



The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

COMMITTEE MEETING

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Brunei Gallery (SOAS), Room BG.01 A 18 JUNE, 2005, 13.00 – 17.00

MINUTES

1. Present: Simone Abram, Alberto Corsin-Jiménez Richard Fardon, John Gledhill, Lisette Josephides, Trevor Marchand

Apologies from: Marcus Banks and Iris Jean-Klein; Ian Harper and Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes (who sent reports)

2a. Minutes of the Last Meeting on 5 March 2005

Lisette requested that the last paragraph of her report (under item 8.2) should be struck out of the record. It should be replaced with the sentence 'the Treasurer continues to pursue the surplus from the Durham conference'.

Item 9 Chair was unable to complete this section corresponding to Ian's presentation (as he was absent from the room when the discussion took place).

Action: Ian to be asked again to complete this record.

Action: Iris to make these corrections then send minutes to Ro to post on the committee-password protected area of the website.

2b. Minutes of the 2005 ABM

Accepted without factual corrections.

Action: Iris to send corrected minutes to Ro to be posted on the members'-password protected area of the website.

3a. Matters arising on Minutes of 5/3/05 (action points only)

Item 4 No report yet from Ian of his visit to IDS.

Action: Ian to distribute this report please, via Ro to the website.

New series with Berg – Ian still to update his book proposal to Trevor.

Action: Ian to update please

Ethics sub-committee – Ian, Alberto and Simone have yet to meet.

Action: Ian, Alberto, Simone, arrange a meeting, and contact Keith Hart if they feel this is appropriate.

Item 5 Annals are delayed (as usual), but are with the sub-editor (see Administrator's report).

Item 6.1 List of distinguished members was examined with a view to recommending future Hon Mems. Some (provisional) suggestions made for 2007.

Termination of membership for members greater than 2 years aggregate in arrears: Ro still unable to provide a complete list. (However, committee did examine arrears for retired members from list provided above.)

Possible changing of discretionary/discounted membership fees to income threshold rather than geographic location – to be discussed at a future date in liaison with Ro.

Ratifications: Lionel Sims, publication list still outstanding.

Action: JG to look at Sims's website for appropriate publications.

Next year, committee agrees that they need to see FULL application papers for all proposed new members at the meeting before the ABM, which Ro is requested to attend. (Ro's aversion to meetings has our sympathy; but just once a year would be appreciated and help keep face-to-face contact as committee changes.)

Action: Ro be invited to attend March meeting *before* next ABM (2006) and bring all full application papers and references (preferably distributed in advance)

Letters received expressing acceptance and thanks from all new honorary members. The committee agreed to re-title honorary members 'fellows' of the ASA, and entitle them to use the letters FASA after their names.

Action: Chair/secretary: next years annals to include item to this effect.

Item 8.1 Further to meeting held with Dawn Woodgate of ESRC to address the lack of anthropological representation on the board, no further action or response has been received from ESRC. The committee expressed its concern that anthropologists are not accountably represented on the Research Grants Board since Tim Ingold stood down; the incoming board member with responsibility for anthropology applications is in a Sociology department (ie, not in an anthropology department) and is not a member of either ASA or RAI. Dawn Woodgate has accepted our nominations of Phil Burnham (UCL) and Jane Cowan (Sussex) to the ESRC's Virtual College. This does not compensate for lack of representation on board. Committee noted that there is currently a vacancy on the Strategic Priorities Board.

Action: JG to follow up Dawn Woodgate or her successor.

RF sent a response to the AHRC's call for new research themes. In the absence of an available current committee member, he will represent ASA at a meeting on 13/7/05 where research priorities will be on the agenda.

Item 8.3 Iris agreed to edit the computer-generated index for the ASA Directory.

Action: Iris to confirm whether this will proceed and liaise with Rohan.

Item 8.6 Publications. Trevor has replied to Collins and Galina declining their proposal.

