

Annual Business Meeting of the Association of Social Anthropologists

Held at the University of Aberdeen

Wednesday 6th April 2005, 5pm – 6.15pm

1. Present

Simone Abram; Karin Barber; Hillary Callan; Alberto Corsin-Jiménez; Jeanette Edwards; Richard Fardon; Andrew Garner; John Gledhill; Ian Harper; Gustaaf Houtman; Felicia Hughes-Freeland; Tim Ingold; Rohan Jackson; Wendy James; Iris Jean-Klein; Lisette Josephides; David Mills; Alison Phipps; Jonathan Skinner; Veronica Strang; Marilyn Strathern; Elizabeth Tonkin.

2. Apologies

Pat Caplan; Trevor Marchand; Laura Rival; Ann Elisabeth Wee.

3. Minutes of the last ABM, held at Durham on 31st March 2004

The minutes were accepted without amendment. There were no matters arising that did not figure elsewhere on the agenda. The Chair reminded everyone that drafts of ABM Minutes and pre-circulated Agendas will be available on the ASA's newly developed website.

4. Matters for Report

a. Summary of report from the Chair (full text to be published in ASA Annals 2005; ABM discussion in larger type)

The Chair opened his report by reminding members that he was standing down as Chair of the ASA at this ABM.

The first item on the Chair's report was progress the ASA has made in the past year in the area of **publications**. At the time of the meeting members had already received the volume *Qualities of Time* (ASA 41, eds. Wendy James and David Mills) that launched the ASA's recent partnership with Berg. Members will receive the annual ASA Monograph as a membership right at half the price they would otherwise have paid through a UK bookshop. The second volume in the new series will derive from the 2004 conference held in Durham (*Locating the Field: Space, Place, and Context in Anthropology*, eds. Simon Coleman and Peter Collins). This will allow the Manchester Decennial conference organisers an extra year to cope with the complexities of producing a copy from such a large meeting. The membership looks forward to these forthcoming volumes. The Chair further reported that the Committee's acting publications officer, Trevor Marchand, is in discussion with Berg to explore the possibility of relaunching the

Research Methods series (formerly with Routledge). A further benefit to ASA members from the new partnership with Berg is the discount of 20% on any Berg books ordered either by telephone (+44(0)1202 665432) or by e-mail from the website of *orcasbookservices.com*. Members need to quote the reference ASA6 to receive the discount, which is not inclusive of postage. Finally, the Chair reported that Routledge has re-issued the first 12 ASA monographs (originally published by Tavistock) in a handsome library edition. The ASA received two sets, of which one was gifted to the Anthropology Centre of the British Museum.

ACTION BY COMMITTEE AND FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS: The Committee welcomed suggestions from the membership of another public collection to which the second set could be donated. A member in attendance at the meeting and representing a Scottish university made a bid for the second set to be donated to the University of Aberdeen where it would supplement the private collection of Prof. Anthony Jackson that was recently pledged to that university. *The Committee will consider this proposal at its next meeting.*

Three of Sir Raymond Firth's ethnographic monographs were reissued in this same edition, and the ASA expressed its thanks to Hugh Firth for transferring to the ASA the royalties of these works.

On **subscriptions and memberships**, the Chair reported that administrator Rohan Jackson's two-pronged campaign (persuading members to pay standing orders at correct rates and collecting subscriptions from members not paying by standing order who are in arrears) has been outstandingly successful. There remain a small number of members with outstanding arrears totalling over two years subscription at the applicable rate. Regretfully, they will be sent letters by the Honorary Secretary terminating their membership. ASA membership may decline as a result, but income will rise concurrently. The core subscription remains at rates established in 1999, and the Committee prefers to enhance income by increasing membership rather than by increasing subscriptions.

ACTION BY MEMBERS: The ASA's ability to hold membership fees at their current levels is assisted by the membership identifying social anthropologist colleagues in their institutions who are not yet members, and encouraging them to apply for membership in the Association that represents academic anthropology nationally to UK funders.

