, broadcasting, and social media. Sometimes this media discussion brings welcome publicity to work on education, sociolinguistics, forensic linguistics, or corpus linguistics. But it can also be ill-informed, misrepresenting academic research or drawing on no research at all. The BAAL EC has often discussed intervening in these discussions. The problem has been that by the time an inquiry from the press has been routed to the correct person, or a press release has been drafted and checked, the news cycle has moved on. For instance, in 2013, a headteacher in Middlesbrough asked parents not to let their children use at home a list of lexical items that she declared to be ‘dialect’. Twitter and BAALmail erupted with criticisms, but by the time a statement was possible, it was too late to be used by the press. To deal with such issues, and to publicise work done in BAAL programmes, a Media Coordinator was added to the EC in 2013. The post was first held by Tony Fisher, who had a background in broadcasting, and then by Claire Hardaker, expanded the use of BAAL’s Twitter account (now at @__BAAL), which retweets news from seminar and conference accounts. The organization still finds it difficult to engage with reports in the media, but it has taken steps to make responses more timely.

5. BAAL administration

The first BAAL Constitution, drafted in 1967, was officially adopted at the 1968 Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh. This provided for the elected offices of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Secretary. In 1972 the EC agreed to formalise the election and rotation of officers through constitutional amendments brought to the AGM. These defined the officers' period of tenure as 3 years, with eligibility for re-election (but continuous tenure of a maximum of 6 years); while the number of officers has increased, these basic rules have stood unchanged since. The Committee has had a varying number of Ordinary Members. Since 1997 these members have all taken on specific roles, for instance shadowing an officer. Because their role came to involve more work, their terms were extended in 2002 to two years, with 6 Ordinary Members, three elected each year from 2004. Additional members can be co-opted to the Committee, including for instance former Chairs, links to AILA and CLIE, and a representative of the Local Organising Committee if one was not already a member.

The role of the Assistant Secretary was clarified in 1975 as undertaking prime responsibility for organising the Annual Meeting and the Seminar programme - as well as continuing to record the EC minutes! This led in due course (1984) to the re-naming of this officer as the Meetings Secretary. Other offices were created as the tasks increased beyond what an ordinary member could cover: Membership Secretary (1980), Publications Secretary (1989), Newsletter Editor (1992), Postgraduate Liaison and Development Officer (1999), Web Editor (2002), Special Interest Group Coordinator (2006), Seminars Coordinator (2010), and Media Coordinator (2013). One example can show how such additions came about. In the late 1990s, the Association was actively trying to increase membership by postgraduate research students, for instance with Postgraduate Colloquia at conferences. But in 1997, three postgraduates stood for ordinary membership, and in a crowded field, none were elected. One of them was co-opted so that students would have representation. She proposed a constitutional amendment creating a new officer role (serving for two years, rather than three as for other officers, because most students would not be ready to undertake the role until they were in the second or third year of their studies). Several Postgraduate Liaison and Development Officers have gone on to other roles on the EC later in their careers.

In 2016, a Diversity Representative was elected, in the first instance as an ordinary member, to see whether this role should also be added to the constitution. But the person elected resigned before attending an EC meeting, and since then the role has been taken by a member of the EC.

The idea of a "mass mailing" to the membership (then 198 people) is first mentioned in the EC minutes in 1972. With the growth in membership, the administration of mailings and subscriptions became an increasingly substantial task. By 1977, it was agreed that the Secretary needed regular administrative support in running mailings, initially through payment to a university department. In 1985, the maintenance and administration of both mailings and subscriptions was contracted out to CILT, and from 1988 this work was undertaken on the Association's behalf by Multilingual Matters. In the mid 1990s, the distribution of mailings to members received financial sponsorship from Oxford University Press, and they were also a useful link to Associate members, who had the right to include advertising leaflets. Mailings ended in 2010, when the *BAAL News* went on-line.

As membership and conferences have grown, some BAAL activities have been contracted out to commercial service providers. From 1998 to 2017, Dovetail has handled membership records and the collection of dues. From 1998 to 2002, Dovetail also handled the on-site organization of Annual Meetings. After this, some meetings were contracted out to an events organization company. The advantage was that some of the routine tasks were taken off the local organizing committee. The disadvantage was that in some years, the contracted provider could not cope with such issues as registration and payments. In general, contracts with a university in-house team have worked better, though that means a new contract, and a new process of explaining the needs of BAAL, each year.

Unlike some larger learned societies, the business of BAAL is conducted entirely by volunteers, with Executive Committee members doing all the tasks of a professional office. As pressures on the time of academics have increased, it has been hard for many members to take on this commitment, but fortunately it has always been possible to fill all the roles. The Membership of the Executive Committee changes each year, as new members are elected, but there is enough overlap with the three-year terms of officers to maintain some institutional memory, and some members have taken on successive terms in different roles.

6. Main strands in BAAL activity

6.1 *Meetings and seminars*

Since its foundation, BAAL has held an Annual Meeting each September (except in 1969, when this was combined with the 2nd AILA Congress at Cambridge). A list of these Meetings is given as Appendix 1. As the list shows, AMs have been located at a fairly wide group of institutions (Edinburgh has hosted the AM five times, Reading and Leeds three times). At early meetings, there was a unified programme, with a fairly small number of papers (six were given at the 1968 AM in Edinburgh, for example). The Executive Committee took a close interest in the planning of early Annual Meetings, for which two or three themes were typically proposed. As the business of the Association grew, this work was increasingly delegated to the Assistant (then Meetings) Secretary and the Local Organisers; from the early 1980s onwards, a single theme was identified, and one or more relevant keynote speakers invited, often from overseas.

By the late 1970s, it was sometimes necessary to have a branching programme to accommodate growing numbers of papers, but as late as 1988 there was an Annual Meeting with only one strand. By 1997 there were typically four strands, and in 2017 there were thirteen parallel sessions. Formal advance vetting of abstracts was instituted in the early 1980s, and is now conducted anonymously in the interests of equal opportunity; acceptance rates have typically been around 50%, though they have gone much lower. While numbers attending Annual Meetings have fluctuated, there has been a detectable rising trend, in line with rising membership; numbers exceeded 200 for the first time in 1995 (Southampton) and 300 for the first time in 2007 (Edinburgh). Attendance at Annual Meetings has changed over the years, with many more delegates and presenters from overseas, and more involvement by postgraduate students.

The Annual Meeting is organized by a new Local Organising Committee (LOC) each year, with the help of a LOC Handbook that grew in size and detail before being rationalised in 2015. The LOC Handbook specifies such issues as the rooms needed, the processes for approaching possible plenary speakers, the kinds of events to be held, and the contract with the university conference office (the last being a potentially difficult matter as universities see conferences as opportunities for income generation). The Annual Meeting has, in some years, been a major source of BAAL income, while in other years there have been large losses due to poor attendance or problems with the contracted events organisers. There have been two occasions where the planned host was unable to hold the meeting, but in both cases another university was willing to take on the task, and the Annual Meeting has been held annually without a break. From 1998, invited colloquia were added, and from 2002, there have always been some colloquia for the Special Interest Groups.

Since the meeting is usually held at the beginning of September (partly to take advantage of accommodation before students arrive on campus) it has from time to time conflicted with other key conferences attended by applied linguists, such as BERA and EuroSLA. Several times it has been held back-to-back with the LAGB, for instance in Exeter in 1988 and Reading in 2001. But BAAL and LAGB have never managed to arrange a complementary, ongoing link (see Hudson 2009, pp. 14-15, for a discussion of the two organisations).

Over many years the Association has encouraged research student attendance through a scholarship scheme, first funded in 1981 through sponsorship from the Bell Educational

Trust, and later (1988) receiving support from the Centre for British Teachers. Since 1997, there has been a competition for 10 scholarships awarded to PhD students, or those within two years of completing their PhD, paying registration, accommodation, and UK travel, and since 2007, a Christopher Brumfit International Scholarship, which was initially established with funds donated in honour of the sixth chair of BAAL.

In 2015, there was heated discussion on BAALmail about the list of plenary speakers for the Warwick Annual Meeting. Critics pointed out that it was an all-male list, for the first time since 2004 (and before that, 1996), and that this was inappropriate where many of the researchers in the field (and most of the Annual Meeting speakers) were women. The local organizing committee, which invites speakers, explained that they had proposed a list of experts in areas relevant to their local programme, that the initial list had included women, and that the speakers announced were those who had accepted their invitation. Others noted that there had been no comments when all plenary speakers in 2012 were female, and that there was gender balance over any three-year period. One of the three plenary speakers withdrew. The discussion led to wider consideration of diversity within BAAL, and a change in the procedures for inviting the plenary speakers so that diversity would be taken into account more systematically.

Though meetings are larger than they were twenty years ago, and more of the talks are linked to Special Interest Groups and thematic colloquia, the general format of meetings remains the same: they are held at universities, with university accommodation, they start on Thursday and run through to mid-day Saturday, usually in early September, they involve three or four plenaries and a number of parallel strands of talks, as well as posters, and have shared arrangements for meals and breaks. The format contrasts with that of large North American conferences, held in hotels, with participants arranging their own meals. There have been discussions of having shorter, cheaper meetings, with more plenaries, or more on-line participation, but for now the format seems remarkably durable.

