



The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

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organiser

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Committee Meeting 18 June 2005, from 12.00

Brunei Gallery (BG01), SOAS

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last meeting on March 2005
3. Matters arising
9. AOB
10. Time of the Next Meeting

Report on ASA training courses

I have applied, under the auspices of the ASA, for the Researcher Development Initiative. This provides funding for the next 3 years: 2006 - 2008. The application consisted of:

- 1) Professional Practice in Applied Anthropology: Social Research and evaluation. 5 day residential in Sheffield. 3 annual courses
- 2) Professional Practice in Applied Anthropology: Methodological and Ethical Dilemmas in the Anthropology of Policy. 2 day course in London. 3 annual courses
- 3) same as (1) but at Queen University, Belfast - one course in 2007
- 4) Professional Practice in Anthropology: Large Scale Survey methodologies and Analysis 4 day residential in Sheffield. 3 annual courses. Course developed with Jenny Blain from Sheffield Hallam university

We will learn the outcome of the application in mid June

The course held this year 11-15 April 2005 in Sheffield entitled Professional Practice in Applied Anthropology: Social Research and evaluation had 16 participants and went very well.

There will be a 2 day course Professional Practice in Applied Anthropology: Methodological and Ethical Dilemmas in the Anthropology of Policy in London shortly - date to be confirmed.

Dr. Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes Senior Research Officer Higher Education Division Department for Education and Skills Moorfoot Sheffield S1 4PQ

Administrator's report

Annals

The delay has been due to our missing our original scheduling with the editor, Mary Warren. Her workload and husband's illness has meant that she has only just completed the work. The book is being proofed before sending to the printer.

Membership arrears

The process of chasing arrears and new s/os continues - it is slow and tedious and not helped by banks and people not following instructions. However we are making slow progress towards having a properly paying membership.

New members

We have had a few applications already.

Website

This has been updated slightly by John recently; blogs are on the agenda for Ethics and appanth.

Conferences

ASA05 went smoothly and there should be a balance for the ASA coffers – realised far more quickly than proceeding years. ASA04 balance should be calculated & transferred across shortly as a remaining £600 in the Durham account is being paid in shortly.

Reports for June 05 meeting

ASA Publications Officer Report for June 18th 2005

1. Two copies of *Qualities of Time* were presented to the Anthropology Centre at the British Museum on April 21st 2005. They were gladly received.
2. Update on ASA volume for the 2003 Decennial Conference: All ASA committee members were asked to review the volume proposal submitted by Wade, Harvey & Edwards. Collective concerns from the committee were expressed in an e-mail sent to the editors by the publications officer on the 16th of May 2005 (see copy in the attached appendix). No response from the editors has been received to date.

Because the 2003 Decennial Conference issue has fallen behind schedule, no ASA monograph will be published in 2005. We should be back on track with the 2004 conference monograph due to be published in 2006, and Aberdeen 2005 looks to be on track for publication in 2007.

3. Update on *Locating the Field*, ASA monograph 42 (2004 conference): All signed contributors contracts were received and copies sent to Berg on April 25th 2005. This volume is on schedule, with an expected delivery date of September 2005, and projected publication date of June 2006.
4. Tim Ingold & Liz Hallam, editors for the 2005 ASA Conference monograph, have been sent book proposal forms to complete and have initiated contact with me and the Berg representative, Hannah Shakespeare. I have not yet received a completed description of the intended monograph, but it is fully anticipated that this volume will be published on schedule in 2007.
5. A proposal from Gallinat & Collins for the ASA Research Methods Series was declined on the grounds that this series was being reviewed by the ASA committee, and that proposals were not being accepted at the given time. It was suggested in an e-mail dated March 7th 2005 that the editors approach other publishers with their project.
6. Richard Fardon and I met with Hannah Shakespeare (Berg) on Friday June 10th to discuss possibilities of Berg publishing a new series on Issues in Anthropological Research. It was pointed out that this series would not aim to produce readers or course text books since this market was already being covered by the Blackwell series and large American publishing houses, but rather the series would establish its own niche, specifically addressing research methodology and targeted towards more advanced anthropology students, academics and practicing anthropologists. Students on the new M Research programmes seem to be obvious targets, as well as MA anthropology students in general, upper-year BA students doing ISPs and methods courses, and MPhil/PhD students. In addition to Harper's proposal for a volume on Ethics, this series might also include topical research methods issues such as multi-sited ethnography; diaspora studies; anthropology in war/conflict zones; applied anthropology; apprenticeship-style research methods; etc.