Coming to **conferences**, the Chair noted in his report that the Durham conference report will appear in the next Annals volume. The preparations for the current conference at Aberdeen went smoothly and the Chair thanked Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam on behalf of the ASA Committee and membership for facilitating the event. Preparations for the **ASA conference in 2006** in Keele on *Anthropology and Cosmopolitanism*, which falls into the ASA Diamond Jubilee year, are coming along well. The local organisers, Pnina Werbner and Sean McCoughlin, have already lined up an impressive roster of speakers.

ACTION BY MEMBERS: Current plans for the Diamond Jubilee include a photographic exhibition documenting the ASA's own history: *the local conference organisers and the Committee invite members to loan photos of previous meetings and events from their private collections*, and to approach the exercise in a spirit of celebration. Prints or negative are to be sent to the organisers together with any other suggestions.

Pnina Werbner plans to approach departments for small contributions to cover costs for the preparation of such materials (scanning, printing, enlargement, montage). A provisional conference programme is already available on the ASA website.

An update on the progress of plans for the **2007 conference** was to follow under item 8 of the agenda.

On to the issue of **Annals and Directory** preparations, the Chair noted that informal feedback suggests members appreciate the convenience of a hardcopy Directory. Hence, there are no plans to discontinue this when a web-based version eventually becomes available.

ACTION BY COMMITTEE: The Chair put to membership a recommendation from the Committee to adjust the timing of Annals and Directory. Presently there is a lag in reports being printed, and some confusion about the year to which reports apply. He proposed that in future Annals and Directory are printed not before the ABM (with a view to being available there – something we have anyway failed to achieve) but immediately following the ABM. Henceforth: reports by ASA officers will cover the year since the previous ABM of the Association, ASA committee members listed will include those taking office from the current ABM; departmental reports will apply to the completed academic year (that ended the previous autumn for those in the northern hemisphere), departmental staff profiles will apply to the current academic year (beginning the preceding autumn). Names of new members accepted by ABM would appear immediately in the years when the biennial Directory was published. These suggestions were accepted without modification.

On **ASA networks**, the Chair reported that Sarah Pink ended a very successful term as the first committee member promoting networks. Two active networks, Applied Anthropology and Anthropology of Britain, have been established and hosted meetings at ASA conferences. Materials for both are available on the ASA's website.

ACTION BY MEMBERS: members are invited to bring other suggestions for ASA networks to the ASA's networking officer.

The benefits of the revamped and expanded **ASA website** were made apparent at several moments during the Chair's report, but he made it a special point in his report to express the Association's immense gratitude to Rohan Jackson for the hard work and creativity he put into developing the site in such a short time. Members are invited to visit it if they have not done so in a while. As announced at the start, AGM agendas and minutes will henceforth be available at the site, password protected ('culture'), amongst numerous other items and updates.

ACTION: PLEASE VISIT www.theasa.org AND SEND SUGGESTIONS TO ROHAN (admin@theasa.org)

Soon after the last ABM, the ASA's Chair attended a Wenner Gren funded meeting at the Brazilian Anthropological Association to establish a **global network of professional anthropological associations**. All those attending, except for the ASA, had already ratified founder membership. The World Council of Anthropological Associations (**WCAA**) aims to enhance the public visibility of anthropology and collaboration among national organisations;

material benefits include the right 'normally' to attend one another's conferences at member rates (the Chair promised that the implications of the weasel word 'normally' would be explored). The principles of the WCAA are available on the website of the Association of Brazilian Anthropologists (www.abant.org.br). The ASA Committee as well as the Heads of Department Committee strongly recommended members to ratify our membership in the WCAA. Under the terms of ASA's standing orders, this is a decision vested in the ABM.

ACTION – CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATOR: The recommendation to join the WCAA was unanimously approved by ABM and the Chair will forward this information to the WCAA organizer. Rohan Jackson should add a link to the ASA's website along with the information that 'the ASA is a founder member of the WCAA'.

