



# The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

## COMMITTEE MEETING

19 Amherst Road, Manchester. 2 November, 2007, 12.00 – 17.30

### Minutes

1. **Present: John G (in the chair), Nayanika, Trevor, Simone**

#### Apologies

Raminder, Georgie, Kate.

Absent : Andrew.

2. **Minutes of 30.6.07** were accepted.

3. **Matters arising** were all covered in the agenda.

4. **Reports (verbal additions to circulated reports)**

a. **Chair**

John has written a letter in support of the RAI's A-level proposal for Hillary Callan to take to a meeting with another board of examiners (the third so far). Hilary has not given a response to John yet. Nayanika suggested that what needs to be sold about anthropology is the ethnographic method which is valuable for other disciplines as well.

b. **Administrator**

The committee discussed membership issues and services, and agreed that more information needs to be circulated to members raising awareness about what the ASA is actually doing on behalf of members so they will understand why we will need to raise subscription costs and make savings by putting annals online, for example. **Ro will also follow up with Andrew** Garner about the promotion of the ASA to anthropology students.

Re the film competition, minutes of March 2007 agreed the following prize details which **need to be announced on the website (Ro and Trevor)**.

*To launch a competition for short (3-5 minute films) for the ASA's YouTube site.  
Space on ASA website – commission short (max. 3 min films).  
Offer first prize of 100 pounds, two runners up of 50 pounds, and if the winner has a full-length film, guarantee showing it at the ASA conference.  
Ro can give the winners the ability to upload their own films.*

In addition, the ASA needs to publicise its activities to members. Firstly, we must update the front page of the website to state what we have been doing **Ro and Simone to liaise on this**. We could also propose an article about the changing role and activities of the ASA over the last years, for AT, for example. We could ask Richard Wilson, David Mills or (suggestions please)?

c. **Treasurer**

We clearly need to address our income streams. We have relatively little confidence of bringing much income in from ASA08. Trevor pointed out that we are not very good at tapping into alumni. The African Studies Association was requesting money from alumni on the basis of goodwill. We could at least make it clear that we are open to benefaction or donations. We could do that if it was tied to grants for students. We might guarantee that a large percentage of the donation will go specifically to student grants, but a small amount stays to administer the association. (Cf Firth fund – RAI manages it but it is the ASA's money.) JG thought it will be difficult to avoid a subscription increase soon. At the very least increasing costs of books and postage must be accounted for. We would have to bring this to the AGM.

Trevor only just received the minutes so will follow up the funds that were withheld from ASA06 to pay for extra publication costs. Pnina held back 1200 pounds but Berg has only charged 600, so Trevor will find out from Berg what they received and request the balance from Pnina. Trevor also mentioned that books are well used as they are being used on courses.

**Raminder - please prepare a review of the subscription cost that could be circulated to the membership 3-4 months before the AGM. We suggest that a long-term raise is the best solution because of the excessive administration costs of changing subscription rates – eg to £50. Please suggest relevant changes for other rates (ie smaller). Ro will also check whether the situation with regard to Direct Debit has changed and whether there is a viable way of establishing it as a means of maintaining subscriptions.**

The committee discussed the paper production of the annals and **agreed that we should start to charge for paper copies but only automatically provide it online.** Postage is also increasing dramatically.

d. **Networks – request for funding**

The committee agreed that the funding request from Arnar Arnason for a meeting of the Anthropology of Britain network should be met from the Firth Fund.

e. **Publications – new officer required**

Trevor's report covers most issues. He is still waiting for a proposal from Tom and Julie which should arrive today. Trevor will circulate it and requested email feedback.

Trevor now has a film clip which will be passed on to Ro next week to go up on the film site.

