



The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

COMMITTEE MEETING

Brunei Gallery (SOAS), Room BG.01 A 7 JUNE, 2004, 13.30 – 17.00

MINUTES

1. Present: Mukulika Banerjee, Maureen Bloom, Richard Fardon, Iris Jean-Klein, Lisette Josephides, Trevor Marchand, James Staples (representing *Anthropology Matters*).

Apologies from: Marcus Banks, Alberto Corsin-Jimenez; Ian Harper, Sarah Pink; Helen Lambert, Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes (who sent a report).

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting on 13 March 2004

Accepted without factual corrections.

3. Matters arising

Membership: need to move from Rohan Jackson asking people to pay up, to the next stage of his providing the Hon. Secretary with a list of names of members who are still 2 years in arrears so that she can begin writing letters to those members stating an ultimatum of 2 weeks before we assume they wish to terminate their membership.

Publication: The Chair reports that the contract with Berg is now signed.

ASA Training Report: Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes had sent in a detailed Report in response to issues raised after the last meeting, which was tabled. Stella's report signalled two important points: a) the ASA does not have funds to continue paying a 10% subsidy which ESRC requires from learned bodies; and the need, hence, to find alternative forms of subsidizing course, e.g. by asking departments to contribute. b) The report raised questions about the need/demand for further courses. Re point (b) Richard Fardon reported from discussions at the last HoD meeting on 20 May that J Spencer (Edinburgh) had signalled that a greater concern with PG training beyond the first year was looking increasingly to be the next trend within the ESRC; so now was not a good time to discontinue them.

4. ABM (Matters for Report)

The Chair reported that the Keele Conference proposal for 2006 had been accepted.

The Chair flagged the urgency of receiving conference proposal relevant to the Commonwealth conference planned to take place in Delhi, India, in 2007; unless proposals come forward by the time of the next meeting, we have to make plans for a UK conference. We need a conference theme and organisers on both ends.

ACTION: It was suggested that the Chair and Secretary approach the team of colleagues at Edinburgh (J Spencer, I Harper, N Thin) who had submitted a proposal at the last AGM for a UK Conference in 2006, which did not go through, to ask whether there is a willingness to make the proposed theme – well-being— the theme of the Commonwealth conference, and for Edinburgh to act as key organisers on the UK end. Timing of the Delhi Conference would need to be end of March 2007.

5. RAE / Heads of Departments Meeting

The Chair reported that almost all Heads of UK Departments/Subject areas attended the last HOD meeting on 20 May. The HoD e-mail group set up by Rohan is being used a lot. Names of colleagues willing to be nominated for the RAE Anthropology UoA had been collected since the HoDs' meeting, and further names were still being added. HoDs/ASA/RAI would submit a single list of nominations by mid-September. Details of quite what was involved were promised in mid-June. But a start had been made before the summer vacation.

6. Committee replacements

Several members of the committee will complete their terms at the 2005 ABM: Marcus, Mukulika, Sarah, as well as Richard.

Richard Fardon reported he had invited Helen Lambert (currently a Radcliffe-Brown Awards Trustee) to join the Committee as a representative of anthropologists in the UK working within academia but outside anthropology departments (and the committee at the present meeting approved the invitation). Helen had been delighted to accept but could not come along to this meeting due to an accident in her family. Helen is to replace Mukulika Banerjee, who will effectively be stepping down early on taking maternity leave, in August. The change in roles is welcome, the Chair noted, as the role which Mukulika had recently been playing – a stepped up new membership recruitment drive – had been time-limited and ought to devolve to the regular duties of the Hon Secretary eventually.

In accordance with our agreement with the postgraduate network, Ian Harper had asked James Staples to attend as postgraduate representative (although James has in fact completed his doctorate). Henceforth we hope to have both an academic who mediates relations with graduate students (currently Ian) and a postgraduate student drawn from the *Anthropology Matters* network. This need not be the same representative on successive occasions since nominating a particular individual typically created problems of continuity as research students set off for fieldwork, graduated and so forth.