Taking advice from the Heads of Anthropology Departments, the ASA successfully nominated James Fairhead to the **ESRC's Research Priorities** board; its nominations to Research Grant and Research Resources Boards were unsuccessful, however. With the support of Heads of Department, the Chair reported he had lodged a complaint about the lack of transparency of the procedures by which nominations were handled by ESRC. This should not be construed as an objection to the person elected, as was stressed repeatedly by the Chair and in the ensuing discussion, but a formal complaint against procedure and the consequent failure to nominate to so important a committee as the Research Grants Board a single social anthropologist who worked in an anthropology department or belonged to our professional association. On a happier note, two successful nominations were made to the ESRC virtual college (of Philip Burnham and Jane Cowan both of whom consented to their names going forward); and Christina Toren was thanked for collating an ASA submission on anthropology for the ESRC consultation on future priorities.

ACTION: PLEASE NOTE REPRESENTATION AT ESRC

The ASA also made a submission on behalf of social anthropology to the **AHRB's** search for themes appropriate to a second round of 'Strategic Programmes', while noting a preference for funding in responsive mode. With advice from Danny Miller, the Chair contacted AHRC to ask whether it will henceforth fund fieldwork on the introduction of full economic costing. Apparently this will be the case from autumn 2005.

ACTION: PLEASE NOTE AHRC REGULATIONS

The forthcoming requirement from **ESRC** to submit to **international quality benchmarking** was also discussed. The Chair informed members that social anthropology had been invited to be guinea pig for these procedures and that ASA and RAI had consented to send representatives to a planning meeting. For ASA, he and John Gledhill would attend. While we needed to be cautious about procedures, given the high grades that anthropology attracted at national RAE (in part in consequence of the small number of submissions), Marilyn Strathern and John Gledhill argued that international benchmarking might actually come at a propitious moment.

With respect to the **RAE 2008**, the ASA undertook **nominations of sub-panel members** on behalf of itself, the Heads of Department, and the RAI. Not only was our nominated chair of the anthropology sub-panel, Professor Hastings Donnan, accepted, so was the entire slate that had been submitted jointly. This clearly showed the value of concerted submissions in the current climate of audit.

The continuing and thriving activities of the revived **Heads of Department grouping**, informally chaired by the ASA, were summarised. Aside from e-mail consultations, the grouping met twice face-to-face in the past year (May and December 2004), with meetings timed to coincide with major public lectures. Meetings have served to circulate information (e.g., on levels of anthropology student applications), canvas opinions, propose nominations, and survey the gamut of anthropological offerings from teaching anthropology to student recruitment, research funding and assessment, and the viability of UK departments. Heads of Departments have found the grouping fruitful, and for the Chair it has been a reassuring mechanism for sharing responsibility by wider consultation on occasions when he is called upon to pass opinions on behalf of the discipline nationwide.

Speaking to **postgraduate research student issues**, the Chair brought to the membership's attention a potential problem in funding the small grants that ASA together with the RAI makes available to doctoral students on the verge of completing their thesis. These grants have been funded by the Radcliffe-Brown and Firth funds of the ASA and RAI, as well as by the Sutasoma Foundation, and the ASA has supported the R-B awards by dedicating its royalties from Routledge exclusively to this purpose. There is a substantial sum to transfer this year, but with the ending of the contract, there will be no new volumes and it was unlikely our Berg royalties would entirely compensate the ensuing fall. The Committee may have to draw more heavily, though with discretion, on the Firth fund in future years.

The Chair expressed the association's gratitude to the RAI and the Government Social Research Service for two subventions (of £600) to cover the cost of funding the ASA's mandatory 10% contribution towards **ESRC-supported, ASA postgraduate training courses**. The ASA had exhausted ring-fenced GAPP funds used for this purpose last year. Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes has continued to apply to the ESRC to fund ASA training course, and she was thanked for making application under revised ESRC guidelines on our behalf. Our understanding is that henceforth we shall not be called upon to make a 10% contribution.