The Berg representative expressed some concern that the target market in the UK and Europe for these kinds of specialised volumes was small (i.e. circulation figures below 2000), and would generate insufficient income for the publisher. Other publishers are also being approached, including Sage. In the meantime, I will complete a proposal form for Berg, outlining our series plans in greater detail. I would like to flag this for committee discussion at the June 18th meeting.

Appendix to Publications Officer's Report, June 2005.

COPY of Email sent to Wade, Harvey and Edwards, May 16th 2005.

Dear Jeanette, Peter and Penny,

In accordance with standard editorial procedure, Hanna Shakespeare (Berg) has passed along your ASA monograph proposal for review by the ASA Committee members. There is general consensus that this will be a strong volume, but the committee has made several suggestions that we would urge you to take into consideration in further shaping the book. I include a summary of these below.

The one-page general outline of the book and its promise to explore the relationship between Anthropology & Science was well received, but the committee is less convinced, however, by the two-part structure proposed and perhaps the overall choice of content.

It was deemed that a developed summary of the book's introduction would better enable us to envision the overall structure and connections between themes and individual chapters. Ideally, the introduction should also clarify the volume's intent and its proposed contribution to anthropology's changed and changing understanding of our discipline's relation to science and technology. It was felt that, in some manner, the introduction should also address the variety of issues raised by the 200 or so papers delivered at the conference, or at least some of the key debates and perspectives presented. Perhaps in place of the proposed bi-partite division, it might be suggested that the overall structure of the book reflect the multi-vocality expressed in the conference?

It is important that all contributions to the volume be original (i.e. not previously published) so that copyright remains indisputably with the ASA and royalties on sold copies are paid into the Firth Fund. It is therefore suggested that Marilyn Strathern might be asked by the editors to revise her chapter, or that perhaps she instead be invited to write an introductory chapter that addresses the main theme(s) of the book. Likewise, hopefully Berglund can be persuaded to revise her chapter, or that it be replaced by another conference paper of equal merit.

If anything like the currently proposed bi-partite division is to be maintained, it seems that the first section, 'Ways of Knowing', needs to be defined more rigorously to focus on the relation between science and anthropology, and not more generally on the subject of competing epistemologies. The proposed title of part one (like the book), 'Ways of Knowing', is somewhat ambiguous and does not signify specifically enough "the nature of scientific knowledge and experiential ways of knowing the world". According to the the abstracts, the first three chapters of part one (Strathern, Schaffer and Battaglia) seem to deal explicitly with the relation between science and anthropology, but the remaining three address the theme in a less convincing manner. Both Crook's and Irving's papers seem to be primarily about questions of relativity of perspectives and perception; and Porath's paper re-visits the mind-body debate. All three of these abstracts are presented without any explicit reference to the interface between scientific and anthropological discourses. Perhaps they are important selections for the volume, but it needs to be further explained (perhaps in the introduction) how they fit and contribute to the theme.

It was agreed that part two of the volume, 'Mobilising Knowledge', seems more appropriately titled and the chapters address the stated theme in a more unified and complimentary fashion.

The inclusion of an epilogue might reinforce the connection between the various chapters and suggest possible future directions for the relationship between anthropology and science, and potential interdisciplinary sharing of method and epistemology.

Finally, as an ASA committee, we would very much like to see an outline for the second (non-ASA) volume in order to have a fuller picture of how the numerous Decennial topics and concerns are going to be represented.

I hope that this outline of the committee's concerns is useful. Please get back to me if you have any queries, and I look forward to seeing how the monograph continues to take shape. With so many papers and such a large topic, I can only imagine how daunting this task must be.

all the best,
Trevor Marchand
ASA Publications Officer

Ethics related activities

At the ASA conference in Aberdeen, the ideas for the ASA membership engagement with our ethical guidelines was presented and discussed. I developed this – with aspects of the discussion - into a position paper with Alberto, which is now on the ASA website. We are currently working this into a paper for Anthropology Today.

