



The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

COMMITTEE MEETING

5th June 2009. 1-5pm RAI meeting room, 50 Fitzroy Street.

Minutes

James Fairhead (chair) Nayanika Mukherjee, Raminder Kaur, Garry Marvin, James Staples, Simone Abram (secretary)

1. Apologies

Rohan Jackson, Kate Degnen, Ian Fairweather

2. Minutes of 6-03-09

Accepted with some typos noted in point G under Media.

3. Matters arising

From the AOB: James S suggested doing a blog on the financial crisis but Nayanika had not agreed take it forward herself, so someone would have to take this up. Simone has requested annals information from the extended HoDs list, including a request for information about public or access courses they might run.

On Ethics – Simone contacted Jon Prosser – email exchange indicated a confusion now clarified. His event is quite separate from us.

4e. Anthropology Matters network has just published a new issue of AM journal online. JS reported that Ro had agreed to be webmaster for AM which helps with continuity. The new editor is Amy Pollard. **JF will write to the editor to indicate ASA's ongoing support for their activities. JF will liaise with Kate on his behalf, as networks officer, on AM continuity.**

4g – Nayanika and Simone have yet to explore the possibilities of a research project (but see GM's comment below).

4. Matters Arising from AGM

ACSS – it was decided that we will withdraw from ACSS. **JF received a reminder to pay subs, so he will write to explain that we are withdrawing. JF will also inform the RAI that we are doing this.** JF wrote to UEL – see chair's report.

5. Annals/Directory

a. Progress

There was some confusion about whether annals and directory are already online. [*NB Annals are online- under 'publications'*] JF suggested we write to members to alert them to the fact that the directory is online (eg as a headline to one of his newsletters) – when it is. Please could links be prominently placed. **Simone will ask Ro about where we are with this.**

b. including non-departmental anthropologists?

Simone will ask Ro to produce a list of departments which employ anthropologists that are not Anthropology departments – from the Directory – to go into the Annals. Kate raised this point and noted that this is an area where we can increase membership.

Garry raised the issue of anthropologists working in government and the military, and pointed out that there are anthropologists who are hired to give contextual briefings to, say, new ambassadors in the country of their expertise. He raised the possibility that this could be a useful role for anthropologists, on the basis of adherence to the ASA's code of ethics. Our role is not to recoil from governmental activity but to be vigilant and supportive of people who feel that their work is being misused.

JF noted that in discussions about wider impacts of anthropology – not specifically of research or teaching, the provision of information when required, is often not flagged up. It would be useful to make visible the many activities that anthropologists undertake (e.g. asylum reports, etc), to highlight the impact of the discipline – and raise awareness of what we can offer. Nayanika reported that the presence of dtsl employees did indicate that there are still questions about how information provided might be used beyond the initial relationship – ie, it is not clear where information is going to go from meetings with these anthropologists working in Defence. JF suggested this is something that might re-emerge in discussions about conferences, or in a discussion about the ethical principles involved in working with government.

6. Reports (written reports received separately)

a. Chair

Chair was asked by AGM and HoDs meetings to liaise with ESRC and AHRC. We need to check whether our nominees actually applied to the ESRC's boards. JF noted that Economic History have an annual meeting with ESRC and AHRC because they cross over the boards. JF would like to convene a similar meeting for Anthropology and **he will call a meeting of the Benchmarking review committee in order to pursue these issues**. AHRC requested presence of a member of ASA committee to a media event on impacts of its research – GM agreed to attend on our behalf. **JF will forward the invitation to GM.**

Ofcom's response was as expected, and Georgie suggested we forward the correspondence to Lords and chairs of select committee to indicate Ofcom's limitations. GM suggested we bring Ofcom into discussion with independent film makers at an event. JF suggested this could be a useful additional activity, but that the point here is that with Ofcom admitting that this is not in their remit, should the government be considering ways of regulating company practices. NM noted that Georgie's point was that Ofcom should have an extended remit to address production practices whether or not programmes are broadcast, and beyond its current UK Terrestrial remit only. **NM will write to the Kent people to check the details about the broadcast of the Cicada programme and relationship between expedition and finished programme.** GM wondered whether there was an MP who might be sympathetic who could guide us in this process. SA suggested contacting Helena Kennedy with our concerns – **JF will draft a letter and circulate it to committee before sending it to these contacts. GM will approach the Independent Producers' association and will ask John Simpson who is Chancellor of Roehampton.** RK also suggested contacting Sanjiv Baskhar who is chancellor of Sussex, and has an interest in human rights. James's letter will indicate what the problem is, showing that Ofcom's letter reveals the limitations to regulation, and that the problem is very likely to occur again, and it will include a dossier of our correspondence so far. GM also outlined possible research projects that we may pick up later, subsequent to this three-pronged approach outlined above. JF suggested applying for funds (Wenner Grenn?) to support a media event.

JS reported on sales figures for ASA 45 (Keele issue) which are in line with expectations for similar titles, despite Pnina Werbner's complaint that Berg had not marketed the book sufficiently. Also in contradiction to her claims, retired members have all been told that they are eligible to receive monographs (SA had contacted them all personally last year when we set up the Direct Debit and invented the Retired membership category).

John Gledhill wishes to host the WCAA international convention in Manchester in 2013. WCAA have asked us to endorse their constitution. Committee agreed to endorse the constitution as presented, welcomed it, and welcomed John Gledhill's contributions to it. **Committee asked Ro to alert people to their eligibility to discount rates at other associations' conferences.** (eg with next membership mailing.)

