



# The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

## Chair's Annual Report 2014-15

### ASA COMMITTEE

#### Finances (Lotte Hoek)

ASA finances are in good order. Accounts will be presented at the AGM.

#### Prizes and Awards

Applications to the Firth Fund, Olivia Harris Fund and Sutasoma were more than double the number received last year. All funds were disbursed.

#### Policy and Ethics (Veronica Strang, Lucy Pickering)

**RCUK liaison** Anthropology would benefit considerably from more representation on RCUK and EU bodies, and in the planning and enactment of RCUK policies. The ASA has advertised a new committee post for this purpose. A senior academic is needed for this role.

**ESRC** Following the efforts of the ASA committee, there is now additional guidance in the *ESRC Research Data Policy* on (and a more explicit recognition of) ethnographic data as a distinctive type of data.

Input has been provided to the consultation on the *ESRC Framework for Research Ethics*. Current and previous Ethics Officers (Lucy Pickering and Matt Candea) have drawn up guidance for ASA members on offering ethnographic data for archive. This has been agreed by UKDS and ESRC.

In July 2014 a collective effort with HoDs (special thanks to Maia Green who did much background work) provided a detailed response to the consultation regarding the *ESRC Future Strategic Direction*.

**HEFCE** A detailed response (with input from HoDs) was provided to HEFCE's request for input to an *Independent Review of the Role of Metrics in Research Assessment*.

**ERC** Following a request from an ASA member regarding a research ethics audit, a response was made regarding an ERC-funded project. The ERC responded positively, but ASA members gaining funding from the ERC are advised to address issues relating to data protection early in the process.

**AcSS** The Ethics Officer facilitated a session for the AcSS, and assisted them in articulating (and agreeing with other bodies) some key principles for social science research. These are in line with the ASA's own ethical codes, so there is no need to revise these.

**Anthropology A Level** The A Level is to be discontinued due to lack of take-up. The ASA committee has supported various efforts to protest against this discontinuation.

**RCUK** A workshop was organised with RCUK representatives in Durham in March 2015. This provided an opportunity to highlight the potential of anthropological expertise in contributing to interdisciplinary research.

### **Networks (Katharine Tyler)**

**APPLY** Thanks to Rachael Goberman-Hill for her several years of effective work on this. APPLY is now co-convened by Julie Scott and Mary Adams. The network has three regular meetings a year and runs linkedIn and Facebook pages. Links with EASA's Network for Applied Anthropology have been established.

**Anthropology of Britain Network** Current convenors are Cathrine Degnen and Katharine Tyler. The ASA provided £100 to assist the AOB workshop in Exeter in September 2014. The convenors have secured the *Sociological Review Monograph* (2017) for publication of papers from this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event.

**Anthropology Matters Journal** Nomad IT is assisting AM with its website and journal. A special issue of the journal, *Ethnographies of the Opportunities and Risks of Neoliberalisation*, edited by Ainhua Montoya, was launched at the 2014 ASA Decennial Conference.

**LATAN: Learning and Teaching in Anthropology Network** Ian Fairweather is seeking a new convener for this network. The prize previously funded by HEA has been reconfigured as an *ASA Award for Teaching and Lecturing in Anthropology*. Nominations can be made by any ASA member teaching at a UK or Commonwealth university. As well as giving public recognition to outstanding teaching quality, the award provides the recipient with a year's free membership of the Association. The deadline for applications is 1 November 2015.

### **ASA Publications (Henrike Donner)**

ASA Monograph 51: the volume *Art and Aesthetics* (2014), edited by Raminder Kaur and Parul Dave-Mukherji, has now been distributed to ASA members.

The manuscript for the conference volume from the IUAES meeting in Manchester 2013 is in press.

A proposal for the monograph arising from the ASA's Decennial Conference in Edinburgh in 2014 is in development.

Thanks go to Simone Abram, who has now stepped down as Editor of *ASAonline*. The ASA recently welcomed a new journal editor, Cressida Jervis-Read.

### **Media and Publicity (Jamie Cross)**

Thanks to Mike Poltorak who has stepped down. Jamie Cross will now assist the ASA in developing a more proactive media strategy.

Work is currently underway with Nomad IT to design fliers to encourage ASA membership.

With some guidelines from the ASA committee, volunteers (Doug Farrer and Sussanah Crockford) are providing social media dissemination of ASA-related activities. ASA members are encouraged to support these endeavours.