From the beginning, BAAL was also active in promoting smaller seminars on more focused and specialist projects. In 1983, a list of all seminars held between 1969 and 1982 was compiled by John Roberts and published in BAAL Newsletter 17; these totalled 30, or an average of 2.3 per annum. Since 1995, Cambridge University Press has sponsored a seminar series with BAAL, with three seminars a year (details of all the seminars are available on the website, and reports of most of them are available in the *BAAL Newsletter*). Since 2014, Routledge has sponsored two workshops every year on specialized topics, aimed at postgraduates and early-career researchers, usually involving some hands-on activities. Both the seminars and the workshops are chosen by the Executive Committee from a range of applicants each year. All past seminars and workshops are listed on the BAAL web page, and all these activities are reported in the *Newsletters* that are also available on-line.

Perhaps the most important change in the organization over the last twenty years has been the rise of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Organisations such as BERA and AILA developed specialist networks in the 1990s. Ben Rampton first suggested them for BAAL in 1993, and David Barton developed a formal proposal to the EC in 2002, involving a process of application and probation before the group was confirmed, and specifying the terms of relation to BAAL. The first three to be approved were the already-existing UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum, and new groups in Psycholinguistics and Applied Corpus Linguistics. New SIGs have been added on a range of topics. SIGs hold one or two events speakers each year, and some have strands at the Annual Meeting. There continue to be debates about their

relation to BAAL at the EC and the Annual General Meeting. Some have argued they drain attendance and interest from the Annual Meeting, and lead to further fragmentation of the field, while contributing nothing to BAAL financially; many members of SIGs are not BAAL members. Others argue that they are essential to keeping BAAL in touch with new developments across the field, and that they thus bring it into contact with a wide range of researchers. It is certainly true that a glance across the list of SIG events gives a sense of what is happening in UK applied linguistics. (A full list of currently active SIGs is in Appendix 3).

6.2 BAAL and AILA

Once established, the early efforts of the British Association were substantially devoted to planning and running the 1969 AILA Congress in Cambridge, under the direction of John Trim. This was the first really large scale AILA venture, though technically the 2nd Congress (Nancy 1964 being counted the first). It attracted over 700 participants, with papers being given in 14 sections. (It also incidentally provided BAAL with a very healthy early bank balance.) The Cambridge Congress was a great stimulus to the formation of further national applied linguistics associations worldwide; as AILA outgrew its European origins, it passed from the sphere of the Council of Europe to that of UNESCO, with which it is on the list of organisations holding Formal Consultative Relations.

Throughout its history BAAL has remained one of the largest AILA affiliates, and a number of its officers and ex-officers have held AILA responsibilities, while members have participated in a range of AILA Scientific Commissions. Joint seminars have been held with other AILA affiliates (with IRAAL, “Formal and Informal Contexts of Language Learning”, in Dublin, summer 1984, and with AAAL, “Communicative Competence Revisited”, at Warwick, summer 1988). In 2006, the Annual Meeting was held jointly with IRAAL in Cork, the only time it has been held outside the UK. Exchanges of speakers and visitors have also frequently taken place with other individual Associations, for instance, a delegation from the South African Association of Applied Linguistics attended in 1999. While many BAAL members have attended later AILA Congresses around the world; the EC has several times over the years discussed holding the huge AILA meeting again in the UK, but this has never happened. UK Meetings of the AILA Executive Board/ International Committee (Essex in 1977, Manchester in 1998, Leeds in 2003) have given BAAL EC members a change to meet with AILA officers.

In 2001, AILA began discussion of Regional Networks. BAAL representatives attended some early meetings on these plans, and the European Regional Network was established in 2006. In 2011, the EC decided not to participate, arguing it would lead to further fragmentation of applied linguistics (see the *Newsletter*, Winter 2011). But in 2016, AILA Europe extended another invitation, just as the UK was torn by arguments about its membership of the European Union. On this occasion, the EC decided to join AILA Europe.

6.3 BAAL and British educational policy

From the beginning, BAAL has taken a close interest in the development of educational policies on language within the UK educational system. There were early and continuing links with bodies promoting innovation in foreign language teaching, especially CILT,

whose first two directors George Perren and John Trim were closely involved in the work of the Association.

BAAL has been represented on the National Council for Modern Languages from its creation in 1972, and on the University Council for Modern Languages since 1993, and it had early links with the Committee on Research and Development in Modern Languages, the Joint Council of Language Associations, the Modern Languages Association, and the Audio-Visual Language Association.

BAAL has consistently contributed to policy debates on the teaching of foreign languages in recent decades. For example, BAAL commented on the HEFCE Benchmarking of higher education degree programmes (1999), and on the Green Paper on Teaching Modern Languages (2002). BAAL participated in the bid for a HEFCE Subject Centre in Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies; this was established and ran as a Learning and Teaching Support Network (2000–2004) and then as a subject centre of the Higher Education Academy (2004–2011) at the University of Southampton, finally closing in 2016. Issues of language education policy have been addressed regularly in BAAL/CUP seminar topics, in 1997, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2015. (For a review of UK policy on language education in schools, see Mitchell 2011.)

BAAL has also tried consistently to participate in national policy making on the teaching of English, and especially on the issue of the place of language study in the English curriculum. Thus over the years BAAL has contributed submissions to the Bullock Committee (1973), the Kingman Committee on the Teaching of English Language (1987), and consultations on various versions on the National Curriculum for English. Comments were produced on *English 5-16*, and on the Report of the Swann Committee on the Education of Ethnic Minorities (1985). The final reports produced by all these bodies have also been extensively debated at Annual Meetings and Seminars, and in the columns of the *Newsletter*. The 1988–91 BAAL Chair, Michael Stubbs, was a member of the Cox Committee which produced the first National Curriculum proposals for English, in an individual capacity. A (future) BAAL Chair, Ronald Carter, was Director of the Language in the National Curriculum (LINC) Project, the national inservice teacher training project intended to improve teachers' language knowledge and language pedagogy skills (1989–92). When the materials produced by LINC were suppressed by government ministers on grounds of their overly sociolinguistic orientation, BAAL participated in the public protests *Newsletter* 40, 42).

Since 2000, UK university departments have greatly increased postgraduate provision, especially for research students. BAAL and LAGB commented in 1998 on the ESRC plans for funding postgraduate study through a series of quotas at approved programmes. It commented again in 2002, as the plans for consortia were put in place. Since then, it has been active through applied linguists on committees making decisions on funding for research training.

From very early days, BAAL was taking an interest in the developing teaching of linguistics in Colleges of Education; one of the very first BAAL seminars was on this topic (Reading 1969). In 1972, the Annual Meeting was held at the West Midlands College of Education, the only occasion to date when it has NOT been held at a university or polytechnic (apart from the very first Meeting, in a Reading hotel!).

One consistent and enduring way that BAAL has engaged with the details of language in

schools, working with other organisations in linguistics, is through its representatives on the joint Committee for Linguistics in Education. CLIE traces its origins to 1978, at a seminar organised by John Rudd at North Worcestershire College of Higher Education (Bromsgrove) on “Linguistics and the Teaching of Language in Schools”, jointly on behalf of BAAL and LAGB. As a result, a proposal emerged for a “joint BAAL/LAGB steering committee”, to liaise on matters of joint concern regarding linguistics in education. Initially the committee membership comprised two representatives from each Association, plus representatives of NATE and the DES. This “language steering committee” was the forerunner of CLIE, with its own programme of seminars and Working Papers, and contributions to consultations on curriculum policy. CLIE has continued to play an important role, both as a site of engagement with educational practice, and as a link between LAGB and BAAL. It has organised a successful UK Linguistics Olympiad, with competitors from schools around the country, and winners going to the international Linguistics Olympiad each year. BAAL representatives have contributed actively to the regular contributions of CLIE to consultations around English language education from the 1990s onward (see <http://clie.org.uk/responses> for more details). An example of engagement with educational policy was its response to the MFL Pedagogy Review, conducted by the Schools Council in 2016.

Like other bodies, BAAL has been very conscious of the fragmentation of language education in the UK into a range of constituencies, and the difficulty of promoting consistent policies for language study across different curriculum subjects and levels. It therefore supported the 1970s initiative of CILT in promoting the National Congress on Languages in Education, as an umbrella body which sought to bring the various constituencies together, and promote broader policy discussions. BAAL was represented at the NCLE Assemblies held in Durham (1978, 1980), and BAAL members participated actively in various NCLE working parties and other activities. In the 1980s however, it became clear that any centrally-directed government impetus for cross-curricular work on language was slackening (despite the development among professionals of the “language awareness” movement, and grassroots interests in language diversity, bilingualism and community language teaching). The early 1990s saw the reimposition of extremely strong subject boundaries through the mechanism of the National Curriculum, which once more carved up the language domain into its discrete elements. BAAL and CLIE, like other professional bodies, felt themselves at this point to be commentators without significant policy influence.

