

History of EHBEA

The EHBE(A) movement was initiated by Tom Dickins, a lecturer in psychology at the University of East London. Tom detected a feeling amongst evolutionary minded human scientists that they would like to meet more regularly and more locally than attendance at HBES permitted. He organized the first EHBE meeting at the LSE in February 2006. Approximately 45 people attended, presenting work from a variety of different evolutionary sub-fields, and with participants being given the opportunity to read each other's papers beforehand. The meeting was deemed very successful, with a healthy pluralism and a strong standard of work, and a commitment was made to hold further meetings. Tom recruited Rebecca Sear, a lecturer in population studies at the LSE, and David Lawson, a graduate student in anthropology at UCL, to help him, and these three formed the steering group for EHBE.

Tom, Rebecca and David organized a second larger EHBE meeting a year later, again at the LSE. This meeting had more of a conference structure with 4 1-hour plenaries and a larger number of 30-minute talks, spread over three days, together with some poster presentations. Pluralism was deliberately built into the programme by structuring the meeting so that one day was dedicated to evolutionary psychology, one to human behavioural ecology and one to cultural evolution. In order to ensure a good standard of presented work, the organizers were selective over who was allotted talk slots. One hundred and thirty people attended from 15 countries, giving the EHBE movement a real European flavour. Following this meeting, Kevin Laland, a biologist at the University of St Andrews, was recruited to the EHBE steering group, ostensibly to represent the interests of cultural evolutionists. Throughout 2007, the members of the steering group began discussing the possibility of formalising the EHBE movement into a new society, and some of the groundwork necessary for this transition was laid.

The third EHBE was held in April 2008 in Montpellier, France, organized by Michel Raymond and Charlotte Faurie. Approximately 140 people attended the three days of talks, again structured to give equal time to evolutionary psychology, human behavioural ecology and cultural evolution. As before, the 30-minute talk slots were designed to leave plenty of time for critical feedback. Approximately 50 people presented posters. Once again, the meeting was deemed very successful, with a high standard of presented work and good critical feedback on the presentations.

At the EHBE business meeting at the end of the Montpellier conference Tom Dickins put forward the steering group's proposal that EHBE should be made into a new society. The advantages of a society over an informal movement were described, and included better financial and administrative support for EHBE conferences and other meetings, the opportunity to offer small research and student travel grants, and to provide a voice for researchers' interests. Over and above the practical advantages, the motivation to form a new society gained

momentum from three lobbies. Some researchers merely wished to meet regularly and locally with like-minded persons, and appreciated the sense of community that this engendered. Others emphasized a distinctive European flavour to research in this area, which some have characterised as more integrative than its North American counterpart. A third group of researchers felt that established societies, such as HBES, did not adequately represent their views, or their sub-field, or objected to the structure or standard of work at those meetings, and wanted a new forum for their research. Those present unanimously agreed to the formation of a new association, to be called the European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association.

In order to ensure continuity and retain momentum the steering group retained their position of the day-to-day running of the organization, with Kevin Laland, Rebecca Sear, Tom Dickins and David Lawson taking up the positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, respectively. An interim committee was appointed, which was composed of the steering group together with Lisa DeBruine (website manager), Dan Nettle (Communications officer), Anna Rotkirch (membership secretary), Pontus Strimling, Michel Raymond, Charlotte Faurie and Sarah Johns. Over the following few months of 2008 the steering group and committee drafted a constitution, developed a website, opened a bank account, and carried out other groundwork necessary for the society to be launched. Then, in September 2008, letters of invitation were sent to all those who had previously attended EHBE meetings, and many other persons, to join the society. There was a good response to this call, such that by the time of the organization's inaugural meeting at St Andrews in April 2009, EHBEA could boast 220 members, from 18 European countries as well as North America.