### **Membership (Michelangelo Paganopoulos)**

Michelangelo Paganopoulos has recently taken on a new committee role as ASA Membership Officer, with a remit to expand the membership of the Association.

Following consultation with the ASA's members, some changes to membership processes have now been implemented, for example new members are now announced in the monthly e-newsletter. The ASA currently has 577 active members.

### **Administration**

**Rules of Procedure** Considerable effort has been made to update the ASA's Rules of Procedure. The proposed changes will be circulated to the membership and presented at the AGM for ratification.

**Website (Nomad IT)** The website has been updated in relation to the annals (now being replaced by links to departments' own web pages). Plans are underway to add a new page about the ASA's policy-related/lobbying activities.

### **Conferences (Marloes Janson)**

**ASA 2014** *Anthropology and Enlightenment*. The ASA's Decennial in Edinburgh (19-22 June) was hugely successful, with 650 attendees. As well as generating multiple outputs, this yielded a healthy surplus. Many thanks to STAR and also to Megan Caine (NomadIT) who managed the complex finances of the event. The ASA Conference Officer organised a survey about conferences subsequently, to which 208 attendees/members responded.

**ASA 2015** *Symbiotic Anthropologies: Theoretical Commensalities and Methodological Mutualisms*. This conference contains 40 panels, 270 papers, two labs, three plenaries, a debate and a film programme. The Firth Lecture will be delivered by Anna Tsing, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The conference incorporates a number of improvements suggested by the ASA's survey following the 2014 event.

**ASA 2016** The Durham ASA conference, *Footprints and Futures: The Time of Anthropology*, will take place on 4-7 June. The event will be greatly assisted by the success of the conveners in gaining \$20,000 in funding from Wenner-Gren. Thanks also to NomadIT for assisting with this application, and also for similarly advising the ASA 2017 conveners.

**ASA 2017 Joint conference with AAS/ASAANZ** Participation in the joint ASAANZ-AAS conference in New Zealand, in November 2014, enabled a useful joint planning meeting regarding the ASA-AAS-ASAANZ international conference in 2017. Entitled *Shifting States*, this will be convened by Richard Vokes and Alison Dundon at the University of Adelaide.

**CAOS** In February 2015 the ASA supported a conference launching UCL's new *Centre for the Anthropology of Sustainability*. This was a highly successful event, attracting leading environmental anthropologists and related scholars from around the world. The ASA was included in the conference's publicity material, and audiences were encouraged to join the Association.

**Conference Guidelines** Following a detailed survey of the ASA's membership, the ASA committee has promoted some new ideas for conferences, and has now incorporated these into the ASA Conference Guidelines.

**ASA Panels at other Conferences** At the AAA meeting in Washington, the AAA and WCAA both noted the potential for Association panels at conferences. The ASA committee would like to encourage this by (nominally) sponsoring an *ASA Panel* at these events. Proposals for such panels should be sent to the ASA two months prior to the conference panel proposal deadline.

## **ANTHROPOLOGY ORGANISATIONS**

**AAA** Several matters of common interest arose from the AAA meeting in Washington. A meeting of Anthropology Association Chairs noted that all are addressing similar issues regarding open data; open access; performance exercises and metrics; 'impact'; university governance and privatisation/corporatisation; and academic disenfranchisement. Several also noted difficulties in gaining participation and support from senior academics, and a consequent reliance for collective disciplinary well-being on early career researchers, often in precarious forms of employment.

Other associations internationally are also recognising the need for lobbying/long-term proactive strategies in relation to policy. There is considerable merging and federation going on, for example, the European Alliance of Social Sciences and Humanities; Networks for Science etc.

**WCAA** The WCAA is moving towards confederation with IUAES. This is now agreed in principle – but they expect to spend the next four years negotiating the details (aiming to complete by 2018). WCAA panels can be organised at any conference, with the approval of the WCAA organising committee: these must include international collaboration. David Shankland has been elected as WCAA Treasurer.

**Wenner-Gren** The foundation has a new media-communications scheme: a news portal plus grants to raise the profile of anthropology internationally to non-academics. It also has ongoing funding to assist internationalisation. ASA members may wish to consider applications that will promote UK anthropology internationally.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

**ASA Name Change** The joint ASAANZ/AAS conference in New Zealand permitted extensive discussion with members of both associations about the proposed name change for the ASA. Both groups expressed a strong preference for the ASA to maintain its Commonwealth links, and to retain its current nomenclature.

**Veronica Strang**

Chair, ASA

April 2015