The choices of students applying to universities change over time, partly because of shifts in policy, ideology, and media representations. From 1990 to about 2014, the growth in popularity of English Language as an A Level subject was an encouraging breakthrough by language studies into the post-16 curriculum; while there is no Linguistics A Level, English Language was one route through which students encountered linguistics as a discipline. But the intake on some of these courses changed significantly after 2013, when the Russell Group of UK universities left it off a list of ‘facilitating subjects’ recommended for applicants, putting it on a lower level than the English Literature A Level. BAAL, together with other organisations, protested the policy, but it has remained unchanged. (The letter is at <http://clie.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/AlevelLetterThrift010913.pdf>). Another route through which students often come to language study is through a modern foreign language; the decline in the number of students applying to undergraduate degrees in such subjects as French and German is a major challenge to the field.

6.4 *BAAL and TEFL/ELT*

As we have seen, one major impulse behind the formation of BAAL was

“the need of members of Departments of Applied Linguistics and colleagues in language centres to create a forum for the discussion of their common problems in professionalising language teaching (especially EFL) and agreeing its theoretical basis” (Trim 1988 p9).

Throughout its history, a substantial proportion of individual BAAL members have been EFL professionals, and papers on academic aspects of EFL/ESOL/ESL have been a regular part of Annual Meetings programmes (though e.g. Rampton detected some shift away from these interests in the 1990s, towards a more sociolinguistic/ ‘ideological’ orientation: 1995, p 234). Much of the expansion of BAAL membership over the years, including international membership, is due to the worldwide demand for TESOL professionals, and the resulting growth in postgraduate programmes in TESOL and related areas across the UK higher education sector. However, the role of BAAL in ELT has been primarily the provision of an academic forum, and it has intervened only rarely on policy issues in this field.

Confirmation of BAAL’s primarily academic role was seen clearly when, in the mid 1970s, a group of BAAL members called on the Association to express concern at the changing climate in ELT consultancy, including perceived commercialisation of British Council work abroad. An independent conference on professional standards in ELT consultancy held at Lancaster in February 1976 called for the establishment of a body which would defend these standards, negotiate collective conditions of service, and accredit individual professionals. Papers deriving from this conference were discussed at length by the BAAL EC, which eventually concluded that while BAAL was interested in the maintenance of academic standards in ELT, and would support the creation of a suitable body, it was not the function of BAAL itself to take on such responsibilities. The task of setting academic standards for TESOL courses was then taken up by a series of organisations, all of which included some BAAL members in key roles, but none of which were directly associated with BAAL. The British Association of TESOL Qualifying Institutions (BATQI, 1991–2001) helped set up the British Institute for English Language Teaching (BIELT, 1999–2002), which handed over some responsibilities to the Association for Promotion of Quality in TESOL Education (QuiTE, 2001–2012).

Another way in which BAAL is involved, indirectly, in the teaching of English is in advertising posts for teachers. One recurrent topic of discussion concerns the descriptions used in these ads. As early as 1990, the Annual Meeting had a panel discussion on ‘Native Speakerism’. The argument is that first language is a meaningless qualification, a merely ethnic category, when what is needed is a proficient speaker who is also a well-trained teacher (see, for example, Rampton 1990). In 2011, the EC decided it would not accept advertisements requiring applicants for posts to be ‘native speakers’. But since any BAAL member can post to BAALmail, in practice this means that the institution posting the ad is asked to amend and repost it. Each time this happens, the issue is discussed again on BAALmail (a published example discussing these exchanges is Jenkins 2013, p. 209). Of course BAAL refusing an advertisement does not change discriminatory hiring practices, but it does lead to discussions around identities and ideologies.

6.5 *Representing and promoting a research community*

Through its early membership policy, and plans for the academic programmes of meetings and seminars, BAAL tried to make plain its commitment to research and theorising in a range of applied linguistic domains, and to establish effectively its credentials as a learned society. National recognition of this standing came first in 1976, through an invitation to participate alongside LAGB and the Philological Society in the newly established British National Committee on Linguistics, a project of the British Academy (see Hudson 2009). This proved practically useful mainly as an intermittent source of information on research funding and activity, and was the precursor to later involvement with other national bodies with responsibilities for research, notably HEFCE and ESRC.

During the 1980s, all branches of the social sciences felt on the defensive in an increasingly right-wing political climate. The Association of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences was established in the early 1980s to promote the value of social science research in a positive way, and in 1985, BAAL became an ALSISS affiliate. ALSISS led to the foundation of the Academy of the Social Sciences in 1999, with BAAL as one of the (now) 43 learned societies participating. The AcSS campaigns to show the relevance of current social science research to urgent policy issues. BAAL has responded to its consultations, benefited from its meetings, where different societies compare their practices, and has nominated fellows each year, so that now about twenty BAAL members are Academicians.

Beginning in the later 1980s, British academic life has been increasingly dominated by perceived needs to hold academics accountable for their effectiveness and productivity, in respect of research as well as teaching. Like other associations, BAAL was ambivalent about the value of successive evaluations in the Research Selectivity Exercises (RAE), organised from 1988 onwards by the Higher Education Funding Council, and continued after 2008 as the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Applied linguistics has been strangely “invisible” during these exercises, as an enterprise conducted by interdisciplinary researchers based across a wide spectrum of academic departments; their work is therefore judged by a wide range of different assessment panels, for few of which they form a really significant group. Nonetheless, BAAL has participated like other Associations in proposing names to join various panels in the peer review process, and to this extent is an accomplice in the exercise. Pressure to demonstrate research productivity has undoubtedly led to an increase in offerings of papers at BAAL events, and in applied linguistics publications more generally. (Whether this increase in research activity has led to an increase in quality is much more difficult to judge.) The Research Assessment Exercises held in 2001 and 2008 had major gaps in panels to which applied linguists would be submitted, particularly education. Persistent campaigning and persuasion, for instance gathering information on publications and citations to demonstrate the range and status of publications in the field, led to better representation in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, with BAAL nominees on the Modern Languages, Education, and English sub-panels, and others serving as consultants to the panels. In each exercise, the organization of panels and terms of assessment have changed; in 2017, BAAL made a response to the consultation exercise pointing out, among other things, that applied linguistics did not ‘map straightforwardly onto sub-panels’.

The management of research training and funding has also become increasingly centralised at national level in recent years, through the mechanism of Research Councils. The Councils in turn have promoted increasingly formalised consultations with relevant learned societies, in order to retain credibility among their academic constituencies. In BAAL's case this has led in the 1990s to a variety of consultations with the Economic and Social Research Council, and involvement in its executive panels (e.g. to draft research training guidelines, to select candidates for research studentships, etc.). A BAAL Seminar was also convened in July 1994 at the University of Southampton to discuss "A Research Strategy for Applied Linguistics in the UK" (Brumfit 1994 comprises the resulting Report). This Seminar proposed a number of specific steps to promote research, including a full audit of current empirical applied linguistic work, the development of BAAL-sponsored summer schools to share specialist research expertise, and more concerted efforts to promote language-focussed Research Programme proposals with ESRC.

An attempt to link with the Linguistics Association of Great Britain was explored in a 2002 meeting in Cambridge under the name 'Building Bridges', with people active in both organisations. This initiative did not lead to joint activity, but was followed in 2009 by the formation of the University Council on General and Applied linguistics with both BAAL and LAGB as members, as well as other bodies. The prime goal of UCGAL is to provide a united voice for linguistics on public policy matters. However, it has to be acknowledged there has been limited positive impact on mainstream research policy as a result of these contacts and activities.

BAAL has however itself taken some direct action in encouraging the promotion of applied linguistic research. In 2011, BAAL had a large surplus, partly due to several successful Annual Meetings, and the Executive Committee decided to spend some of it on an 'Applying Linguistics Fund' that would 'promote activity related to applied Linguistics'; in the first year, the theme was announced as 'Connecting with Applied Linguistics'. The first awards in 2012 went to Kate Howarth and Nicci MacLeod for a project on 'Applying linguistics to police interviewing', Frances Rock for a project on 'Improving communication between police and public', and Jenny Cheshire and Sue Fox for a project compiling a Linguistics Research Digest.

6.6 *Politics, equality and ethics*

While BAAL has seen its prime purpose to be the promotion of academic study and research, this has never been in a vacuum, but with a concern to solve language-related problems of real life and social practice. Members have been ready to grapple with live political issues of the day, despite the usual difficulties this presents for any learned society.

One early example of such political issues was a long running dispute within the Association in the 1980s, when South Africa was still under an apartheid regime, over the proper attitude towards links with South African academics and institutions. In 1982 it was agreed (in line with AILA/UNESCO policy) that while individuals from South Africa might participate in BAAL activities, there would be no formal institutional contacts. In 1987, BAAL funds were removed from Barclays Bank, because of its then South African connections. Both these decisions were controversial however, as *Newsletter* correspondence documented.

Since around 2000, there have been fewer opportunities to engage directly with government

policy, One attempt to deal with the need for quick response to consultations was the establishment in 2007 of ‘expert panels’, informal lists of members that the EC could consult when it needed to draft a response. These were useful, for instance, in responding to policies on language testing of migrants, and on plans for the 2014 REF. The BAAL Chair has also regularly written to officials to convey the Association’s views on public policy where language is an issue, including

- a defense of ‘cultural diversity and language learning’ in a letter to Home Secretary David Blunkett after his statement that bilingual families should speak English at home (2002)
- a criticism of unscientific use of language analysis in examining the cases of asylum seekers (2003)
- criticism of decisions that both raised the requirements for English skills by immigrants and withdrew free ESOL provision that might enable them to meet these requirements (2007)
- a criticism of the introduction by the Home Office of pre-entry language tests for spouses hoping to join their families in the UK (2008)
- a criticism, again addressed to the Home Office, of the use of English testing in immigration cases (2012)
- joining the Communication Rights Group, a consortium of linguists across Australia, North America, and the UK, in recommending *Guidelines for communicating rights to non-native speakers of English in Australia, England and Wales, and the USA*. (2016)
- a statement to key policy makers, with six other learned societies, on linguistic issues in Brexit (2017).