C-Sap: Narmala Halstead asked if ASA would like to join the initiative on Anthropology in Translation. Generally ASA does not support this kind of initiative and we do not have a funding scheme for such activities. **JF suggested she approach RAI with her request.**

b. Administrator

Committee agreed that Ro and Trevor should make a decision about BlipTV. Committee looked forward to seeing Ro back home again.

c. Treasurer

RK asked whether to close the Lloyds account as we have now moved all our activities to the Co-Op. RK's concern was that bank accounts are protected up to £50,000, so it could be useful to have a second bank account in case of turbulence. There are no charges attached to the account and it contains currently only £1. **Committee agreed to maintain the account for security.**

After the AGM, we discussed putting money into the Firth Fund, and RM has asked Ro to put royalties minus production costs of the Monograph into the Firth Fund. The accounts with this report are the version that should go online. **Ro to check the updated accounts are online.** It appeared that Tapati did not know that she should buy return tickets on the train, so we must remember to alert Firth speakers to buy rail tickets in advance.

d. Ethics

NM indicated products from the Auckland Ethics panel and other publications. Media, Film-making and Ethics was discussed above. Discussing events could be taken up later after the 3-pronged approach above is underway. An event could be envisaged in Spring 2010.

Jeremy Maclancy had approached James about being involved in an online ethics game. It would entail them giving ASA progress reports, every 3 months in the first year. **Committee agreed to support this initiative, and that Nayanika will be the officer with responsibility for this.** SA suggested asking Jeremy if he had been in touch with NESTA futurelab or Pervasive Media in Bristol for technical support.

NM asked how the blog might go forward in the autumn. Raminder suggested Margaret Faulkner, who is working on Business Ethics, as a possible blog leader. **RK will ask Margaret and put her in touch with NM.**

e. Networks

Committee supports Networks having a 'sacred space' in the conference schedule and JF suggested that if Kate is still concerned about the arrangements for Network meetings at conference, she should contact him directly.

f. Publications

JS had little to add to his report, but highlighted good news that the Auckland proposal has been accepted by Berg. JF asked for information about the Sage ASA handbook and suggested that JS update himself on the status and progress of the volume. **JF will forward the information he has to JS who will then present himself (to Sage) as link person.**

ASAonline has one article in press and a collection of articles on Cuba expected shortly.

g. Media – media strategy? (discussed above)

h. C-SAP

Committee agreed that the teaching and learning prize need not be restricted to members of ASA, but that the wording of the announcement should be corrected to refer to learning and teaching Anthropology (not Sociology!).

7. ASA conferences - review and plans

a. Proposal for conference guidelines

JF thought it might be useful to get Jonathan Skinner, the Lampeter conference organisers, and the working group for India conference together to discuss the issues raised in SA's conference guidelines proposals that were presented to the AGM to discuss what an ASA conference should be. SA Suggested inviting Ro (and perhaps Megan) to the group. **SA will coordinate a meeting.** JF noted also that the Bristol panels were arranged far too late to get international funding. Maybe in September.

b. ASA08

As we are awaiting final accounts from Ro, this discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

c. Firth Lecture 2010?

GM had discussed with Jonathan about whether to invite Vincent Crapanzano. GM suggested inviting Leila Abu-Lughod whose work is very much about talking to people. **SA will email the committee asking for other suggestions, will discuss this with Jonathan and will then write to Leila (or a.n.other) with an invitation.** We should also remind Jonathan that the Firth lecture must be suitably scheduled in the programme (not crammed into a lunchtime). We all agreed that the timing of the 2009 lecture was an embarrassment.

d. ASA 2010

Jonathan has promised a revised proposal. **SA will request a budget for ASA2010.**

e. ASA 2011

Lampeter proposed the theme of Human Interaction and Living Things. They requested hosting the conference in September in order to have accommodation available. **SA will write to Penny Dransard to confirm acceptance of their offer and request a budget.**

f. ASA 2012

JF suggested the need for a sister-organisation in India to co-host a conference. NM pointed out that in South Asia, it is often Sociology depts that host Anthropology. NM had been in touch with an organisation in Goa which is in History. RK has had little response from sociology/anthropology departments. NK Suggested that Delhi or Hyderabad would be ideal as places for anthropology, but Ro thought that Hyderabad was limited as a location. Delhi has the lively anthropological environment, and Ranjani Mazumdar will be in the UK shortly. JF pointed out that we are not just looking for a site to host the conference, but partners to shape the agenda and define the conference. NK agreed that any hosting would automatically presume setting the intellectual agenda. JF suggested that for the next meeting, we should have a range of

suggestions and contacts. Any venue needs to be sufficiently large regional/global academic power within India to attract scholars from across the sub-continent. JS noted that Kent have contacts with Hyderabad. JF noted that Indian sociologists and anthropologists were very helpful in offering a very robust response to the ESRC's request for a meeting on the security issue. The research boards also have an office in India. JF will send relevant names to NM. **Nayanika, Raminder and James S will form a working group towards a conference in India and bring proposals to the next committee meeting.** Although we should work with the Indian Anthropology society, most key thinkers are in other disciplines, so we should be clear to welcome and work with other intellectual associations. JF noted the need to refer to boundaries between disciplines in that context.

8. ESRC virtual college and postgrad funding

The new ESRC postgrad funding regime, on which we were consulted, has now been advertised. JF will look into who is in the virtual college and the boards. JF suggested that we re-nominate members to the boards who were nominated last time. Ian Diamond had suggested that our nominees had not made a formal application to the board. He will first write to HoDs to confirm, and ask John Gledhill whether the nominees applied last time.

9. WCAA constitution

See above.

10. Jeremy McClancy's proposal for ESRC Researcher Development Initiative for online open-access games in field research ethics training.

(see above)

11. Dates of meetings 2009.

November 20th. **SA will ask Ian if he can find us a room in Manchester for the meeting, or will identify a suitable meeting place.**