Await “blog” development so that we can start to develop the case studies and ASA member engagement further, as outlined in the position paper. I have in mind a case study from Nepal – around funding and research in relation to military interests and engagement - and welcome further suggestions of current issues and case studies that could be engaged with.

Postgraduate Matters

Tragically, the anthropologymatters webmaster, Mário J.L. Guimarães Jr., (who was at Brunel) was killed in a road accident. He will be greatly missed, and was a dynamic and productive member of the anthropology-matters cooperative.

Otherwise, there is now another new edition of the journal up on the web (one from the postgraduate panel at the Manchester ASA conference). Another normal edition is in the pipeline.

In Edinburgh there was a C-SAP funded, and anthropologymatters supported, postgraduate run conference on fieldwork and conflict, which was well attended and successful. Another edition of the journal will come from this.

It is intended to put out a call for papers for postgraduates to reflect on how “ethics” is taught at their institutions, as a part of the ethics engagement.

We are still grappling with how to get funds, and maintaining a dynamic steering committee as the older generation and founders move to other pastures.

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asa network of applied anthropologists

brief report on activities, June 2005

Membership

Apply currently has 136 members. Members are drawn from both inside and outside of academia and a large proportion are based outside the UK.

Meetings

Meetings have been held in London, Durham and Edinburgh. Meetings provide an opportunity for members to get together and discuss issues of interest in an informal setting. Meetings are held in different localities in order to try to ensure that at least some meetings are reasonably easily accessible for as many members as possible.

Information sharing

The network has proven useful as a means of sharing information about different theoretical approaches and about a variety of projects. It has also been used as a means of announcing volunteering and work opportunities.

Profiles

Profiles of some network members are on the web, these are currently being updated and added to.

Publications/papers

Publications have included working papers available on the network's web page and a book series with Berghahn is developing well.

Application to ESRC

An application was submitted to the ESRC by Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes and Jenny Blain, building on the training programmes run in recent years by Stella aimed at applying anthropological theory and academic training to professional, policy related practice.

Bank Account

At present the network does not have a bank account – Sal Buckler is to liase with Rachael Gooberman-Hill to set one up within the next couple of months. This would be for holding small amounts of money to cover meetings expenses, petty cash etc.

Future Plans

It would be useful to have a larger meeting that would perhaps be accessible to people outside the country – it is likely that the best place for this to happen would be the next ASA conference in Keele. We are to look into this.

We hope to expand membership from people outside academia by attracting post-graduate students to join the network who will hopefully stay involved after they have finished their studies.

Postgraduate training courses

1. Successful course held in Sheffield 11-15 April *Professional Practice in Anthropology: social research and evaluation*. 16 attended. Report has been approved by ESRC and funds released. (£7476). This course was also financially supported by RAI and the Government Social Research Unit.
2. *Professional Practice in Anthropology course: Ethical and Methodological Issues* will be held in London 22-23rd September 2005, and directed by Robin Wilson.
3. *Professional Practice in Anthropology: Job hunting and career planning* new course being planned (funded from surplus fee income for (1) above) directed by me, for 24th September 2005 in London (to dovetail with (2) above).
4. An application was submitted to ESRC Researcher Development Initiative scheme which runs for 3 years. The application comprised:
 - (i) 3 annual courses in Sheffield: *Professional Practice in Anthropology: social research and evaluation (5 days residential)*
 - (ii) 3 annual courses in London: *Professional Practice in Anthropology course: Ethical and Methodological Issues (2 days non-residential)*
 - (iii) 1 course in Ireland: *Professional Practice in Anthropology: social research and evaluation (5 days day/residential)*
 - (iv) 3 annual courses in Sheffield: *Professional Practice in Anthropology: Large scale survey methodologies and Analysis (4 day residential)* (developed with Jenny Blain from Sheffield Hallam university)

We will be informed about the outcome of this application in mid-July

Appendices

1. WCAA letter

Dear friends of the World Council of Anthropological Associations,

This is to put you in touch with Dr. Roberto Melville of the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social – CIESAS, one of Mexico's most prestigious centers of anthropological production. Under prof. Roberto Melville's leadership, the CIESAS is launching a most interesting project of translating major anthropological works to Spanish. Dr. Melville told me that their goal is to translate books from different countries in order to show the diversity of the anthropological knowledge. Dr. Virginia García Acosta, the head of CIESAS, is an enthusiast of this idea.