As this list shows, BAAL usually makes a statement when there is broad academic consensus about the linguistic issues, even if the wider political issues may be highly controversial.

In its own practice, BAAL has become increasingly conscious of equality issues within the Association, in gender and also in career stage. There has been a longstanding commitment to promoting the involvement of young scholars and research students in the Association, first evidenced in the establishment of student scholarships to support attendance at the Annual Meeting (1981). In the 1990s, there has routinely been a research student member of the Executive Committee, with increasing responsibilities for promoting liaison and dedicated activities for the research student constituency. A research students’ forum is usually held at Annual Meetings, and the BAALPG email list provides an active communication network.

In the mid 1980s, once the formal controls on membership were cleared away, it was possible for issues of equal opportunity to be discussed more openly within the Association. At that point, BAAL’s own official documentation and administrative procedures were revised, to eliminate gender-biased language (the “Chairman” became the “Chairperson” and then “Chair”). The existence of gender and ethnic imbalances within the Association itself was publicly discussed (*Newsletter* 24). It is interesting that the *Newsletter* carried a criticism of all-male panels (at AILA) as early as 1983 (the letter was from Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas). A formal Equal Opportunities statement was adopted in 1995, leading to an EC audit of its own practices as a follow-up (*Newsletter* 48, 49, 54). And these issues were raised again in discussion of the all-male plenary list in 2014.

In the 1990s, positive efforts were also made to involve academic members of the deaf

community in BAAL's activity, and through sponsorship from the Hilden Charitable Fund, and later BAAL funds, British Sign Language interpreting was provided at Annual Meetings from 1994 onwards. BSL researchers played key roles in several meetings (for instance 2013, at Heriot-Watt) and have served on the Executive Committee.

In 1994, the Association developed and adopted a detailed set of "Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics" (1994), which provide guidance for the membership on relations with the wider community, and the ethical conduct of their own applied linguistics research, with a later, shorter version for students. The guide has been very widely used, for instance by researchers explaining this area of research to their institutional Research Ethics Committees, and by researchers reflecting on new kinds of relations to language communities. It is in the nature of the reflexive, self-questioning tone of this document that it was extensively revised in 2006, and again in 2016. The latest version, for instance, deals with ethical issues in studying on-line uses of language.

7. Conclusions

7.1 (1997)

This short account of BAAL's history since 1967 provides evidence of continuing development, and real achievement. The Association is established on a secure footing, with a substantial (and rising) academic membership, and very active programmes of events and publications. True to its founders' intentions, BAAL continues to bring together diverse constituencies concerned with ELT, with English as a mother tongue, with foreign language teaching, and with bilingualism/multilingualism, from within the world of education, as well as diverse groups concerned with the study of "language in use" in non-educational settings. It provides an arena where those engaged in the theoretical and empirical study of language can interact with those whose interest is in the practical implications of such work. It provides a continuing commentary on language policy matters, and represents the interests of applied linguistics research in a range of forums.

BAAL nonetheless continues to face a range of academic, political and administrative challenges. Despite years of effort and argument, and some major reports and projects, a principled approach to language study in British schools and colleges eludes us, and applied linguists have made relatively little headway within the key domain of English as a mother tongue. Issues of standards and quality in ELT remain contentious, and unresolved, in a market-oriented climate. Major research funders remain relatively insensitive to the domain of language (literacy apart); and the conditions of work of too many academic applied linguists make continuity and coherence in the development of applied linguistics research programmes extremely difficult to achieve. Despite its active profile, perhaps BAAL is simply too small to make a significant impact alone, and needs to work even more closely with other groupings with cognate interests in the next decade, if it is to have a real impact on research policy. But whether alone or linked to other groups, there is a long agenda of unfinished business for BAAL, and a decade ahead just as full of interest as the three we are commemorating in this pamphlet.

7.2 (2017)

In many respects, all the statements in the 1997 conclusion to this history still hold. (There is perhaps one exception: 'major research funders' have supported many socially-relevant applied linguistics projects over the last twenty years, in such areas as corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics.) And as this history shows, there have been many continuities, since 1997, in the gradual broadening of membership, the work of administration, the organization of Annual Meetings, and the regular efforts to address issues in education and public policy involving language use.

But there have also been significant changes in the way BAAL works. All chairs since 1997 were interviewed for this history and they were asked about the changes in their three-year periods of office, and over the twenty years. They tended to raise similar issues, which could be grouped in challenges that are internal and external to BAAL.

7.2.1 *Broadening topics*

All the interviewees noted a growth and shift in the content of BAAL Annual Meetings, and spoke of a 'balance' (or a 'tension'). BAAL was founded with language learning as its main (for some members, exclusive) focus. By 1997, other topics had joined it, such as language in

education, bilingualism, literacy studies, and language policy; only about a third of the papers on the Annual Meeting programme were about language learning and teaching. Since then, the broadening of areas has continued, to include major representation at Annual Meetings, seminars, and SIGs for sign language, language in (new) media, language and gender, language and sexuality, language and migration, and forensic linguistics; researchers use such methods as corpus linguistics, ethnography, and discourse analysis. There are presentations on language learning topics at every Annual Meeting, and normally at least one plenary on the topic; the Pit Corder Lecture is the one specified topic in the plan. But experimental studies in second language acquisition have been a small part of the programme. This broadening means that BAAL has remained an intellectually diverse organization, in keeping with the field, not captured by any one sub-field, interest or approach.

The chairs also note two possible problems arising from this broadening: tensions between interests within BAAL, and fragmentation as members skip the BAAL Annual Meeting and attend only more specialized conferences. The tensions often take the form of a perceived imbalance, one way or the other, of language learning and second language acquisition versus discourse analysis, ethnography, and topics oriented to social issues. These complaints are often presented, not so much ‘the lack of topics and people that interest me’, as ‘the presence of topics and people that don’t interest me’, as if there were a limited pool of attention and approbation. Guy Cook (2105) has written on these issues, but it was a concern of all the chairs: just what is applied linguistics now?

These are not just intellectual concerns about the nature of an academic discipline; they come down to choices that BAAL members make each year. Each of the new topics raised at BAAL since 1997, such as linguistic ethnography, corpus linguistics, or forensic linguistics, now has its own conference, organisation, and journals. EuroSLA, the International Pragmatics Association, and Sociolinguistics Symposium now hold large conferences, attended by BAAL members, who have played key roles in each of these organisations. And as university administrations came to see conferences as opportunities for income-generation and branding, there has been a proliferation of smaller, ad hoc (and often excellent) conferences and workshops on specialist topics, besides the conferences held by BAAL’s own SIGs and seminar series. The BAAL Annual Meeting has to compete with all these new attractions in a much more crowded academic landscape.

7.2.2 Maintaining Continuity

Unlike some other learned societies, BAAL has no professional staff or permanent office, so there are practical challenges in maintaining continuity. Local Organising Committees serve for one Annual Meeting, Executive Committee members for two years, officers for three years, so there is always a steep learning curve for new volunteers, a danger of slow-burning problems not being addressed, or contacts, innovations, or momentum being lost. One solution to this problem has been written guides, for instance the updating of job descriptions and work schedules. The Handbook for the Local Organising Committee was elaborate, year to year, to the point where it became very large, and had to be simplified again. But the main form of continuity is in personal, face-to-face, e-mail, and phone or Skype contact. Veteran and new members of the EC share knowledge, and many EC members have taken on several different roles over time (see the lists of Officers in the Appendix). There are also repeated practices around the planning of meetings, reporting of accounts, preparation for the Book Prize, and renewals of memberships that are not always written down but passed on from one officer to the next.

7.2.3 Opening to diversity

The third issue that arose in all interviews with chairs was a concern with equality, diversity, and justice, in society but also within BAAL itself. As noted, issues of gender equality were discussed in e-mail exchanges and later meetings about the selection of plenaries in 2014. But gender is probably the area of diversity in which BAAL has made most progress. The first eight Chairs of BAAL were men; the next 8 included four men and four women. The Executive Committee has usually had a majority of women, reflecting the ratio in academic departments. On other dimensions of diversity there has been less progress, in BAAL and in the wider academic world. BAAL has had non-European officers and members, but it is less likely to have UK-born members of ethnic minorities. Deaf colleagues have made great efforts at engagement with BAAL, but people with disabilities still sometimes encounter physical and practical barriers at Annual Meetings. None of this is news to applied linguists, who discuss inequalities in society and in the academic world at every conference. But an academic looking into the future from 1997 might have expected more.

All these challenges – broadening, continuity, diversity – are internal to BAAL. But it is also shaped, or swept along, by wider changes, to which it tries to respond.

