

## **Co-ordinator's report of activities 2006-7**

The year 2006-7 has in many ways been a good year for the AHE, although challenges remain. Clearly, we heterodox economists remain in an environment which is difficult for us. We have little choice but to keep battling and retain some realistic optimism.

The Association remains financially viable, although unexpected costs from the 2006 conference, and a lower than expected return from memberships have had a negative impact on our finances.

The AHE is making progress in pushing the case for pluralism and heterodoxy in teaching and research. The AHE has recently been quite successful in establishing good relations with the Economics Network and the associated International Review of Economics Education (IREE), culminating in the award of a small grant to two AHE members to research the effectiveness of teaching heterodox concepts in creating understanding of real world issues; the publication of a chapter in the Network's Handbook for Economics Lecturers; and the possibility of special issue(s) on pluralism, benchmarking and teaching heterodox economics in the IREE. These are unambiguously positive developments.

The AHE has continued to contribute to the debate on teaching and research quality assessment in the UK, issues which have international significance given the move towards such mechanisms in other countries. The AHE recently wrote to the Research Assessment Exercise panel about the treatment of heterodox work, and obtained assurances that heterodox work would not be discriminated against. We await the outcomes of the process.

The AHE continues to engage internationally and renewed its membership of ICAPE. An AHE representative was present at the ICAPE Directors' meeting in Utah in June 2007.

The AHE recognises that in order to survive, heterodox approaches need new students of them. We were very pleased to receive a grant of £2000 from the Cambridge Political Economy Society Trust to fund a postgraduate training event, organised by Paul Downward, which immediately preceded this year's conference. We hope to offer similar events in the future.

The AHE conference this year is being held at the University of the West of England, Bristol. This is the host institution of the current Co-ordinator and it was felt that administratively this would be beneficial. The local organising group has been ably assisted by a central AHE conference committee, plus contributions from various Committee members and others co-opted on to assist with AHE business.

There was an AHE meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2007, at London School of Economics, which was quorate. The meeting discussed the selection of papers for the conference, plus the AHE website and the AHE's response to the RAE.

The AHE Committee needs to be continually renewed and to that end, several AHE members were co-opted to join in relevant discussions. It is hoped that many of these people will become elected Committee members. The Committee and AHE also need officers. This year, the Co-ordinator, Treasurer and Secretary all step down. They need to be replaced.