Sarah Pink proposed Dr Simone Abram (Sheffield University) replace her on the Committee. The current committee was delighted to approve Sarah contacting Simone.

Marcus Banks had previously suggested Laura Peers (Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford) to replace him. The Committee would be pleased if he made an approach to Laura about this.

The committee also discussed succession to the Chair in 2005.

Officially, all new committee members must be ratified at the ABM.

7. Impending administrative change

The Committee discussed at great length the consequences of the fact that its treasured administrator, Dr Maureen Bloom, wishes to retire at the end of June to concentrate on finishing her book. The Chair and all Members of the Committee thank Maureen for her service. The Chair explained that the best way to proceed was to distribute the work Maureen had been doing between the following: Rohan (who has already expressed a willingness to take on the greatest part, as long as no extensive paper files are involved), the Hon. Secretary (notably, membership correspondence and Annals and Directory Information collation), and a part-time assistant to Rohan to look after routine work (membership subscription pay-in, for example).

ACTION: Chair to meet with Maureen and Rohan to decide on final reallocation of former administrator's work. [Rohan has already made several suggestions on this which make good sense; it would be good to involve the Hon Treasurer in discussions since banking arrangements seem to be the area needing closest attention. A modification to responsibilities for Annals editing has been suggested, see below - RF]

8. Updates:

8.1 *Annals*: the Chair and Maureen reported that the *Annals* are now in page-proofing stage. The number of copies to be printed off was discussed; it was agreed that no more than 600 copies would be printed (and that we would avoid this time sending out copies, at considerable cost of postage, to members who have not kept up payment of membership fees.) Extra copies to be sent to all departments who sent in updates, to RAI, to our publisher (Berg).

Following the establishment of the World Council of Anthropological Associations – to be reported by the Chair at our next meeting – we need to include copies for Presidents of other members (only about 15 thus far - RF). [note from Maureen: Print-run now set at 650.]

Next year, a revised Directory as well as the *Annals* will be required. Publication will need to be brought forward to the time of the ASA conference and ABM, as it is not a job one would want to hand over to the new Chair in her/his first months in office.

ACTION: The Honorary Secretary, with the help of Rohan, is to send out calls for Updates of information and Annual Reports as early as end of September, with a view to editing and proofing documents in week 1 of December.

Under the new regime (after Maureen's departure), it will be important to keep to a procedure whereby HoDs are asked to send in REPORTS of activities as Word documents (which Mary will just paste in, after the Hon. Sec. Has had a look at them), and to register UPDATES OF PROFILES on printed copies which they then send in to Iris (who draws up a printed list of amendments for Mary to work from). It is at all cost to be avoided that individual HoDs access the formatted document themselves (since superfluous formatting codes had previously been introduced this way and made the files unusable).

*[Since our meeting, Mary has suggested that she take over responsibility for contact with HoDs since this will help her determine the form in which she receives updates; so far as assembling *Annals* is concerned, this would leave the Hon Sec the task of ensuring committee members update their sections; evidently reading proofs would become even more important since we would see information that had gone directly to Mary only in proof form; I am inclined to think we should accept Mary's suggestion, RF]*

8.2 Membership drive

a) Maureen reported that there was a problem with newly signed up members falling behind in their first membership fee payments which activates their membership.

ACTIONS: Maureen Bloom to write to newly nominated and approved members to explain this, and to set a deadline for payment (the end of this year).

Rohan and Richard Fardon to contact the newly elected "members" who have not yet paid.

In anticipation of problems with payment by new members, the Committee decided to propose at the next AGM a 'Change of Standing Rules' (which would need to be included in the 'Rules of Procedure' set out in the *Annals*), to the effect that 'Election to membership lapses if membership fee is not paid within 3 months after election.'

b) Maureen further reported that the nomination/application form doesn't have an e-address field. Nominees don't need to pay. She suggested it would be useful to have an e-address on the primary form, as the 2nd form to be completed by new members ("Additions & Updates" does, of course, have such a field.)

