



Association of Social Anthropologists

of the UK

ASA Annual General Meeting
13th April 2023, 12.50-1.50pm
Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS

Apologies

Tim Ingold, Andrea Pia, Emilka Skrzypek.

Present

Simone Abram (Chair), Hannah Knox (Secretary), Catrina Schwendener (Treasurer), Jeanette Edwards, Catherine Degnan, Marloes Jansen, Nayanika Mookerjee, Georgiana ?, Yuan ?, Helen Lambert, Chima Michael Anyadike-Danes, Constance Smith, Sarah Winkler Reed, Marilyn Strathern (online)

+ 3 conference attendees who did not identify themselves.

2. [Minutes](#) of last meeting

Approved

3. Matters arising

None

4. Approval of [accounts](#)

Catrina Schwendener (Treasurer) presented the accounts, which are also available on the ASA website.

A question was raised as to whether there was a registration fee for the Anthropology Educates conference held online. CS confirmed that attendees were invited to make a donation.

Accounts accepted.

CS asked the meeting whether they approve the use of the same auditors next year.

Auditors Approved.

MJ raised a concern about the cost of the conference - this was covered later in the Chair's report.

5. Chair's [report](#)

SA started by welcoming new members to the ASA committee: Timothy Carroll (ethics), Catrina Schwendener (Treasurer) and Anthony Pickles (Conference)

SA formally welcomed Constance Smith as the new Honorary Secretary.

SA thanked Hannah Knox for her time on the committee as Honorary Secretary.

SA also thanked NomadIT for their support of the committee's work.

SA reported on membership figures. The ASA had 434 members in 2022, of whom 166 were full members (with an increase this year to 500/176). These are good numbers but we still need to do more to make younger anthropologists more aware of why it matters to be part of a membership organisation.

SA observed that there has been a change in philosophy over the years from seeing membership as a collective good to seeing it as an exchange for benefits. There needs to be more emphasis that this is a collective and that solidarity is important.

SA summarised the ASA's developing strategy for attracting new members:

1. ASA is putting together a database of PhD abstracts.
2. ASA is building a cohort of ambassadors. The idea will be to have an ASA Liaison person in each department that employs anthropologists. The role of the liaison will be to help communicate what the ASA is, what it does, why should belong to it.
3. This year the ASA has introduced a buddying scheme at the conference to make it feel more accessible. 60 people signed up.
4. The ASA is seeking to build a clearer annual calendar of key events including the AGM, the ASA Annals (an update from each anthropology department of annual activities)– the Firth Lecture, Network Events, Welcome to New Members, Series of Obituaries.
5. Andrea Pia (media officer) is conducting a short research project for the ASA looking at engagement in anthropology and career trajectories. This builds on research that David Mills did several years ago.

SA reported on the SOAS conference :

The ASA is very pleased with the conference and SA thanked the organisers and also committee member Anthony Pickles for his work on the conference organisation.

SA noted some of the novel initiatives at the SOAS conference:

- a. the ASA has introduced an initiative to broadcast research in 3 minutes.
- b. the ASA is running a publishers panel on 'how to get published' in anthropology.
- c. the ASA also organised a panel with practicing anthropologists at the SOAS conference, but the external partners cancelled at the last minute.

SA reported that the 2025 conference will be in Birmingham. There are still questions over the venue as the University of Birmingham are proposing charging very high rates. On the other hand it is exciting to hold the conference at Birmingham as it seeks to expand its Dept of African studies to into a Department of Anthropology and African Studies.

Through 2022 the ASA ran an extended online conference. Five studios ran between March and June and Oct and Dec. Chaired by a long list of people (listed in the Chair's report). Like the other ASA conferences, the 2022 conference series will be turned into a monograph.

SA reported on move to holding ASA conference on a biennial calendar. This will fall on the year when the EASA conference does not run.

SA reported on plans for a festival of anthropology. Connie Smith provided details of the festival which will be held at the University of Manchester. The dates of the festival will be the 3-5th April 2024 and it will be held in a mix of spaces across the city. For those interested in participating Connie said that they should contact her at Constance.smith@manchester.ac.uk.

SA also outlined the role that the ASA will play in this year's Durham book festival. SA suggested that this could be a model for other anthropology departments which could participate in already existing book festivals.

SA updated the meeting on ASA Publications. The most recent issue of the ASA monograph has just been published. The monograph series remains with Routledge. The longer term aim is to move to Open Access.

SA thanked the editors of the journal Anthropology Matters, who are standing down. Currently more people are aware of the email list than the journal. There have been problems in recent years where people have used the editorial process at the journal to get feedback and then sent their publications to a more prestigious journal. SA noted that the ASA is seeking a team-based group of editors to take the journal and list in new directions.

SA noted that that ASA will be requesting an update from all departments for the annals which are held on the ASA website.

SA also noted that the ASA is very keen to encourage more network activity among the membership. The Anthropology of Britain and Anthropology Matters networks are very active at the moment.

