

Minutes of a meeting of the ASA committee 12.12.08 held in Auckland at ASA conference 2008.

Present: John Gledhill, Simone Abram, Raminder Kaur, Nayanika Mookherjee, Catherine Degnen, Dimitrios Theodossopoulos, Rohan Jackson

1. Administration

Moving to direct debit – Rohan needs to finish the transfer. Little activity expected before spring. Darren (technician) is better so Rohan hopes for progress on the directory of members.

John suggested creating common format to EASA and ASA membership, to save time and create the possibility to search across both databases. All 3 (+RAI) are on Ro's database so it makes sense administratively. There may be issues about data protection and chargeable searches. The committee considered having a basic public search and a restricted professional search.

The Committee discussed the interest categories – to allow some unity of search terms. Country and region are easiest categories to dictate. The categories/keywords are currently free text with a free text search. **The committee agreed that when we ask people to update their entries, we recommend that they include geographical search terms.**

Ro asked whether some money should be invested to have a worldpay function – because EASA members have complained about paypal. Worldpay is easier to use and takes a smaller cut. The cost is a couple of hundred pounds. It could be used for membership payments, conference payments, etc. Ro will get the figures and check with Raminder. **Committee agreed for Ro to look into this and go ahead with Raminder's approval.**

2. finance

The travel grant that RAI offered was 900 – only half was disbursed because of a drop-out at the last minute and the other applicant had her funds covered already. We will ask the RAI if this can be transferred to the next conference with a top up from ASA to pay a sufficient amount to bring a Southern scholar to ASA09. **Ro will send John the exact details and John will contact RAI and make the request.** ASA is already funding a Firth lecture for ASA09. Raminder suggested we ask applicants for a budget so we can assess how much it would cost us. The committee noted frequent visa problems, but that we might be able to apply for a waiver on deposits for visas. JG has close contacts in the foreign office for visiting scholars, but Home Office tend to be more belligerent and refuse to allow people in. John invited a Cuban scholar resident in Spain, but she was refused a visa from the British Embassy in Madrid. Nayanika will explore visa regulations when she is back in UK in January.

WCAA website. JG saw Thomas Reuter who is president elect, but learned that the coordinator is not doing anything. The website is out of date, and membership details are not up to date enough for conference administration. The site is on a server in the states but is edited from Brazil but John thinks a majority will be in favour of Ro building a new site and maintain it. Wenner Gren might fund the construction cost, but because of grant cuts, they will not be able to fund it further. Annual cost might be in the region of £700 a year (assuming no great changes). With content management, it would be less. Setting up a new website is more like £1500, but moving it to another server is simpler. ASA could offer a sum of money but AAA could offer much more. Others include Casca (Canada) RAI, Brazil, Japanese, Portuguese... Veronica had suggested each organisation paid 1% of membership income. John insisted that WCAA should remain a network without an infrastructure, but it does organise meetings – 'to bring the global level playing field into focus' but it will not organise world congresses, etc.. What it needs is a one-off fund to set up the website and a small sum for maintenance. **ASA agree to give £300 to get the ball rolling.**

3. ASA09, conferences

38 panel proposals received. Timetable has only 6 panel sessions (cf this conference had 14). Each panel wants over 2 sessions. Simone argued that too many panels fragments a conference and is self-defeating. Bristol panels will be plenary panels with 3 speakers each. Ro noted that Bristol hosts felt that parallel sessions allow people not to be excluded. Where plenaries attract an audience they can be a genuine discussion between a real number of people, to give conferences a greater unity. The committee discussed session organisation and numbers of sessions. **The**

committee recommended the Bristol organisers take a strong editorial approach to panel selection and organisation.

ASA AGM will be held at Tuesday lunchtime. Committee will discuss by email the organisation of the conference programme (brochure).

Ro will follow up with Prina whether we have had the final payment from the Keele conference. Apply have asked whether they can contribute to having a more significant role in a conference. Simone suggested that they liaise with the Belfast organisers. Kate will liaise with Kathryn Tomlinson.

4. Networks

Andrew Irving asked advise on how to go about calling for ethnographic research in terrorism. John suggested we recommend that they abide by the ethical code of the ASA. In the last controversy, the foreign office did at least acknowledge that the process should be open.

5. consultations

Druid – burial request from English Heritage. Dimitrios explained that druids object to new archaeological technologies that potentially prove that the remains are not druids or that do not connect with current druids, and that druids are small minority who do want to know about archaeological discovery. The North American case is simpler, where keeping human remains is an offence to living people for whom the ancestors are not dead. Here, the Druids are only empathising with what they imagine the Druid groups might have wished. The issue is whether the current Druids can show that they are sufficiently disturbed by the unburied... However, many of the remains were never buried in the first place but were placed in burial tombs that could be visited. Reburial seems to indicate a return to the tombs were they were found – which means to return it to Avebury world heritage site which suggests some further issues. Current Druids are taking inspiration from other reburial campaigns. JG suggests that there is a difference between cases where there are living people connected to the bones than where people have imagined connections. But the question of what kind of connections there are, are problematic. Dimitrios suggested talking to Josh Pollard at Bristol and Jenny Blain at Sheffield Hallam. The committee tended to favour the position where bones need not necessarily be held in museum storage, but access for research purposes is important. The difficulty here is the lack of connection between current Druids and the bones.

Kate Degnen will consult with Josh and Jenny and report back to the committee.

6. ethics

Nayanika reported from the Ethics meeting that it went well, and recommendations included having a bigger session in future conferences. Participants suggested that the panel would have been a good plenary. A number of speakers suggested offering papers for publication. **Simone requested that they be submitted to ASAonline.**

7. publications and other ASA activities

Simone reported that she has been offered a selection of papers on Cuba for asaonline. John felt that ASAonline does need to get something out of this conference. We should suggest to Veronica that a selection of papers goes to ASAonline.

Simone reported that the blog was not as active as we had hoped because of competing debates. Georgie's approach to RAI on the media debate was less fruitful than she had hoped, and despite her efforts (detailed in the minutes of Nov.08), there has been no breakthrough towards organising a meeting. JG asked about progress on the letter to Ofcom that Georgie offered to write. He was concerned that he will not be available to respond to a letter in his name. Georgie has indicated that she wishes to step down from the Media officer position as she cannot give it the time it needs. A number of suggestions were made for replacement. The committee suggested that Georgie find a replacement and suggested she ask Garry Marvin first because of his experience in media and broadcasting.

ASA2010 will go to Belfast. Ro will recirculate the proposal. We should now call for 2011 and publicise 2010. CASCA has expressed interest in holding a joint meeting, but they meet in May which is difficult timing, although there is space for negotiation. Conferences abroad do really need to have an invitation – the local host has to want the project to happen. The committee discussed

possible places to organise future conferences, particularly in India. Nayanika and Raminder will explore the possibilities.

Film competition? Simone will request an update from Trevor

Ro thinks this conference should make money – they could possibly use money to produce a second book – but this is a difficult precedent. A second book could not be an ASA monograph, but some surplus can be used for a second book.

Ro noted that the subsidy for student places for NZ students was taken from the conference budget, but the ASA put money for students. Committee agreed that if this was the case, then the money ASA put in for students must also come from the budget so that each association followed the same rule. In principle, this is the ASA conference, and surplus is shared between ASA and the local host.