7.2.4 Increasing workloads

One change that we may take for granted, but that was mentioned by several chairs, is the increased workload of university staff. The monitoring that had just begun in 1996 has intensified, with targets and league tables a daily part of academic life. University staff, and especially early-career lecturers and staff on temporary contracts, have enormous demands on their time, so they have less time for optional activities such as roles in BAAL (or for family, leisure, politics, sports or art). The chairs talked about repeated discussions of how BAAL can appeal to applied linguists, but perhaps the problem is not a decline in the appeal of BAAL, but an increase in the urgency of other demands. And language professionals outside universities, language schools administrators or translators for instance, have less involvement in BAAL now than they did in its early years. It must be noted, though, that BAAL still manages to find well-qualified candidates to stand each year for the Executive Committee and for posts as officers.

7.2.5 Hardening of policy-making

As noted in this history, BAAL did have problems before 1997 in getting the concerns of applied linguists into education and public policy; an example would be the political rejection of the LINC teaching materials after so much work had gone into them. Efforts to make a difference continue, in every EC, but the focus has shifted. Many interventions since 1997 have dealt with issues of migration and social justice, such as BAAL's criticism of the uses of language testing in asylum cases. In educational policy, there have been fewer opportunities to shape the teaching of languages, despite applied linguists' concern to maintain research-informed language teaching as a part of the school curriculum and university degrees.

The form of intervention has also changed. EC members in the 1990s believed the government should listen to expert opinion, and would listen if it were put to them in the right way, by professionals who made the time commitment to get deeply involved in consultation processes. The more recent interventions come at a time when experts are publicly scorned; they are made with just as strong a will and just as strong backing in evidence, but perhaps with less hope of having an effect. Policies are shaped by other forces, such as pressure groups, market research, press reports, and social media. No one is surprised that a small organization doesn't have a loud voice, but we may be disappointed when there

is no effective channel for the concerns of people who have studied the issues and can provide relevant evidence. BAAL has consistently tried to collaborate with other interested associations to form a stronger voice on language questions (through bodies such as CLIE and UCGAL). But it may be that much broader alliances are needed across the social sciences and humanities for any voice to be effective (witness for example the policy work of the Academy of Social Sciences).

7.2.6 New technologies and new practices

Perhaps the biggest changes in the day-to-day operations of BAAL have taken place almost unnoticed, because they were so much a part of our daily lives as academics. Each of the chairs mentioned challenges and opportunities that come with changes in technology. This is no surprise; these technologies have transformed journalism, marketing, travel, and teaching, so we might expect it would change the practices of a learned society. In 1997, most academics were already making daily use of e-mail, and consulting web pages, but BAALmail and the BAAL web site are only mentioned in passing in the 1997 history. Jill Bourne, who was on the EC both before and after communications shifted to e-mail, commented on the way it intensified the work of EC members. Committee members were less called upon to respond to issues between meetings, there was more time between meetings to consider responses. Officers received a few formal letters, and some handwritten notes, but they could be handled in a more leisurely way, with no expectation of a reply that day. Now the BAALexec e-mail list sends out issues for response by EC members almost every week; comments may be expected within 24 hours. Officers find that any sudden flurries of posting to BAALmail, for instance on the “native speaker” issue, or the selection of plenaries, or the practices of publishers, will get completely out of hand if there is no response within hours. Only brave (but perhaps wise) academics leave their e-mail accounts for a week. Of course new technologies also make some processes easier such as laying out the *Newsletter*, or receiving and selecting abstracts for the Annual Meeting. But it means that being a BAAL EC member (or teaching an undergraduate class, supervising a PhD, chairing a committee, or being Head of Department) means one never escapes from e-mails.

So, there are tensions around the content, organization, and membership of BAAL, increasing demands on time, difficulties in having any practical effects on policy, and a bigger e-mail inbox. Why do people still volunteer to keep BAAL going? The responses of the chairs in interviews are remarkably consistent. One said simply, ‘Duty’. All the chairs had some idea when they started of keeping up the service BAAL provides for applied linguists and for knowledge of language. Most could point to some issue they wanted to address, such as broadening the membership, or keeping up with new topics. And most could point to something they learned personally: about the breadth of applied linguistics, the diversity within the UK system of higher education, the functions of learned societies, and more generally about policy-making, careers, and the ways people respond (or don’t respond) to change. They also said they learned about themselves: where they can no longer rely on their own knowledge and views, what questions they should ask and how they should ask them, and how the pressures of being a BAAL officer fit with the other pressures on them as senior academics. They generally remember it (perhaps after the passage of some time) as making them more confident, or more relaxed, or more aware.

It is a heartening sign that, after 50 years, BAAL keeps getting more members, from more countries, with more people at conferences, and more SIGs. But it is also a good sign that applied linguists in the UK are still willing to give it their time, skill, and commitment.

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Appendix 1 – BAAL Meetings and Plenaries

Date	Location	Attendance ¹	Theme ²	Plenary or Invited Speakers ³
1967	University of Reading			
1968	University of Edinburgh			
1969	University of Cambridge	c700		
1970	(?)			
1971	University of Essex			
1972	West Midlands College of Education			
1973	University of Nottingham	79		
1974	University of Edinburgh	112		
1975	University of York	84		
1976	University of Exeter	90		
1977	University of Essex	120	(10th Anniversary meeting)	Forum including: Pit Corder – University of Edinburgh Peter Strevens – Bell Educational Trust Walter Grauberg – University of Nottingham
1978	University of Wales Cardiff	79	“Bilingualism”	Eric Evans – National Language Unit of Wales Kenneth Pike – Summer Institute of Linguistics Verity Saifullah Khan – ESRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations
1979	Manchester Polytechnic	65	“Applied Linguistics vs. Linguistics Applied”	Alan Davies – University of Edinburgh
1980	University of Leeds	69	“Grammar in Applied Linguistics”	Pit Corder – University of Edinburgh
1981	University of Sussex	97	“Linguistic Variation & the death of Language Teaching”	Christopher Brumfit – Institute of Education
1982	University of Newcastle	93	“Learning & Teaching Languages for Communication”	Roy Dunning – University of Leicester
1983	Leicester Polytechnic	119	“Success and Failure in Language Acquisition”	Gordon Wells, University of Bristol

1984	University of Wales Bangor	93	“Language Description, Language Contact & Language Acquisition”	Gabriele Kasper – University of Aarhus
1985	University of Edinburgh	154	“Spoken Language” ⁴	Gillian Brown – University of Essex Elaine Tarone – University of Minnesota Hans Dechert – University of Kassel
1986	University of Reading	126	“Written Language”	Michael Stubbs – Institute of Education
1987	University of Nottingham	140	“Applied Linguistics in Society” (20th Anniversary Meeting)	John Trim - CILT Theo van Els – University of Nijmegen Peter Newmark – University of Surrey Pamela Grunvell – Leicester Polytechnic
1988	University of Exeter	150	“Words” (overlap with LAGB)	Charles Fillmore – University of California John Sinclair – University of Birmingham
1989	University of Lancaster	139	“Language and Power”	Bernard Gardin – Université de Rouen
1990	University of Wales Swansea	141	“Language and Nation”	Nina Spada – University of Toronto Colin Williams – Staffordshire Polytechnic
1991	University of Durham	136	“Language and Culture”	Brian Street – University of Sussex First Pit Corder Lecture: Gunter Kress – University of Technology, Sydney
1992	University of Essex	c160	“Evaluating Theory and Practice in Applied Linguistics”	Paul Fletcher – University of Reading Deborah Cameron – University of Strathclyde
1993	University of Salford	c120	“Language in a Changing Europe”	Ruth Wodak – University of Vienna
1994	University of Leeds	198	“Change and Language”	Catherine Snow – Harvard University Norman Fairclough – Lancaster University
1995	University of Southampton	235	“Language and Education”	James Lantoff – Cornell University Neil Mercer – Open University Jenny Cheshire – Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London Pit Corder Lecture: Christopher Brumfit – University of Southampton

1996	University of Wales, Swansea	130	'Evolving Models of Language'	Nick Ellis – University of Wales, Bangor J. Charles Alderson – Lancaster University Michael Stubbs – Universität Trier
1997	University of Birmingham	186	'Language at Work'	Greg Myers – Lancaster University Susan Bassnett – University of Warwick J. R. Martin – University of Sydney Pit Corder Lecture: Malcolm Coulthard – University of Birmingham
1998	University of Manchester		'Language and Literacies'	Ulla Connor – University of Indiana at Indianapolis Theresa Lillis – Open University Pit Corder Lecture: Gunther Kress – Institute of Education, University of London
1999	University of Edinburgh		'Change and Continuity in Applied Linguistics'	Gillian Brown – University of Cambridge Susan Gass – Michigan State University Ben Rampton – Thames Valley University Pit Corder Lecture: Michael Stubbs – University of Trier
2000	Anglia Polytechnic University, Cambridge	222	'Language Across Boundaries'	Jennifer Coates - University of Surrey Bencie Woll – City University David Graddol – Open University
2001	University of Reading	ca. 230	'Unity and Diversity in Language Use'	Claire Kramersch – University of California at Berkeley Barbara Seidlhofer – University of Vienna Pit Corder Lecture: Keith Johnson – Lancaster University
2002	Cardiff University	276	'Applied Linguistics and Communities of Practice'	Celia Roberts – King's College London John Swales – University of Michigan David Crystal – University of Wales, Bangor

