

Profile: Michael Jubb



Michael's first action after being appointed as the new Director of the Research Information Network (RIN) was to lobby to change the name from the Research Library Network. The intention of the new name is to attempt to emphasize that 1) it is not exclusive to research libraries (e.g. CURL), 2) it is not just about libraries and 3) it is about all research-related information. Michael moved to RIN from the Arts & Humanities Research Board (AHRB) where he had chaired the RCUK (Research Councils UK) Working Group which prepared evidence for the Government's Science and Technology Committee inquiry into scientific publications and then developed the Position Statement on issues relating to the dissemination of research outputs.

Asked why he was attracted by the job as Director of the RIN, he stressed that he had always been interested in research information issues and the way the world was changing, even though the humanities and social sciences had changed less quickly than the STM sector. Over the past two years (during which the AHRB had been treated as if it were already a research council) he had been increasingly involved with RCUK. He was involved in the RSLP programme, and the AHRB's Resource Enhancement Scheme was his brainchild. Michael feels very strongly that he has a significant contribution to make to the development of an intellectual infrastructure in the UK.

Michael was born and brought up in Romford, Essex. After attending the City of London School he went to Cambridge where he studied history for

six years, culminating with his PhD on economic and financial policy under Robert Walpole.

From Cambridge Michael moved to Wolverhampton Polytechnic as a lecturer for four years, but soon moved on to the Public Record Office where for ten years he was an Assistant Keeper, spending half his time in Chancery Lane and half in Kew, during the rather unsatisfactory period when the PRO operated from both sites. Much of his work there was with the public, managing the search rooms, dealing with public enquiries from social scientists, genealogists and journalists. Michael's main projects at that time were editorial, developing research tools and finding aids, organizing records and providing contextual history. He also ran outreach and exhibition services and developed, from a very low base, an extensive network to schools and exhibitions. He became increasingly involved in policy issues, and served as Secretary of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on Public Records, where he worked on matters such as public access and the retention and opening of records. While at the PRO, he also worked as a part-time tutor for the Open University, running history tutorial groups and working at weekend schools. From 1988 to 1991 Michael was seconded to the Department of Education and Science (DES) where he developed policy on adult access to higher education. This included operating as a one-man funding council for the Open University, which was one of three HE institutions directly funded by government (the others being Cranfield and the Royal College of Art) and he

wrote the policy review which led to the OU coming under HEFCE in 1991.

In 1991 Michael joined the British Academy as Deputy Secretary responsible for grant programmes, mainly funded by the DES. This involved support for post-graduate and post-doctoral research in the humanities and the social sciences at a time when there was no other source of public funding for project research in the humanities. At post-doctoral level, the grants tended to be relatively small-scale: for fellowships, research leave, travel and conferences. But the post-graduate operation involved over 2,000 new awards each year, and was larger than those run by any of the Research Councils other than the EPSRC. Michael changed the structure of the post-graduate award schemes, moving them to the '1 plus 3' system (Masters, then Doctorate). During this time he was involved in the campaign to establish a Humanities Research Council but in 1992 the Government decided not to set up HRC (the result largely of disagreements between the two main government departments involved, the DfEE and the Cabinet Office). The British Academy was left in a quandary, because it wanted to separate its learned society activities from its funding activities. Michael was given the job of setting up an arms-length Humanities Research Board of which he became Executive Secretary from 1993 to mid-1998. Then following a recommendation of the Dearing Review of Higher Education, the Higher Education Funding Councils in 1997, the British Academy and the DfES decided to set up the Arts & Humanities Research Board, as a precursor to a fully-fledged research council. Paul Langford was appointed as the first CEO in 1998, and Michael was successful in his application for the post of Director of Policy and Programmes and Deputy CEO. He worked with three CEOs in his seven years at the AHRB and left just before its formal transition into a research council.

The mission statement given to the RIN is 'to lead and co-ordinate new developments in the collaborative provision of research information for the benefit of researchers in the UK' and the RIN is funded for an initial period of three years to June 2008 with £3 million. Of this, £1 million is for the organization and the remaining £2 million is for research and development projects. In addition the British Library is providing accommodation and services – or, as Michael puts it, "pay and rations" – reporting to Clive Field.

Michael sees three main challenges:

- initiate a programme of work that will make a visible difference
- secure for RIN recognition of a leadership and co-ordination role
- develop an authoritative voice on behalf of researchers and the research information community.

All this alongside and through co-ordination, leadership and advocacy. To achieve this, they are looking to partnerships with other organizations where possible, as they know they have an initial short time-scale and limited resources to achieve very ambitious objectives. Stephane Goldstein from RCUK (who was also involved in the submission for the government inquiry) has been recruited to work with Michael.

Although he seems to be constantly working, Michael still has time for his hobbies of cinema and the theatre, and does enjoy walking (not quite to Ronald Milne's standard – see March profile), especially long distance walks like the North and South Downs Way and in Wales and Spain. He is a singer with his local choral society and church choir in Battersea, and when he has time, he enjoys tending his garden. Michael currently has two children at Oxford, his son doing an MPhil in Politics at St Catherine's and his daughter, history at St Hugh's. He is proud that they both got there through the state education system.