The **anthropologymatters network**, which has prospered under a committed generation of postgraduate student members, now faces the double challenge of finding a succession for the founder generation progressing into careers, as well as finding sustainable forms of sponsorship. Various alternatives have been discussed that the new Committee will pursue with incoming *anthropologymatters* representatives. The Chair congratulated and thanked Ian Harper on behalf of the Committee and the Association for the tremendous headway he had made in respect of the initiative.

ACTION FOR COMMITTEE: LIAISE WITH ANTHROPOLOGY MATTERS ON FUTURE COLLABORATION

Good **news of members** included congratulations to **Professor Scarlett Epstein** (Practical and Gender Support) who was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List in recognition of her services to rural and women's development; and to **Professor Elisabeth Croll** who was elected an Academician of the Academy of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences. Tim Ingold, on behalf of the Association, asked that congratulations be added to the outgoing ASA Chair, Professor Richard Fardon, himself on his election as Fellow of the British Academy (FBA).

On the sadder side, the meeting observed a few moments of silence in remembrance of **Dr Marianna Heiberg** (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs) whose premature death on 25 December 2004 had been notified to the Committee. Dr Heiberg gained her doctorate from LSE in 1981, and had been an ASA member since 1987.

In response to his report, the Chair was happy to learn from the Director of the RAI, Hilary Callan, that long-awaited report that had been just been received about the use made of funds donated to the **Tikopia Appeal**. The appeal had been supported by the three Firth Funds (ASA, LSE, RAI) and private contributions, including a substantial one from the Firth Family.

ACTION: RAI TO CIRCULATE REPORT TO FIRTH FUND TRUSTEES

The **Firth Fund** has been maintained by interest and donations, and the Chair expressed the Association's thanks to Professor Elizabeth Colson for her generosity.

The **Academy for Learned Societies in the Social Sciences** appears to have functioned more efficiently in the past year than in the previous year, although a recent article in the THES reports resignations at highest levels. The Committee will need to find a delegate to represent ASA's interests at administrative meetings. Since these are held in London it makes sense for the person to be London based, and the Chair suggested that the membership ratify the nomination of Professor Lisa Croll (SOAS), who is an Academician and has expressed willingness to act in this capacity for us.

ACTION: INCOMING CHAIR TO LIAISE WITH LISA CROLL (ec2@soas.ac.uk)

On **ASA finances**, the Chair commended Lisette Josephides for her terrific work in tidying up matters in collaboration with him. Without intending to pre-empt the treasurer's own report, the Chair mentioned that the ASA has successfully controlled its core costs in the past year; but has had to spend on the new IT systems (the benefits of which, however, we see in the membership database, streamlined Annals and Directory production, mailing groups, and extensive website development). Some of the costs are one-off. Additionally, our new accountants have been less creative than the last (particularly by finding our actual interest earnings rather than making what turn out to be over-optimistic imputations). To assist the incoming Chair's planning, the outgoing Chair had encouraged the treasurer to prepare a realistic account of the ASA's financial position. The bottom line is that our position is stable: we retain around £25,000 in the Firth Funds, and an additional working balance somewhat less than a year's turn-over; as the ASA is not a profit-making organisation, this is adequate. The Committee also anticipates some growth in its revenues as a result of increasing membership numbers, and collecting subscriptions at proper rates. In the longer run the Association will have to raise core subscription rates which have been unchanged since 1999, but at the moment this is a daunting process: most members pay by standing orders and getting them all to amend these individually requires immense effort. The Committee is therefore continuing efforts to find a bank which is willing to extend *direct debit* facilities to an organization of our scale.

ACTION: ADMINISTRATOR AND TREASURER TO CONTINUE TO SEEK A MEANS TO PAY MEMBERSHIP DUES BY DIRECT DEBIT. THESE MEANS MAY INCLUDE AN ARRANGEMENT WITH OUR PUBLISHERS.

