



The Association of Social Anthropologists
of the UK and Commonwealth

Chair's Annual Report 2013-14

ASA Committee and Administration

Matt Candea stepped down from his role as Ethics Officer and James Staples completed his term as Series Editor. The ASA would like to thank both of them for their sterling work on behalf of the Association. New Committee members have been proposed for these roles (to be approved at the AGM). Rachael Gooberman-Hill will also soon complete her term as Networks Officer, and applications have been received in response to advertisements for a replacement. Mike Poltorak is stepping down as Media Officer, and this post will also be advertised shortly.

In considering the contemporary needs of the ASA, the Committee proposes conflating the roles of Teaching and Learning Officer and the lead for LATAN into a single role and suggests adding to the ASA Committee a Policy Engagement Officer to engage actively with RCUK (and EU) funding and policy making bodies, and a Membership Officer with a remit to increase the membership of the ASA.

The Rules of Procedure have not been updated for many years and no longer fit the needs of the Association. For example, processes of election etc. might be better served by use of electronic voting. The Committee proposes to update the Rules and will circulate its proposals to ASA members.

ASA Finances are in good health (see Treasurer's Report). However, there remains a need to increase the ASA's membership, and colleagues are asked to encourage fellow anthropologists to join their professional association.

The ASA Annals have not been produced for some years, due to low responses from Departments. It has been suggested that they could be replaced with links to departmental websites in the UK and the Commonwealth. Members are invited to express their views on this to the Committee.

ASA Conferences

The ASA's **2015** annual conference will be held in Exeter, April 13th-16th. Focusing on anthropology's capacities to engage with other forms of knowledge, it is entitled *Symbiotic Anthropologies: theoretical commensalities and methodological mutualisms*.

Durham University has offered to host the ASA conference in **2016**. The ASA Committee has been discussing with the RAI the potential for a joint event in that

year, to build collaboration between the associations and to encourage productive dialogues between social and biological anthropology.

Commonwealth connections are being maintained. A proposal for a joint ASA-AAS-ASAANZ international conference in **2017**, entitled *Shifting States*, has been received from Richard Vokes and Alison Dundon at the University of Adelaide. The convenors are also negotiating with CASCA, with a view to including them too.

The ASA Committee is considering some new ideas for conferences: for example, welcome events for new members; facilitating research follow-up and development; having regular debates. Proposals will be circulated for feedback to ASA members prior to being incorporated into the ASA Conference Guidelines. ASA members are invited to send their own ideas for conference improvements to the Committee.

ASA Publications

Series Editing

- [ASA Monograph 51: the volume *Art and Aesthetics* from our 2012 conference, edited by Raminder Kaur (ASA) and Parul Mookerjee's (JNU), is near completion and will be sent to ASA members later this year.
- [ASA Monograph 52: the volume from the IUAES conference in 2013, has had some delay due to the editor's ill health but it is hoped that it will be completed later this year for distribution to ASA members in 2015.

Sage has approached the ASA with a proposal for a volume of *Major Works in Anthropology*. They have already published one on *Cultural Anthropology* and another on *Anthropological Theory*. These volumes 'are intended to present a nuanced reading of the key issues/concepts in depth' via a collection of approximately 80 leading articles in the field. All royalties (approx. £6,500 in total) would go to the Association.

Policy and Ethics

Following a lengthy correspondence with the ESRC, Veronica Strang and Matt Candea met with ESRC and UKDS representatives to discuss ESRC Data Policy, in particular requirements regarding data archiving. The meeting included Paul Meller (Strategic Lead for Data and Resources, ESRC); Phil Sooben (Director of Policy, Resources and Communications, ESRC) and Libby Bishop (Manager, Producer Relations: Research Ethics, UKDS). The meeting produced several outcomes:

- [There will be additional guidance on, and a more explicit recognition of ethnographic data as a distinctive type of data, in the ESRC Research Data Policy and ESRC Framework for Research Ethics.
- [Information about data deposit requirements and available support (particularly through UKDS) will be posted on the ASA and UKDS websites.

- [There will be clarification of ESRC's UKDS's position regarding waivers.
- [The ASA will be consulted in the ESRC's upcoming review of its Framework for Research Ethics.

The ASA Committee also assisted members with an ERC Ethics Audit, which similarly involved issues around data protection.

Members, in particular HoDs, have raised concerns about developments in relation to Impact, REF citation and emergent metrics for evaluation. Ways to address these concerns will be discussed with HoDs, and ASA members are invited to have input on these matters.

The 'A' Level in Anthropology requires political support. This will be discussed at the HoD's meeting.

There are ongoing visa/immigration issues. Correspondence has continued with the Home Office regarding immigration, addressing the need for fieldwork to be recognised as an official reason for discretion in issuing visas. No direct reply has been forthcoming, but a recent case has been resolved with the ASA's support. The ASA now has some material that may assist members in such cases.

The Committee notes the need for Anthropology to have greater representation in the planning and enactment of RCUK policies and those EU bodies – for example, pan-EU Data Protection Regulations. It is for this reason that it proposes the addition of an ASA Committee member with a remit focused on these issues.

ASA Publicity and Media

The *ASA Directory of Members* is now open to public access and thus functions as a source of experts for research users. ASA members may want to update their directory details.

A flier describing the professional activities of the ASA has been prepared. Members can help the Association by assisting in the distribution of these at events and in their own institutions.

Mike Poltorak facilitated the selection of an anthropologist expert to feature in a Channel 4 commissioned series on love, based on a highly successful Danish series.

The Committee has communicated with Laurie Taylor to encourage more engagement with anthropology in the *BBC Ethnography Awards*.

Networks

The ASA continues to support 4 networks:

- [Learning and Teaching Network (*LATAN*)

- [Applied Anthropologists (*Apply*)
- [*Anthropology of Britain*
- [Postgraduate students (*Anthropology Matters*)

Apply continues to run meetings in London every few months, focusing on topics raised by members. The *Anthropology of Britain Network* is celebrating 10 years of activity with a workshop on 4th September 2014. *LATAN* would welcome new members. *Anthropology Matters* is active particularly through its email list. Information about the networks is on the ASA website.

Anthropology Organisations

RAI. Committee members have attended various RAI events, to promote the ASA at these. Considerable correspondence has also been exchanged with the RAI regarding publications. Some discussions are underway regarding joint endeavours, for example exploring the potential for a joint conference in 2016.

AAA. At the AAA meeting in Chicago, members of the committee attended a WCAA meeting (of which the ASA is a member); discussed ASA issues with the Director of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and met with staff of with *Minding Your Business*, a consultancy firm commissioned to provide a strategic report for the AAA. The ASA has asked the AAA to share some of the material arising from MYB's analysis.

Members of the ASA Committee are trying to ensure we are represented at Academy of Social Sciences, British Academy events etc. The Committee has provided some material to the Campaign for Social Sciences. On behalf of the ASA, Lucy Pickering attended an AcSS generic ethical principles conference and a NatCen workshop on ethics in social media and digital research.

Prizes and Awards

The ASA continues to assist the RAI in disbursing the Radcliffe-Brown Trust funds, and in promoting the Urgent Anthropology Fellowships.

The RAI has recently instituted an annual 'Marsh Prize' recognizing individuals 'who have distinguished themselves in the field of anthropology by making a contribution to the public good, but who do not hold a post in academia'. ASA members are invited to suggest potential candidates to the RAI Director.

Veronica Strang

Chair, ASA

18.6.14