2003	University of Leeds		‘Applied Linguistics at the Interface’	Casimir Rubagumya – University of Dar es Salaam Jim Cummins – University of Toronto Rosamond Mitchell – University of Southampton
2004	King’s College London		‘Reconfiguring Europe: The Contribution of Applied Linguistics’	Arturo Tosi – Royal Holloway, University of London Guus Extra – Tilburg University Robert Phillipson – Copenhagen Business School
2005	University of Bristol		‘Language, Culture and Identity in Applied Linguistics’ ⁵	Roz Ivanic – Lancaster University Tim McNamara – University of Melbourne Pit Corder Lecture: Srikant Sarangi – Cardiff University
2006	University College Cork		‘From Applied Linguistics to Linguistics Applied: Issues, Practices, Trends’	Patsy Lightbrown – Concordia University Jean-Marc Dewaele – Birkbeck College Paul Fletcher – University College Cork Michael McCarthy – University of Nottingham
2007	University of Edinburgh	ca. 300	‘Technology, Ideology and Practice in Applied Linguistics’	Norman Fairclough – Lancaster University Karin Aijmer – Göteborg University Richard Johnstone – University of Stirling
2008	Swansea University	265	‘Taking the Measure of Applied Linguistics’	Paul Meara – Swansea University Ben Rampton – King’s College London Alison Wray – Cardiff University
2009	University of Newcastle		‘Language, Learning, and Context’	David Crystal – Bangor University Pauline Rea-Dickins – University of Bristol) Bethan Benwell – University of Stirling) & Elizabeth Stokoe – (Loughborough University)
2010	Aberdeen	260	‘Applied Linguistics: Global and Local’	Bonny Norton – University of British Columbia Tove Skutnabb-Kangas – University of Roskilde Wilson McLeod – University of Edinburgh Alastair Pennycook – University of Technology, Sydney
2011	University of the West of England	270	‘Applied Linguistics: The Impact of Applied	Diane Larsen-Freeman – University of Michigan

			Linguistics’	Guy Cook – Open University Rick Iedema (University of Technology, Sydney)
2012	Southampton		‘Multilingual Theory and Practice in Applied Linguistics’	Anna Mauranen – University of Helsinki Aneta Pavlenko – Temple University Rosemarie Tracy – University of Mannheim
2013	Heriot-Watt University	300?	‘Opening New Lines of Communication in Applied Linguistics’	Kathryn Woolard – University of California, San Diego Jannis Androutopoulos – Universität Hamburg Svenja Adolphs – University of Nottingham
2014	University of Warwick		‘Learning, Working and Communicating in a Global Context’	Suresh Canagarajah – Pennsylvania State University Michael Haugh – Griffith University
2015	Aston University	258	‘Breaking Theory: New Directions in Applied Linguistics’	Adrian Blackledge – University of Birmingham & Angela Creese – University of Birmingham Penelope Eckert – Stanford University Rick Iedema – University of Technology, Sydney Pit Corder Lecture: Keith Richards – University Of Warwick & Sue Garton – Aston University
2016	Anglia Ruskin University	ca. 192	‘Taking stock of Applied Linguistics – Where are we now?’	Ingrid Piller - Macquarie University Devyani Sharma – Queen Mary University of London Jean-Marc Dewaele – Birkbeck, University of London Pit Corder Lecture: Jan Hulstijn – University of Amsterdam
2017	University of Leeds	ca. 257	‘Diversity and Applied Linguistics’	Bencie Woll – University College London Henry Widdowson – University of Vienna Pit Corder Lecture: Mohamed Daoud – Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis

- ¹ In most cases numbers cited are taken from pre-printed lists of participants, and may be underestimates of actual attendance. Later meetings did not circulate delegate lists.
- ² Early Annual Meetings did not have any single theme
- ³ The terms ‘Guest Speaker’, ‘Invited Speaker’ and ‘Keynote’ are used before 1991
- ⁴ First volume of ‘British Studies in Applied Linguistics’
- ⁵ Last printed volume of ‘British Studies in Applied Linguistics’

Appendix 2: BAAL Officers, 1967-2017

Chair

1967-70 obituaries <i>BAAL</i>	Stephen Pit Corder, University of Edinburgh, d. 27.1.90 (see in <i>BAAL Newsletter</i> 36, <i>Applied Linguistics</i> 11/4, and Notes in <i>Newsletter</i> 20)
1970-73 <i>BAAL</i>	Peter Strevens, University of Essex (1922-89: see obituaries in <i>Newsletter</i> 35, <i>Applied Linguistics</i> 11/2)
1973-76	Walter Grauberg, University of Nottingham
1976-79	Alan Davies, University of Edinburgh
1979-82	Arthur (Sam) Spicer, University of Essex, d 16.3.1988 (see obituary in <i>BAAL Newsletter</i> 30)
1982-85	Christopher Brumfit, London University Institute of Education
1985-88	John Trim, Centre for Information on Language Teaching
1988-91	Michael Stubbs, London University Institute of Education
1991-94	Paul Meara, University of Wales College of Swansea
1994-97	Rosamond Mitchell, University of Southampton
1997-2000	Jill Bourne, University of Southampton
2000-03	Mike Baynham, University of Leeds
2003-06	Ron Carter, University of Nottingham
2006-09	Susan Hunston, University of Birmingham
2009-12	Guy Cook, King's College London
2012-15	Greg Myers, Lancaster University
2015-18	Tess Fitzpatrick, Swansea University

Secretary

1967-71	David Wilkins, University of Reading
1971-74	William Bennett, University of Cambridge
1974-78	Mary Willes, West Midlands College of Education
1978-80	Keith Morrow, University of Reading
1980-83	John Roberts, University of Essex
1983-86	Euan Reid, London University Institute of Education
1986-89	Rosamond Mitchell, University of Southampton
1989-92	Jill Bourne, University College Swansea
1992-98	Ulrike Meinhof, University of Manchester
1998-2001	Greg Myers, Lancaster University
2002-05	Eddie Williams, University of Reading
2005-08	Graham Turner, Heriot-Watt University
2008-10	Paul Thompson, University of Reading
2010-13	Caroline Coffin, Open University
2013-18	Dawn Knight, Cardiff University

Treasurer

1967-73	John Trim, University of Cambridge
1973-76	Veronica Du Feu, University of East Anglia
1976-78	David Bruce, University of Cambridge

1978-84	Pamela Grunwell, Leicester Polytechnic
1984-90	Peter Hill, London University Institute of Education
1990-91	Pamela Grunwell, Leicester Polytechnic
1991-94	Romy Clark, University of Lancaster
1994-97	Paul Meara, University of Wales Swansea
1997-2000	Ann Ryan, University of Wales Swansea
2000-03	Constant Leung, King's College London
2003-06	Esther Daborn, University of Glasgow
2006-09	Richard Badger, University of Leeds
2009-11	Jim Milton, Swansea University
2011-14	Michael Deller, Swansea University
2014-17	Steve Morris, Swansea University

Assistant/ Meetings Secretary

1968(?) -73	Brian Gomes da Costa, North East London Polytechnic
1973-74	Mary Willes, West Midlands College of Education
1974-76	Reinhard Hartmann, University of Exeter
1976-77	Christopher Brumfit, London University Institute of Education
1977-78	John Mountford, LSU College of Education
1978-80	John Roberts, University of Essex
1980-83	Euan Reid, London University Institute of Education
1983-86	Rosamond Mitchell, University of Stirling
1986-89	Keith Johnson, University of Reading
1989-95	Martin Bygate, University of Reading
1995-97	Meriel Bloor, University of Warwick
1997-2000	Susan Hunston, University of Birmingham
2000-03	Deirdre Martin, University of Birmingham
2003-04	Goodith White, University of Leeds
2004-07	Joan Cutting, University of Edinburgh
2007-10	Erik Schleef, University of Edinburgh
2010-13	Dawn Knight, University of Newcastle
2013-17	Alex Ho-Cheong Leung, Northumbria University

Membership Secretary

1980-86	Janet Price, Friends Centre Brighton
1986-89	Jill Bourne, NFER
1989-92	Michael Byram, University of Durham
1992-98	Kay Richardson, University of Liverpool
1998-2001	Teresa O'Brien, University of Manchester
2001-04	Gabriele Hogan-Brun, University of Bristol
2004-07	Svenja Adolphs, University of Nottingham
2007-10	Lynn Erler, University of Oxford
2010-16	Jo Angouri, University of the West of England
2016-19	Jessica Briggs, University of Oxford

Publications Secretary

1989-91	Paul Meara, Birkbeck College, University of London
1991-94	David Graddol, Open University
1994-97	David Graddol, Open University
1997-2000	Srikant Sarangi, University of Wales, Cardiff
2000-02	Judy Delin, University of Stirling
2002-03	Goodith White, University of Leeds
2003-04	Marilyn Martin-Jones, University of Wales Aberystwyth
2004-06	Goodith White, University of Leeds
2006-09	Veronika Koller, Lancaster University
2009-14	Steve Walsh, Newcastle University
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1976-81	Christopher Brumfit, London University Institute of Education
1981-84	John Mountford, La Sainte Union College of Education
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1997-2004	Virpi Yläne-McEwan, University of Wales Cardiff
2004-07	Sarah Lawson, Rokeby School
2007-10	Nick Groom, University of Birmingham
2010-15	Sebastian Raisinger, Anglia Ruskin University
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1999-2001	Paul Thompson, University of Reading
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Appendix 3: Special Interest Groups

(as of 2017)

Corpus Linguistics

Health & Science Communication

Intercultural Communication

Language, Gender & Sexuality

Language & New Media

Language in Africa

Language Learning & Teaching

Language Policy

Linguistic Ethnography

Linguistics & Knowledge about Language in Education

Professional, academic and work-based literacies (PAWBL)

Testing, Evaluation & Assessment

Vocabulary Studies

Appendix 4: Obituary Notices

(In this appendix we reproduce obituaries for former Chairs of BAAL, originally printed in the BAAL Newsletter. They are included in the order in which the Chairs held office, rather than in order of publication. Some minor errors of fact have been corrected.)