Last year's ABM discussed the increasing prominence of research ethics and noted how often such issues are brought to the attention of the Committee. Ian Harper has begun a **review of the ASA's Ethical Guidelines** which are widely used by institutions and in grant applications. At the time Ian envisaged a broad consultation and one or more workshop meetings. A lunchtime workshop meeting had taken place at Aberdeen on the day of the ABM, in which Ian Harper with Alberto Corsin-Jiménez presented to members innovative plans to enable web-based interactive discussion of ethical issues which involve the users more directly in reformulating our

Guidelines. The Committee looks forward to hearing Ian's report of this experiment at the next ABM.

ACTION: IAN AND ALBERTO TO PUBLICIZE WEB-BASED ETHICS DISCUSSION

In concluding his report the Chair expressed his thanks to the committee members and officers he had worked with during his four-year term, and wished the new and continuing members of the committee success.

b. Report from the Hon. Treasurer

Lisette Josephides presented the accounts for 2004. She drew attention to 'Adjustments from 2003' (p. 2 of her tabled report, under 'Expenditure') of £ 2,618 which had been made in the spirit of preparing a realistic account, and which writes off stock with no real sale value as well as absorbing an imagined debt. It was reported that the investment in Annals has paid off this year, while Database costs appear as a new item. However, this is a one-off payment which furthermore enabled the administrator to reclaim rogue payments. The pay-off is reflected already in higher subscription income this year (£14,210); however this sum is reduced by the cost of the Association's conference volume which must be paid to our publishers. On the other hand, secretarial and administrative costs are lower than in the past and will continue to fall as the two roles have been amalgamated into one. Committee expenses were only slightly up. The administrative officer has improved conference transactions by setting up *paypal* transfers. The Decennial conference in Manchester rewarded the ASA's contribution to its organisation with net revenue in excess of £3,000. (The sum appears in this year's account because in the delay in reaching the ASA.) Net revenue from the Durham conference in 2005 will for the same reason show up in the Associations' accounts for 2005. The ASA is grateful to members who continue to make contributions to the Firth Fund, which stands at £25,423. The funds have been placed in a National Savings Investment account which is interest-bearing; and we continue to receive substantial amounts in royalties, primarily from Routledge (£3,486; up on last year's £2,285). The ASA's support for Postgraduate training courses continues to feature for the accounting year, but will for reasons the Chair explained in his report not feature in future years' expenses. The treasurer in concluding her report confirmed a stable position on the whole, and reiterated the encouragement the Chair had given to all members, to do the best they can to recruit colleagues who are not already members to the Association as a way of increasing our revenue.

ACTION: The Chair and the Administrator both stressed that membership application forms are available at the ASA website and are ideally filled in electronically. Applicants are now also required to fill in standing order forms at the time of making an application; this avoids long delays in the collection of subscription fees.

5. Election of New Members

ACTION: The ASA Committee presented its recommendation for 18 **new members**, which were approved by the ABM. We are delighted to welcome: Dr Jenny Blain; Dr Sal Buckler, Dr Gil Daryn; Dr Joost Fontein; Dr Stan Frankland; Dr Wenzel Geissler; Dr Wendy Gunn; Dr Mils Hills; Dr Martin Holbrad; Dr Andrew Irving; Dr Tobias Kelly; Dr Ullrich Kockel; Dr Karen

Lysaght; Dr Simon Roberts; Dr Mel Storr; Dr Peter Sutton; Dr Richard Whitecross; Dr Diana Young.

The Committee sought, and received from ABM, delegation of the power to ratify the membership of one further applicant whose applications had been incomplete at the time of the meeting.

6. Nomination of Honorary Members

It is now a custom of the Association to propose **Honorary Memberships** at least in alternate years. The ABM conferred this honour on a past Honorary Treasurer, David Riches, and on two distinguished, long-standing members, who edited influential ASA Monographs – Ralph Grillo and Judith Okely.