Item 8.7 Conferences. Diamond Jubilee conference Keele 2006. RF raised Pnina's request for ASA conference/archive photographs at the ABM and circulated a request for photos to all HoDs via email, requesting that they respond to Pnina (therefore is unable to report whether response was achieved).

2007 conference. RF contacted those who had previously expressed an interest, who all declined. Fiona declined on behalf of Bristol, but David Shankland later responded that they might be interested after all. By that time, agreement had already been reached with London Metropolitan (lead: Tom Selwyn) to host the 2007 conference on the theme of Tourism and related issues. This has now been followed up by Tom and confirmed.

2008 conference will be held in either New Zealand or Australia, with their national associations. Veronica Strang has been in further contact with RF to confirm this. Following the precedent set by the Arusha conference, and to allow UK members not attending the Commonwealth conference the opportunity to take part, RF recommends the Committee to consider the option of holding the 2008 ABM with a Firth Lecture in the UK prior to the conference.

3b. Matters arising on Minutes of ABM (action points only)

Item 4a Donation of ASA volumes. The committee agreed that the second set of volumes should be reserved for the use of the publications officer for reference. There is therefore no need to find a further recipient.

Membership drive. Iris had agreed to check the Annals and Directory for all UK Anths who are not members. The chair noted that Andrew Garner has expressed enthusiasm to assist the committee, and the committee agreed to request his assistance in this task (see later), in order to be able to send a list of potential members to JG (so he can distribute letters).

Action: under item 5.8 below

The committee also noted that the ASA's networks were a key means to encourage new members to join the ASA, and warmly congratulates the networks on their current activities. They very strongly support the right for networks to hold meetings at ASA conferences. Networks should contact local conference organisers and may contact the committee (through the networks officer) if there is any obstacle to this right.

Annals and Directory timing was adjusted but has unfortunately re-adjusted itself due to the current delays (see administrator's report to ASA committee 18/6/05). They should be ready for distribution within a month. RF noted that we need to print more copies of the directory than the annals as the former is printed only every other year and accruing new members require copies.

Action: Ro to order approximately 100 copies of the directories – additional to those mailed with 2005 Annals - at the next print run.

Networks. Some enthusiasm was expressed at a meeting at London Met for an anthropology of tourism network.

Action: Simone to chase Julie Scott (London Met).

Anthropologymatters. The committee agreed this should be a priority. (see below).

Firth Fund. RF reiterated that Raymond Firth expressly wished the ASA to do whatever it wanted with the Firth Fund. He was not concerned about it existing in his name in perpetuity, indeed he envisaged that all the various Firth funds should be brought together into a more generic 'President's Fund'. RF has made this point several times (in print in the Annals should it be questioned in future), yet the accountant continues to limit the use of the fund.

Action: Lisette to remind the accountant again to change the terms of this account.

Lisa Croll was recommended to the Academy for the learned Societies in the Social Sciences in response to their request for an active member. However, on receiving the proposal, they responded that they already had a representative from anthropology, who was Henrietta Moore. Their original request arose from the fact that Henrietta never attends. The committee suggested that Henrietta be encouraged to resign to make space for an active representative.

Action: JG to speak to Henrietta.

RF Also attends as the ASA rep. If the committee think it is worthwhile attending, they will need to nominate a new rep.

Action: JG to ruminate on this one and RF to recommend alternatives.

Direct Debit has been investigated by Ro, who reports that the costs of setting it up (administrator's time) plus the bank charges to operate it mean that transferring to Direct Debit would cost more than it would recoup. The committee agreed that it should not be pursued further at this time, but may need to be revisited when the Association next raises subscription levels.

Ethics – see 3a.

Hon Membs. – see 3a

IUAES. It appears that the cost is 50 cents per member, minimum \$50, not \$50 per association. Therefore the committee agreed not to join the IUAES.

Minutes of the ABM have not been circulated.