ACTION: Rohan to be asked by Hon Sec to include on the e-mail nomination form a field for nominee's e-mail address.

c) Mukulika reported that it was minimally a drawback, at worst a disincentive that new members could not join (or become active members) throughout the year; but had to wait until the time of the next AGM to be elected and properly installed. The Committee discussed the justifications for making membership conditional of General Membership's approval; but also saw Mukulika's point. It was decided to show sensitivity to this issue in the following ways (i) by timing the new membership recruitment drive to run close to the next AGM (Hon Sec to consider non-members within department in connection with Annals Preparation in December, e.g.); (ii) by asking potential new recruits to submit name and e-mail address to Rohan and Iris immediately; these officers would then send out a warm reminder to approach referees closer to the time of the AGM.

8.3 Back subscriptions

See 'Matters arising'. ACTION: Rohan to provide Iris with a list of people who are at this point still in arrears with their fee payments.

8.4 Publications

The contract with Berg is now signed. In principle all copies additional to those sold along with association membership attract royalties to the ASA. However, we have not yet attracted the numbers of Association member subscriptions anticipated. We need to keep at this and explain to Berg that new members will automatically subscribe whereas some existing members take a little more persuasion.

Trevor reported that under the new contract, there exists now a clause that clarifies that all Index work is the responsibility of the volume editors. He also reported that he is involved in the designing of the new series. It was also suggested that we might now explore other projects with Berg; for example, the continuation of the Methods series (after the one with Routledge is being closed), including perhaps the reprinting of old Methods volumes.

8.5 *anthropologymatters*

John Staples talked the committee through a detailed report of activities and updates, including the use, by Sean Kingston, of the name "Anthropology Matters" in his own publishing business. This was discussed at length. An objection had been made, but it was felt that Sean Kingston would not back down over his use of the name. He had already publicised his own use of this name under the banner of his publishing company on his website.

8.4 Honorary Secretary's Report of EASA Summit in Lisbon

The Honorary secretary found the EASA Summit productive and also thinks input from the ASA at critical point was useful for the EASA Executive Committee. Noteworthy parallel or common concerns the EASA Committee is currently dealing with are a recognition that anthropologists working outside of academia would ideally be incorporated (and means of reaching and mobilising this category of anthropologists are being deliberated), and/or the employment of a professional administrator to ease the growing work load of the honorary membership secretary (not knowing that we are about to lose our efficient administrator, the ASA Hon Secretary offered our employment of Maureen and Rohan as a model, though concerns about cost of professional labour were raised).

The Secretary attended all for themed workshops (Funding, Publication, Anthropology Outside Academia, and Anthropology in Public Spaces) by moving between parallel sessions. Summaries of issues and recommendations arising from discussions will soon be published on the EASA Web-Site, if they are not already up. Intellectually, a concern voiced strongly and repeatedly by Eastern European colleagues was that the European Association was increasingly growing to take for granted 'British standards' of what constitutes good anthropology. As one might imagine, the charge invited lively debate, was not settled, and will probably surface at the EASA Conference in Vienna as a panel theme.

9. ASA Conferences 2006 & 2007

See under point 3, Matters Arising. It was reaffirmed that we will need to find out by the end of the calendar year whether the Delhi conference is a runner for 2007, and leave ourselves 3 months running up to the AGM in Aberdeen to prepare an alternative. In the event that a UK conference would be planned, we would reconsider the proposals by Bristol, Edinburgh, LSE and Sheffield which had been submitted at the last AGM for 2006.

10. AOB

Richard Fardon reported that Sarah Pink had written a response to the recent editorial by Gerald Mars in *Anthropology Today* concerning applied anthropology. Sarah and he had agreed to submit a slightly revised version of this jointly as an ASA response. Gerald Mars had been acknowledged at the applied anthropologists' dinner that he had not known so many activities were in hand, and that he would have written differently had he known. In this light the letter from Sarah and Richard was designed to be conciliatory and constructive. This did go to show how important publicity was.

11. Time of the Next Meeting

It was decided to hold the next Committee Meeting in London on Saturday 23 October 2004. Venue to be announced nearer the time. Members coming from outside of London are asked to make travel arrangements early in order to take advantage of lower travel fares.