Stephen Pit Corder (BAAL Chairman 1967-70; d. 27 January 1990)

Stephen Pit Corder (known as Pit), Emeritus Professor of Applied Linguistics in the University of Edinburgh, died suddenly on 27 January 1990. His death comes very soon after that of his close colleague of many years, Peter Strevens. Together they pioneered the development of academic Applied Linguistics in Britain. Corder's special contributions were, first, that between 1965 and 1975, he established with his Edinburgh team a coherent discipline which was neither Applied Linguistics for language teachers nor English language teaching. The view he always presented of Applied Linguistics was eclectic; the encouragement to his colleagues was generous; the inspiration he provided was that of insatiable curiosity. Pit Corder's direction made Edinburgh the leading department of Applied Linguistics, certainly in Britain and probably internationally, during that ten year period.

His second achievement was that in his later work on the language of the second or foreign language learner (*Interlanguage*), he was largely responsible for the creation of a model of second language acquisition. This model, based on speculation, has a stronger claim than most to be called a theory and if there now does exist a theory of *Interlanguage* and of Second Language Acquisition then it is because of Corder's thinking and writing about the issues.

Pit Corder, born in 1918 in a York Quaker family, had his Oxford modern language studies interrupted during the Second World War by service in Europe and North Africa with the Friends Ambulance Unit. After a brief period in school teaching he joined the British Council and spent the next 15 years in the Council's service overseas. He found the academic side of the work of most interest and left the Council in 1961 for university teaching, first in Leeds University and then, for the last 20 years of his career, in Edinburgh. In 1983 he retired and took up permanent residence in the family house in the Lake District which, during all their foreign postings and continuing through (some would say including) Leeds and Edinburgh, the Corders had always considered home.

Corder's Chair in Edinburgh, his prominence in professional associations of Applied Linguistics including two terms as President of the International Association, and his publications gave him international leadership in the field. His publications reflect the range of his interests and their development over time, from early interests in pedagogy (*An Intermediate English Practice Book* 1960, *English Language Teaching and Television* 1961, and *The Visual Element in Language teaching* 1966), to the more theoretical, *Introducing Applied Linguistics* (1973), and the *Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics* (1973-75). His book *Error Analysis and Interlanguage* (1981) made the direct link between pedagogy and theory.

Corder's career started as was normal in the British tradition of *Applied-Linguistics* with the hands-on practical work of the British Council's English teaching operations in non-English speaking countries where he worked for a number of years on the practicalities of classroom teaching, materials preparation and syllabus design. Out of that period came his

early publications on language teaching. That first part of his career was similar to many of the better known British applied linguists who worked for years in the field and, in some cases, wrote up their detailed experiences in textbooks and practical books for teachers. It is a tradition that continues very strongly today. In the second phase of his career Corder worked in the Universities of Leeds and Edinburgh editing and writing the *Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics* (1973-77) and his own *Introducing Applied Linguistics* (1973), both representing at the time the acme of this British *Applied-Linguistics* tradition, practice distilled and systematised and, when possible, informed by theoretical insights from the language sciences.

Corder's uniqueness is that in the last ten years or so of his career he proceeded to a third stage in which he developed his ideas of the systematicity of learner's errors, the notion of the built-in syllabus and of the surrender value of part learning, into the theoretical model of *interlanguage* which has been so influential. In doing so he broke away from the British *Applied-Linguistics* tradition, recognising the need it had for a sounder theoretical base. He thereby brought together in his own work the British *Applied-Linguistics* and the American *Linguistics- Applied* traditions. In a larger sense this move away from the British tradition showed that a tradition built only on practical language teaching was inadequate to develop new insights into a new paradigm.

Corder found himself isolated in the UK in his interlanguage work, gaining the support and understanding for what he was trying to do in the North American tradition of *Linguistics-Applied*. Unlike his American colleagues, however, Corder never engaged in empirical research. For him the direct link between practice and theory was always adequate and did not need the support of empirical findings. I have argued that Corder belonged for most of his career very much to the British tradition of *Applied-Linguistics*. This approach may be contrasted with the North American tradition of *Linguistics-Applied* in the following ways. The North American tradition grew out of the search by linguists (for example Bloomfield, Fries) for applications for their theoretical and descriptive interests. These applications they found in language teaching, especially during the Second World War.

This American *Linguistics-Applied* tradition also holds in Britain in the work, for example, of JR Firth (also very much involved during the Second World War in intensive language teaching courses) and of Michael Halliday. But it is not the mainstream British and Commonwealth tradition which comes, I have suggested, from quite a different source, that of teaching English as a Foreign (often Second) Language in the former colonies, in Latin America, Japan, and in Europe. This tradition was associated with the work of Henry Sweet, Michael West and Harold Palmer among others. The work that the British Council took on in the 1950s and 1960s under Arthur King and developed widely around the world, was in this tradition, professionalising language teaching to such an extent that British 'Teaching English as a foreign Language' became one of the wonders of the language teaching world. It was very much a bottom up approach and it led of course to a search for input of a theoretical kind. The School of Applied Linguistics at Edinburgh university was established in 1957 precisely to provide that theoretical backing and support. Applied linguistics in Britain was therefor never just *linguistics for language teachers*. It was always a more problem oriented approach; and it was Corder above all who gave it order and authenticity. It was also Corder, I have argued, who found it finally wanting in that the attempt to marry bits of theory to practical issues was ultimately incoherent. Corder's recognition of the need for a true marriage between practice and theory does not yet appear to have made any important headway in British applied linguistics.

As with all such dichotomies, of course, what is needed for progress and development is a combination of both approaches. Problems need theory for their understanding and their resolution; theory becomes arid without reality to relate to. Renewal of our connection with the data is as important as an understanding of what counts as data. It is to be hoped that Applied

Linguistics will, as we move into the 21st century, make use more and more of both traditions together in harmony.

What Corder's own case indicates is that a reliance on one or other of the two traditions (*Applied-Linguistics* and *Linguistics-Applied*) is ultimately inadequate: in his case a career which was so much in the mainstream of British applied linguistics, and so successful in directing it, needed to break with that tradition in order to make its major contribution in the concept of *Interlanguage*. Corder's career thus makes clear the need that theory and practice have for one another. Applied linguistics must necessarily look both ways. His career also shows by its absence the need for an empirical component in applied linguistics.

Corder's contribution can therefore be used as an icon of the development of British applied linguistics, of its strengths and of its weaknesses. Its main weakness, his neglect of empirical research, is now shown to be less important when set against its major strength, his insistence on the need for theory to explain the practical (and of course the empirical). That insistence has still not made itself adequately felt or understood in British applied linguistics.

Corder belonged to a very British tradition of speculative curiosity. His hobbies showed that just as much as his intellectual interests. His craftsmanship, his music, his home-making and family were as important to him as his career. He was a man of conviction with a clearness as to his place in the world. That is why he could move from one phase of his career to another with finality. In later years ill health and perhaps a sense of intellectual isolation made applied linguistics less exciting. He moved on once again, this time to retirement in the Lake district, characteristically leaving all his academic books to his department in Edinburgh. To Britain he left as his legacy the firmly established and now confident discipline of applied linguistics.

Alan Davies

(Reproduced from *BAAL Newsletter* 36, Summer 1990)

Peter Strevens (BAAL Chairman 1970-73; d. November 1989)

Friends of Peter Strevens will have affectionately felt that there was something appropriate, whilst greatly distressing, in his sudden death in November attending a conference in Tokyo on the teaching of Japanese as a second language. He was at an age where most of his contemporaries might have settled back into a comfortable retirement. He, typically, was still on the go. Peter was indeed an indefatigable traveller, not only because he regarded travel as one of his recreations, but also because it served the cause to which he devoted his life, the promotion of Applied Linguistics, particularly, though not exclusively, in language teaching. There was more than a grain of truth in the wry suggestion that if you wished to have a word with Peter you had only to wait a short time in the departure lounge at Heathrow.

Peter was in at the very beginning of Applied Linguistics in Britain: Edinburgh 1957. In a sense he became involved by accident of place and time. After teaching phonetics in the then University College of the Gold Coast, he had been appointed Lecturer in the Phonetics Department in Edinburgh and was seconded by David Abercrombie to do the phonetics teaching in the newly established School of Applied Linguistics. This proved to be a congenial task. His natural internationalism deriving from his Quaker pacifist background and wartime service with the Friends Ambulance Unit led him to become readily involved with EFL as he met it amongst his students in the School, who were all mature teachers of English from every part of the world. This was a concern which inspired and guided his activities for the rest of his life.