Finally, SA summarised her work as chair of the ASA representing the discipline beyond anthropology:

- a. Wrote to Polish academy of social science regarding its omission of ethnology and cultural anthropology from the list of approved disciplines in the Polish Academy
- b. Offered financial support for GDAT in October which had an excellent turnout. SA Proposed that ASA should have more formal relationship with GDAT and regular support.
- c. Continued to chair a committee of UK Heads of Departments.
- d. Continued to use the ASA website as a platform for commentary on current events. In March last year the ASA did an interview with Taras Federiko about the Ukraine war which has been widely cited and republished elsewhere.
- e. Joined the ACSS working group on EDI.

Questions

Georgiana asked whether the ASA still of UK and the Commonwealth.

SA confirmed that it is just the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK. But noted that the **ASA needs to put a note on membership description page on website to say that you don't have to be from the UK to join.**

Georgiana said that she has noticed that at the conference there are lots of Americans and less from other distant places. Is it the impact of post Brexit. Does NomadIT have data on where people come from?

SA said that we will report on this in the next AGM as far as possible.

SWR pointed out that the 2022 online Anthropology Educates conference was very international. People joined from across the world.

Jeanette Edwards noted that the ASA conference profile seems very young. But also pointed out that the conference seems very expensive.

In response to the first question SA explained that before 2000s ASA conferences were generally small and very much for professional anthropologists. Since then they have become more broad, more inclusive and more PGR/ECR focused. Different kind of conference. Nonetheless the membership is ageing so SA noted that the ASA does need to get word out about ASA among early career researchers.

Nayanika Mookerjee made two suggestions regarding how to include the PGR community:

- a. When the ASA gives information to staff it doesn't always go to ECRs, it doesn't go to non-tenured people, doesn't go to PGRs.
- b. NM suggests that producing a video of the committee talking to each other about what it means might help people connect. This could then be sent out to all the PGR community of ASA.
- c. NM also suggested that the ASA do a virtual roadshow with PGRs.

SA pointed that this kind of roadshow is the key thing that liaisons will do.

NM also suggested that the ASA could run a conference session on grant writing as these are the skills that PGRs/ECRs need.

Jeanette Edwards suggested having a PGR member on the committee. SA pointed out that the ASA already has that via the Anthropology Matters editors representation on the committee.

Georgiana asked if the ASA is on Instagram? It is not.

Helen Lambert suggested that HODs should take more responsibility in representing anthropology through the ASA. HODs should be telling staff and students about it.

SA pointed out that not all heads of department are members of the ASA. ASA have extended invitation to join HODs committee to those anthropologists located in non-anthropology departments. All organisations that offer anthropology degrees are very welcome to join the HODS community.

HL asked whether ASA has thought of trying to tapping into the experience of the Academy of Social Science membership, e.g. it would be interesting to know whether political science association etc have similar issues in terms of membership, ageing profile etc.

SA explained that all the association heads meet quarterly online. It is dominated by the big associations. But they do share experience and suggestions and ideas. There is another group for managers that RJ joins which is also useful.

CAD pointed out that one challenge is encouraging anthropologists who are not in anthropology departments to join. They need support and there is a benefit to them to be part of the ASA.

Constance Smith noted that this is also the case for anthropologists working in museums.

SA pointed out that if there is a community of dispersed anthropologists that we should be paying more attention to then this should be brought to the attention of the committee.

Nayanika Mookerjee suggested running a short survey to ask people what is not keeping them from joining the ASA.

Helen Lambert raised concern that there is an assumption that anthropologists working outside academic anthropology departments are by definition doing applied work, but there are about ¼ of practicing anthropologists who are doing academic research not in anthropology. **HL offered to help more to engage this audience.**

Marloes Jansen suggested that the ASA could usefully host a database of successful grant applications.

Jeanette Edwards finished the meeting by expressing thanks to the work of the committee.

Points for follow up:

- a. **RJ to put a note on membership description page on website to say that you don't have to be from the UK to join.**
- b. **SA to compile information on SOAS conference attendees and where they came from. (appended)**
- c. **SA to follow up with HL on building links with anthropologists outside anthropology departments.**

Country breakdown of ASA2023 delegates

Country	Count	Percentage
United Kingdom	331	56%
Germany	27	5%
United States	22	4%
France	19	3%
Netherlands	18	3%
India	16	3%
Denmark	13	2%
Italy	11	2%
Norway	11	2%
Spain	10	2%
Switzerland	10	2%
Brazil	9	
Poland	8	
Estonia	7	
Belgium	6	
Canada	6	
Finland	6	
Austria	5	
Czech Republic	5	
Romania	4	
China	3	
Greece	3	
Russia	3	
Australia	2	
Burkina Faso	2	
Georgia	2	
Hong Kong	2	
Israel	2	
Japan	2	
Latvia	2	
Portugal	2	
Sweden	2	
Bangladesh	1	
Bhutan	1	
Chile	1	
Colombia	1	
Guyana	1	
Iceland	1	
Jamaica	1	
Kenya	1	
Lithuania	1	
Mozambique	1	
Singapore	1	
Slovenia	1	

South Africa	1
Taiwan	1
Turkey	1
TOTAL	586