Trevor will chase up with Berg on the various issues in his report. He will also try to meet with the RAI before he leaves his post. He has discussed with various people about replacing him, and found that Louella Matsunaga would be a very good replacement, and Trevor could offer her support as they work in the same place. She works on medical anthropology in Japan (on death and insurance) and is research fellow at SOAS. She is keen to take on a new role, but we would be better with a person in a permanent post. Nayanika suggested David Pratten who is now in Oxford – or Katherine Charseley who may be a permanent member of staff at Oxford now – **Trevor will check how permanent Louella's position is and if necessary contact the other people mentioned.** Trevor will prepare the annual report and will attend the AGM.

f. **Ethics**

Nayanika referred to some issues that Alberto had raised by email. He is moving the blog along but there are questions about how to take it forward. Ro has put the blog up ready. N suggested to Ro to put links with the Lancaster ethics site.

Nayanika has looked through previous meeting minutes to see what had been suggested. A blog needs to have a subscription option – **Ro will check that an RSS feed is available.**

Raminder will use current issues of the day to raise informed debates via the blog. John pointed out that we should have some public debate about immigration, for example.

Alberto has raised the question of English language domination of the site, but the committee agreed that the association's working language is English, and it would open us up to problems if people posted controversial items which we were unaware of, so at this stage we will restrict it more or less to English.

**Raminder will take on the ethics blog and keep Alberto informed.**

We discussed a pledge from the website of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists against participation in counterinsurgency. Raminder felt it would be a good way to encourage people to participate in the ASA. **John will write to David Price suggesting that the pledge is rephrased to be more relevant outside the USA. If this is done, we will encourage our members to sign up to it.**

g. **Media**

no report was received.

5. **Election of president.**

Marilyn Strathern was delighted to be invited to stand for president of the ASA and we are very happy that she agreed. **We will need to circulate the membership 3 months before the AGM.** The president is a figure-head without an executive role, but occasions will often arise where the president will have a strategic role.

**SA will check the rules on notification and election etc.**

6. **ASA conferences - review and plans**

a. **Firth Lecture – LSE conference**

**The AGM will be held at the LSE conference 17-18 March.** We have no more information on this. John will chase up to find out what progress has been made. We understand that the Firth Lecture will be given by Sherry Ortner.

b. **ASA 2008 (inc Marilyn Strathern event, Douglas memorial)**

We have no report from Veronica about how well they are doing with panel proposals etc, although Ro says there's been no response so far. We must check that abstract acceptance will allow time for funding requests.

Ro pointed out to Veronica that the quote he had offered originally was not reasonable given the increase in costs and the increasing demands. Veronica suggested using additional people, but Ro feels he will be compromised if other people do not provide good services. Given that Veronica needs to save money, she will have to farm out some of the work. The only link with the ASA committee is where the ASA website is used to register people using the cocoa system. There have been some delays so far, but Veronica may be overestimating what was possible for the money.

The most recent budget that Veronica sent shows a projected loss, and **John will impress upon Veronica the need to avoid making any loss, and that the ASA**

**will not indemnify any loss.** The ASA will, on this exceptional occasion, we will give her a start-up loan of 1000 pounds, but will reinforce the point that we expect this loan to be returned following the conference.

Arusha was offered a larger subvention because they were an impoverished organisation.

**John, Raminder and Simone must approach the British Academy together for air fare costs.**

Mary Douglas was a very well known figure outside anthropology, and we agree that we should have an ongoing recognition of her legacy. We will ask Richard Fardon to be the first keynote speaker in the Mary Douglas series. **John will speak to Richard about ASA2008. Simone will talk to Naneke at UCL about how we combine our memorial activities** starting from the point that the ASA is willing to fund an annual lecture in memory of Mary Douglas.

c. **ASA 2009**

Ro has not heard from David Shankland about 2009. The accommodation situation (ie lack of it) has not been resolved. There is a youth hostel centrally where we could make a block booking but this would not be sufficient. The problem with block bookings is that they have to be paid for. **Ro will follow up on accommodation.**

d. **ASA 2010 – Ro will broadcast a call for 2010.**

e. **Conflict conference? (from ASA07)**

John has tried to move this forward with Raphie but was waiting to check what the results of the discussion on the UCU potential boycott was. Now, this appears to have gone by the wayside, so **John will find out what is going on.**

7. **Dates of meetings 2008**

15<sup>th</sup> February

17<sup>th</sup> March AGM

13<sup>th</sup> June

7<sup>th</sup> November