Action: Iris to put the corrected version of the minutes on the website under the general members' password. (see item2)

4. Communications from the New Chair

ESRC's international benchmarking of research impact/quality exercise is starting with Social Anthropology as a Good Example. A UK steering committee of the great and the good has been agreed (including JG, the past and present RAE panel chairs, and Marilyn Strathern as BA rep on the academic side, accompanied by anthropology-friendly "users" selected at an initial meeting in April between Ian Diamond, ESRC CEO, and RF, JG, and Hilary Callan and Wendy James from RAI). The Steering committee will have its first meeting in August. Another of its tasks is to devise qualitative indicators of international research quality, since ESRC accepts that bibliometric measures are of limited value in the social sciences. This exercise could have a beneficial impact on future anthropology funding, and might also have some beneficial indirect impact for the subject in the RAE, assuming it goes well.

Request from Mexican **CIESAS** for suggestions of key anthropology texts to be translated into Spanish. JG circulated his suggestions (noting that none of Marilyn Strathern's work is available in Spanish, and hence not known).

Action: JG will email Committee to remind them to consider request and send up to 8 recommendations to JG.

Canadian Anthropology (CASCA) conference convened by Nigel Rapport (Concordia University) suggested we hold an ASA plenary. Lisette expressed an interest in convening the panel and was asked by the committee to make a proposal. The committee agreed it would convene a panel if CASCA are paying.

Action: Lisette to contact Nigel Rapport, and if they are paying for the ASA panel, to make a proposal.

WCAA faces challenges to its continuity of functioning since its Council (i.e. executive) is made up of association presidents/chairs who rotate (in some cases after a single year in office). One solution to this problem that has been discussed is the creation of an advisory board of past Council members who would continue to be involved in WCAA for a three further years. JG has recommended that they create a secretariat to provide administrative continuity (whose nomination would be a primary function of this advisory body), and that the administration remains located in Brazil for the time being, since that is where the new website has been built. No further responses to the debate have been received to date, so the matter remains under discussion.

JG noted that in the public debate about our intervention (via *Anthropology Today*) in the controversy over PRISP (see next item), the BBC reported the OED definition of anthropologists as being concerned 'esp. with 'primitives'.

Action: JG to check OED and see if this is really the current definition, in which case we should make an urgent representation to OED.

JG has had extensive contact with the press over the Pat Roberts Intelligence Scholars Program (PRISP), a pilot scheme in which 150 anthropology students are to be funded covertly by the CIA or other US national security agencies, for which they will work after graduation. In addition to THES, the BBC, Time Out and various UK national and student newspapers, this included half an hour on the Alex Jones nationally syndicated radio talk-show, which emanates from Houston and devotes itself to attacking aspects of US government intervention deemed to be leading the country towards a police state. Although JG felt these contacts were productive from the point of view of focusing the media on the real issues of concern that motivated our original statements (as distinct, for example, from witch-hunting searches for possible spies on UK campuses!), and the BBC piece did produce a lot of favourable feedback from colleagues in the USA, he was mindful of

the fact that we often exercise little editorial control over what is published on the basis of telephone interviews and that it was therefore necessary to exercise more caution in the statements made than one might want to exercise in an academic context.

5. Officers' reports. (see attached reports)

5.1 Chair & Sec.– all items dealt with above

5.2 Administrator – items dealt with above

5.3 Treasurer

Income was around £11,000 and outgoings currently around £8,700. we are therefore balancing the books but there is not a great deal to slosh about.

A new account is in place for courses, which should cut down on any confusion. Costs for Ro should decrease as the database settles down and requires less attention.

RAI and ASA did hold discussions about bringing the two Firth funds together (as Sir Raymond wished), but the RAI withdrew from negotiations on the basis that it is a charity (although ASA doesn't pay tax either). Subsequently, all the Firth funds given out have come from the ASA and none from the RAI. RAI had agreed to discuss making compensatory payments into the ASA fund after an initial period of operation, but so far this has not been the subject of further discussion.

Action: Lisette will explore the terms of expenditure of the Radcliffe-Brown funds, and the relationship between the Firth funds held at ASA and RAI.