ACTION: CHAIR TO COMMUNICATE WITH HONORARY MEMBERS. ASA MEMBERS ENCOURGED TO PROPOSE NOMINATIONS FOR HON MEMBERSHIP TO CHAIR OR HON SECRETARY AT ANY TIME OF YEAR.

7. ASA Membership in the World Council of Anthropological Associations

Ratification of the ASA's membership of WCAA was made during presentation of the Chair's report.

8. ASA 2007 Conference

The Chair explained that attempts to realise plans to hold a **Commonwealth conference in 2007** in India had not come to fruition. In principle the Committee remains committed to Commonwealth conferences and would welcome offers to host them. However, the fact that there would be no Commonwealth Conference in 2007 meant that a UK venue now had to be chosen. In the absence of proposals to this ABM, the Chair proposed he make enquiries of the four universities in addition to Keele which had expressed willingness to host an ASA conference in 2006.

Dr Veronica Strang, a member of staff from the University of Auckland and past committee member of ASA, expressed willingness to explore the possibility of hosting a 2008 conference in New Zealand, or possibly in collaboration between Australia and New Zealand. A theme attractive to sponsors would be necessary: Tim Ingold proposed 'Anthropology Upside Down'.

ACTIONS: CHAIR - TO CONTACT UNIVERSITIES WHICH EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE 2006 CONFERENCE TO ASK THEM TO CONSIDER HOSTING IN 2007. IF POSSIBLE HE WOULD INCLUDE THE 2007 CONFERENCE THEM IN THE 2005 ANNALS.

PROFESSOR VERONICA STRANG - TO KEEP ASA COMMITTEE ADVISED OF THE RESULTS OF HER CONSULTATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA.

ASA MEMBERS - TO ADVISE VERONICA ABOUT RELEVANT THEMES AND POSSIBLE SPONSORS.

9. ASA Ethical Guidelines

Ethics had featured as part of the Chair's report. However, he drew attention again to the lunchtime forum which Ian Harper and Alberto Corsin-Jiménez had held at noon on the day of the ABM, in which the membership was consulted on a proposal worked out by Ian and Alberto to open a set of interactive guidelines where members can register ideas for amendments and carry on a discussion of ethical issues. The Committee looks forward to hearing Ian's report of this experiment at the next ABM

10. Election of New Committee Officers

Several committee members reached the end of their term at this ABM; the Committee is not seeking to replace all of them.

The Chair expressed gratitude to outgoing officers Marcus Banks, whose role as media officer will be taken over by Albert Corsin-Jiménez, and to Mukulika Banerjee, whose role as membership recruitment officer will be divided between the administrator and the Honorary Secretary.

Sarah Pink's successful term as Network Officer has ended, and Simone Abram very kindly accepted nomination by Sarah seconded by the Chair to replace her on the Committee in this vital role. Like the ASA committee, the ABM unanimously supported Simone's election.

The Association is fortunate that John Gledhill has accepted nomination by Richard Fardon, seconded by the Committee unanimously, to become the next Chair of the Association of the Social Anthropologists. His election was by the acclamation of the ABM.

11. AOB

The ASA was recently approached by the Treasurer of the IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences), Dr Tomoko Hamada, with an invitation to join. The cost of joining is \$US 50 per annum. In discussion of the invitation it was pointed out that the Union holds large conferences which are in any event open to non-members. However, one member pointed out that while the material benefits of joining are indeed negligible, so is the cost; and there might be additional benefits of joining, such as members of the Union developing an interest in joining our association.

ACTION: The ABM ratified the proposal of the Chair that the ASA join the IUAES.

In closing the meeting the outgoing Chair again took the opportunity to applaud the efforts of all the committee members who had worked with him over the preceding four years. The Honorary Treasurer, in turn, on behalf of the Committee and Association proposed a vote of thanks to Richard Fardon for his dedicated and caring Chairmanship, and wished him rest and success in his retirement from this role.

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm. The next ABM will be held during the 2006 Conference in Keele.