As we know, one of the goals of the WCAA is to enhance heterodox flows of anthropological knowledge on a global scale. I thus ask you to please send Dr. Melville a list of five or more of the major works of anthropology in your countries that you deem would be of interest for an international public. As you know, Spanish is a global language with a huge quantity of readers especially in the Americas and Europe.

All the best,
Gustavo Lins Ribeiro

2. CASCA Conference 2006: Concordia University, Montreal

HUMAN NATURE/HUMAN IDENTITY: ANTHROPOLOGICAL REVISIONINGS

What it is to be human has been central to the anthropological enterprise: 'we are all human', Ernest Gellner urged: 'Don't take more specific classifications seriously'. Recently Maurice Bloch called for a 'rehabilitation of "human nature"' whose study represented anthropology's 'ultimate and central aim'. ... Robin Fox has claimed the nature-nurture debate as fundamental to the anthropological project and remaining unresolved. ... Donna Haraway has described 'the invention and reinvention of nature [as] perhaps the most central arena of hope, oppression, and contestation for inhabitants of the planet earth in our times'. ... For its entire history, according to George Stocking, the discipline of anthropology has been dialectically torn between 'the universalism of "anthropos" and the diversitarianism of "ethnos"'. Are human beings the same inasmuch as they all inhabit different cultural worlds or over and against their inhabiting such worlds? Do they become human within culture or does their humanity (consciousness, creativity, individuality, dignity) transcend cultural particularities? ... Clifford Geertz describes as anthropology's 'recurrent dilemma' the question of how to square generic human rationality and the biological unity of humankind with the great natural variation of cultural forms. ... Marilyn Strathern sees sense only in recognising the simultaneity of nature-culture: there can be no either/or.

The CASCA Conference 2006, at Concordia University, will take *Human nature/human identity* as its central theme and hope to address the above issues and more.

The theme is intended as a means of connection: of opening out not closing off debate. Revisiting and revaluating 'human nature/human identity' presumes no givens and excludes no positions, including the potential for pluralization ('human natures/human identities').

The theme we propose would seem to connect directly, for instance, with the following areas of current anthropological concern (amongst others):

1) **...the embodied nature of identity**, whereby mind is part of body, and individual body part of social body, such that any conceptualization is partial, partisan and provisional. What does 'human nature' mean when to be human and natural (healthy, sentient or sick) are discursive notions owned by collective systems of signification?

- 2) ...**the political nature of identity**, whereby positioning in and by social discourses determine the conditions of being. What weight (freight) does 'human nature' carry in a milieu where identity politics would deploy subaltern notions of ethnicity, religiosity, gender and indigeneity so as to classify a sovereign space beyond the purview of others?
- 3) ...**the relational nature of identity** --recursive, cybernetic-- whereby things are epiphenomenal upon the relations between them. On this view, human nature is that which is elicited in particular moments and places by the contingent and relative qualities of what 'the human' is seen to engage with.
- 4) ...**the existential nature of identity**, whereby each of us individually manifests the potential of the species, and constructs world-views, life-projects and life-courses which embody the capacities for conscious creativity intrinsic in the nature of the human as such.
- 5) ...**biogenetics, nature and identity**: new reproductive technologies, the genome project, genetically modified foods. What does genetic engineering tell us, as anthropologists, about current public understandings of human nature and of our own?
- 6) ...**environmentalism, nature and identity**: Gaia, new-age travelling, tribalism, religiosity and dissidence. What does the global phenomenon of environmental awareness tell us about a political reconceptualisation of the relationship between humanity and nature?
- 7) ...'neo-materialism' or 'neo-ecologism' variously argue for anthropology to consider how humanity's **identity is to 'dwell' in nature**. Methodologically one overcomes distinctions between culture and biology, human and animal, ideal and material, by a holistic appreciation of the way human nature is at once a matter of evolution, adaptation and enculturation.

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At this time the organizers invite proposals from members of the Association for panels and workshops they would like to convene on the above issues and theme, or on any others they envisage.

Please address any communication to one or all of the following names:

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