5.4 Ethics

Alberto C-J presented a draft paper for AT about the ASA ethical guidelines. The committee offered constructive feedback and noted the importance of the ASA ethical guidelines for associated institutions (such as university departments). In the current climate of ethical overdrive, the committee noted the importance of stability within the debate. JG has already placed a brief statement from the Chair on the Ethics page of the website designed to contextualise the role of the new ethics initiative in relation to the Guidelines.

Action: ACJ to revise draft paper before publication.

5.5 media

Alberto reported that a researcher for Bruce Parry's 'Tribe' programme at the BBC Natural history unit, had contacted him requesting contact with anthropologists working in East and West Africa. Following email discussion, Alberto invited Parry and the director to a meeting, to enable us to indicate our very grave concerns about the meeting. JG and RF expressed extreme caution, and the real fear that the programme makers might 'credit' or 'thank' the ASA, which would be most unfortunate. Both considered the programme beyond redemption.

Action: Alberto only to agree a meeting if both Parry and the director attend personally, and to indicate in no uncertain terms that the ASA does not wish to be considered to endorse the series in any way. Any meeting is merely to 'find out more' about Parry's intentions.

5.6 Publications

Trevor M indicated that the publication from the Durham conference is on track for 2006. Ingold and Hallam is also well on track for 2007 issue.

RF noted that *Qualities of time* which was published in 2005 was the 2004 subscription issue (and so on, with subscription issues not always matching publication date).

The committee noted that the publications from the 1973 and 1993 decennials were not included in the ASA series. The committee recommends that therefore the 2003 decennial need not be included in the ASA monograph series. The committee hopes that this will make it easier for the 03 organising committee to pursue a convenient and appropriate publication strategy.

Action: TM to indicate this to Peter Wade asap.

RF and TM met Hannah Shakespear (Berg publications). TM will write a formal proposal for 'Issues in Anthropological Research' series and circulate it to the committee for feedback on what's topical and what's on the market. The series will be carefully 'managed' for consistency.

5.7 networks

Reports were received from the networks, with thanks.

There had been interest from Dutch anthropologists for the apply network, as they have no formal representation. This has been passed to Apply.

Scope for other networks was discussed. The committee expressed hearty enthusiasm for network activities and a willingness to assist as necessary.

Action: SA to write to networks on behalf of committee to thank them, and ask if they require any further assistance.

5.8 postgraduate affairs and anthropologymatters

A request was received for support for a conference organised by PG students at Manchester to be held on 9 November 2005 on the theme of '*Universities in the neo-Liberal World: possible futures*'. The committee wished to support this exemplary student activity and offered a sum of £400 from the Firth Fund.

Action: Treasurer to send £400 to organising committee via liaison with JG (to find details of account it is to be sent to) and a request that the conference organisers include the ASA logo on its conference materials.

Anthropologymatters. The committee expressed its sorrow on news of the death by road accident of the anthropologymatters webmaster and wished to extend its condolences to his friends and relatives.

The committee remain unclear about the status of *am*, and wish to see it stabilised and revived.

The committee agreed to create a new post and invite Andrew Garner to fill it. This post would be concerned with postgraduate liaison activities in 3 respects: with training courses (liaising with Stella M-K, so that Stella need not attend committee meetings), anthropologymatters, and membership and recruitment (especially of new doctorates, but also a watching brief to recruit eligible non-members in anthropology departments in UK)

Action: JG to talk to Ian Harper to find out what is happening at *am* then to contact Andrew Garner and invite him to carry out tasks identified here and under item 3b(4a) above.

5.9 Postgraduate Training

Report received from S M-K.

6 honorary members.

See item 3a(6.1)

AOB

Richard was thanked by the committee for his infinite hard work and good humour as Chair of ASA, and expressed his gratitude both for a gift of a framed Matisse print that the committee offered to him, and for the reliable collegiality of the committee. He looked forward to the ASA campaigning on important issues in the next four year term and was delighted it would do so under John's active chairmanship.