Whilst the School of Applied Linguistics had been established to provide advanced training for *experienced* teachers, Peter realised that the demand for qualified ELT teachers was going to develop rapidly and that there existed at that time no provision for *initial* training in TEFL and nothing that could be called a professional career structure in that field. It was this concern that led to the development of the PGCE Diploma courses in TEFL in the School of English in Leeds, where Peter became Professor of Contemporary English in 1961. It was always one of his principal objectives to see a recognised career for ELT teachers established.

The founding of the University of Essex in 1964 under a Vice Chancellor from the Modern Languages field in this country, Albert Sloman, coupled with a failure of the powers in Leeds to give Peter the opportunity to develop his work in the way he had been led to believe was possible, resulted in his appointment to the Chair in Essex bearing for the first time anywhere the title of 'Applied Linguistics'. Peter's concern that English teachers should have the opportunity to learn something of the relevance of linguistic studies to their professional work was now extended to teachers of Modern Languages whose academic preparation was then wholly, as I fear, still is largely, literature oriented. Circumstances however defeated him here, and Essex became very soon another 'centre of excellence' in Applied Linguistics for English teachers.

Peter's move, after ten years in Essex, to the 'independent' sector as Director General of the Bell Educational Trust may have surprised many, but was a logical step. By 1974 the academic world had more or less come to terms with the phenomenon of Applied Linguistics, including the name. Peter's election to a Fellowship in Wolfson College in 1976 is evidence for that. The demand for postgraduate training for EFL teachers had by now increased enormously and provision to meet this demand had become widespread. The

private language schools on the other hand had been something of a jungle, though attempts were being made by government to regulate them and by ARELS to establish standards and a career structure for teachers within the system. It was all part of Peter's concern to participate in this process. This new position gave him the freedom to pursue this concern on a worldwide scale, an opportunity which he exploited to the full.

What may not be so well known was his early involvement with international movements in Applied Linguistics. A project to establish an international association was initiated by the French in the mid-sixties. Peter was one of the few British participants in the first meeting of the Association in Besançon in 1966. He found himself Secretary of the newly-founded Association with an undertaking from the British side to be responsible for the organisation of the next congress. It was realised that, if matters were to go forward, a national association would have to be formed to take over the organisation. Peter found himself thus the moving figure in calling the founding meeting of BAAL in Reading in 1967. BAAL did organise and play host to the second AILA congress in Cambridge in 1969. It was typical of Peter that he did not put himself forward to be first Chairman, though he would have been the most obvious choice, but only allowed himself to be elected in later years. It is certainly no exaggeration to say that, had it not been for Peter's initiative, neither BAAL nor AILA would have come into existence at the time and in the form they did.

Peter Strevens was an impresario rather than a scholar. Though he always made it his business to be well informed about theoretical developments and who was doing what and where, he was not particularly interested in theoretical matters or in conducting research himself. He was essentially a facilitator and for this he had great administrative and negotiating talents. He was eclectic in his models and, lacking classroom experience of language teaching, had not himself become committed to any particular method or philosophy. One had the feeling that he was more concerned with the teacher than the subject. He enjoyed arranging things, putting people in touch with each other, proposing suitable people for jobs and helping forward students and colleagues alike in their careers. The present writer was a beneficiary in several ways of this benign activity.

A new discipline needs a champion, a promoter, a salesman, in short an impresario. If we can now feel secure in the final and full acceptance of Applied Linguistics there is no one who has a better claim to be responsible than Peter Strevens.

Pit Corder

(Reproduced from *BAAL Newsletter* 35, Spring 1990)

Sam Spicer (BAAL Chairman 1979-82; d. 16 March 1988)

Arthur Spicer was not a personage with whom most BAAL members would have been familiar; but Sam Spicer, as Arthur Spicer was rechristened by his school mates at an early age, and who died on 16 March 1988 in his sixty-ninth year, will certainly be remembered with affection by his colleagues in BAAL and his friends in applied linguistics circles more generally.

Sam Spicer enjoyed a university career spanning nearly 40 years. As an academic he was the first to admit that he was not really a “publishing man”, though his organisational skills and investigative abilities had considerable influence in the field of language teaching. He was the driving force behind the Nuffield Modern Languages Project which produced *En Avant* and *Vorwärts*, and these, as their names imply, represented in their time notable advances in school language teaching materials. He also co-authored, with Professor Donald Riddy, a major report on the training of language teachers in colleges of education and on applied linguistics and language teaching methodology.

However, it was more as a teacher and as a forceful conference speaker that Sam Spicer shone, and in these roles he steadily promoted the principles in which he believed. He bemoaned what he saw as the meagre and often dilettante standards of foreign language teaching and learning in this country, and at each stage of his career he insisted that these activities be pursued to the highest standards of professionalism. As Chairman of BAAL from 1979 to 1982, Sam used his position to disseminate the same message to a wider audience within Britain, but during the same period he also represented the British view of applied linguistics at the AILA Executive Committee.

Undoubtedly, Sam’s most significant contribution to teaching was made in his capacity as Professor in the Department of language and Linguistics at Essex, where for several years he directed the MA course in Applied Linguistics. Many alumni of his, and no small number who will be reading this notice, went on to occupy leading positions in the language teaching and applied linguistics world and indeed became known, not least at the instigation of Sam’s old friend Peter Strevens, as the “Essex mafia”.

Sam Spicer’s students quickly became aware of the topics about which he felt most passionately: teacher training, foreign languages in the primary school, syllabus design, and “reasoned eclecticism” in language teaching methods. The last was perhaps closest to his heart. Given the state of flux in linguistics and psychology, and the complexity of the human mind, he simply did not accept that “one best language teaching method” could emerge in our day, but that nevertheless, through examination of the theoretical and practical issues, it was possible to arrive at a set of language teaching techniques, drawn from sundry quarters, which seemed most plausible in the circumstances. This pragmatic but perhaps unexciting position once led him to be accused, at a Georgetown Round Table, of “mental obscenity”. The jibe cut him to the quick; but most British applied linguists who have monitored flashier developments elsewhere would no doubt continue to agree with him today, and likewise deplore the “mental obscenity” of polemicising inconclusive research results in order to hype and sell the cellophane-wrapped package.

Sam Spicer believed in reason and justice. He was never unwilling to listen to counterarguments, and as a teacher did not expect his students simply to agree with him; but he quickly took exception to speciousness and any departure from good faith. His

conviction and resolve, once his mind was made up, earned him some enemies. Among these was a would-be student to whom he refused a place on his jealously-guarded MA course. A year or so after this student's return to his homeland, Sam received a copy of a grammar of English, published in that country, in which virtually every example included reference to a Professor Spicer: "Some people say 'Between you and I', but Professor Spicer says, correctly, 'Between you and me'". Sam may have laughed on this occasion, but as a general rule anyone who did not play the game with him and who did not realise that the only successful approach to him was through reasoned argument, had little idea of the wrath that could explode forth.

Sam's students and colleagues will remember him as fair, and above all, kind. He was not usually a demonstrative man, but in his daily life he cared deeply for others, and one of the emotional wounds he bore came from loss of contact with the "son" he had adopted during his days in Ghana. An honest judgement of him would be that he was an autocrat, but a benign one, who was always ready to use his considerable authority to assist others, and not least

to help students and younger colleagues to climb on to the first rung of the career ladder. But he never once sacrificed his integrity in any of the high offices he held and always pursued the ideas in which he believed with the tenacity of a bull terrier. To this extent, he typified all that the English like to believe is best about themselves.

It was at a time when applied linguistics was only just beginning to establish itself as a serious discipline in Britain that Sam acceded to one of the very few chairs in the subject here. Publishing man or not, his tireless work, much of it behind the scenes, made a valuable and lasting contribution to the development of the field, and he must be counted among the pioneers on these shores.

John Roberts

(Reproduced from *BAAL Newsletter* 30, Summer 1988)

Walter Grauberg (BAAL Chairman 1973-76, d. 6 October 2013)

From BAALmail:

Walter Grauberg died on 6 October, 2013, aged 90. He had taught at the University of Nottingham, and was the third Chair of BAAL, from 1973 to 1976. He did early research on error analysis in learners' writing in German. *The Elements of Modern Language Teaching* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1997) drew on both applied linguistic research and his extensive teaching experience.

From Christopher Butler:

“Walter was my head of department when I was in the Linguistics Department at the University of Nottingham, and he also ran the Language Centre which taught languages across the university. In 1986 I took over both of these roles. He was always supportive, always ready to listen. And he was, of course, also a brilliant practical linguist, with fluent German, French and Italian, and an excellent language teacher. After his retirement he was presented with a book edited by Joanna Channell, Richard Cardwell and myself, with the title *Language & literature – theory and practice: A tribute to Walter Grauberg* (University of Nottingham, 1989), with articles by Joanna and myself, Reinhard Hartmann, Mike Stubbs, John Trim, Henry Widdowson, Margaret Berry, Richard Cardwell, Malcolm Jones, Bernard McGuirk and Walter Nash.”

Alan Davies (BAAL Chairman 1976-79, d. 26 September 2015)

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John Trim (BAAL Chairman 1985-88, d. 19 JANUARY 2013)

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