

# Annual Business Meeting Of The Association Of Social Anthropologists

Held at University of Sussex  
on Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup> 2001

## 1. Present

Ann Akeroyd, Shirley Ardener, Hilary Callan, Angela Cheater, Pat Caplan, Jane Cowan, Audrey Dougall, Susan Drucker-Brown, John Eade, Jeanette Edwards, Richard Fardon, Sarah Franklin, David Gellner, John Gledhill, Sarah Green, Ralph Grillo, Kirsten Hastrup, Gustaaf Houtman, Wendy James, Helen Lambert, Bob Layton, Julie Marcus, Jon Mitchell, David Mills, Judith Okely, Mike Rowlands, Aidan Southall, Veronica Strang, Marilyn Strathern, Tanka Subba, Richard Wilson, James Woodburn, David Zammit

## 2. Apologies

Raymond Firth, Neil Montgomery, Jonathan Skinner, Bill Watson

## 3. Minute of the 2000 ABM were read and approved.

## 4. Announcements

Pat Caplan reported that the ASA had held a celebration lunch for Sir Raymond Firth's centenary at the New Zealand High Commission on Friday, March 30, which had been attended by 60 people.

Pat Caplan further noted that Mary Douglas's birthday was on the same day as Sir Raymond's (25 March) and that Richard Fardon, Suzette Heald and Adam Kuper had organised a celebratory function for her 80th birthday at the British Academy. Mary Douglas was made an Honorary Member of the ASA in 2000.

The ASA Committee had decided to honour the following senior anthropologists with Honorary Membership: Shirley Ardener, John Barnes, Elizabeth Colson, Scarlett Epstein, Ronnie Frankenberg, Philip Gulliver, Polly Hill, Adrian Mayer, Aidan Southall.

The deaths of the following members were reported with much regret: J. Boston, A. Harris, P. Gutkind, D. Posey and M.N. Srinivas.

Members were reminded about the Funding Bodies meeting to be held on Monday, April 2. Representatives would be attending from the AHRB, the British Academy, ESRC and Nuffield Foundation.

Sarah Green was thanked for producing the new ASA tee-shirt.

## Matters for report

**5. The Chair's Report** was distributed. Ralph Grillo welcomed its upbeat tone and forward looking agenda. Pat Caplan replied that she was sorry to be leaving the committee as Chair but was certain that the new Committee would develop its own momentum.

**6. Secretary:** John Eade explained that he had not produced a report since all the issues he wished to report on were either covered in the Chair's report or by the Agenda.

**7. Treasurer's Report:** John Eade spoke to the report Jonathan Skinner had already provided. John Eade noted that although in 2000 there had been a net surplus of £1,384, this did little to offset the 1999 deficit of £5,738. Losses made on the 1998 and 1999 conferences were compounded by investment in CD-ROMs of the first ten volumes of the ASA Monographs series which had still to be recouped. The situation had been made worse in the short term by delays in the publication of ASA monographs, although several would shortly appear at the same time. The 2000 Annual Conference may have made a profit, although this had been put in doubt by SOAS's bill for the conference organisers' expenses.

He noted that the ASA relies largely on income from membership fees and royalties to offset costs incurred in producing the Annals every two years, administration and travel costs, and conference expenses.

Angela Cheater inquired whether costs could be cut by sending fee reminders to members by email. Audrey Dougall, Administrator, explained that 75% of the total membership was on email so some correspondence had to be done by surface mail. She also noted that members could pay by Visa but not by Mastercard. Pat Caplan suggested that it should be made clearer that fees could be paid by Visa. In reply to a question from Hilary Callan, it was explained that members are immediately reinstated once they had paid their overdue fees.

John Gledhill suggested that people could update their details more easily if they were put on the website.

**Raymond Firth Centenary Fund:** it was noted that this was close to £10K. It was hoped that the sum would increase over time and could be used for an occasional lecture as well as to support students. It had been suggested that the first such occasional lecture might be held at the 2003 Decennial conference in Manchester.

## **8. Committee Reports**

**Standing Conference of Heads of Anthropology Departments (SCHAD):** John Gledhill was thanked for his incredible efforts on behalf of the discipline. Pat Caplan noted that the ASA had worked closely with John and that his would be a difficult act to follow.

**Publications:** Wendy James reported on the progress in negotiations with Routledge over a Readers series involving as editors both herself and Bill Watson, who was currently in Indonesia. Routledge was also publishing new volumes in the Monographs and Methods series, although these would probably not appear before 2002. The CD-ROMs were selling slowly.

The website was being revamped by John Gledhill and Neil Montgomery and was being used more than hitherto. John Gledhill encouraged everyone to send him information for the News section. It was suggested that some pictures from the Raymond Firth Centenary Lunch might be put on the site.

In response to Ralph Grillo's question about arranging a discount for members buying the Routledge Readers series, Wendy James said that she would discuss the suggestion with the Routledge representatives at the conference and the information about this would be put on the website.

**Academy of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences (ALSISS):** Pat Caplan explained the background to the creation of the Academy in which the ASA was represented by John Eade on behalf of the Learned Societies and by our Academicians (Judith Ennew, Ronnie Frankenberg and Hastings Donnan). John Eade reported that the Academy had invited nominations for the next election in June 2001 and three members had been proposed by the Committee

**Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (CSAP):** David Mills, the half-time Coordinator for Anthropology, spoke to his report. He explained that CSAP had replaced the National Network for Teaching and Learning Anthropology and was intended to support a culture of research as well as specific projects. A conference would be held in the near future.

## **Matters for discussion**

### **9. Revised Rules of Procedure**

These were distributed, and a new paragraph at the beginning of the document was agreed. People can write to the Committee if they have any objections.

### **10. ASA/RAI collaboration**

Pat Caplan reported that the appointment of a new Director of the RAI had provided an opportunity to consider closer collaboration between the two organisations. A joint ASA-RAI Working Party had been set up and two meetings had already been held. Issues discussed included sharing a database, fundraising and communicating with members. A joint questionnaire concerning current services provided by the two bodies would be distributed soon. One suggestion was to establish a joint membership fee at postgraduate level. In due course Anthropology In Action might want to join in. Hilary Callan, RAI Director, reported that the ASA Chair and Secretary had been quick to contact her after her appointment and that the negotiations had received strong support from the RAI Council.

### **11. ASA Committee**

Pat Caplan reported that John Gledhill, Wendy James, Bill Watson and Richard Wilson were leaving the Committee as well as herself. She thanked Richard Wilson for revising the ASA Ethical Guidelines, producing the ASA-RAI leaflet and for co-organising such a successful Annual Conference. The Committee proposed that two new areas would be covered in the new Committee – PR/Publicity/Media, and Outreach to practitioners and those in non-anthropology departments. Those nominated for elections were Richard Fardon as the new Chair, Julie Marcus for Commonwealth Liaison, Christina Toren - Publicity, Marcus Banks - Media, and Sarah Pink – Outreach. These nominations were all agreed.

### **12. New members**

The names of the following were read out and were duly elected to membership of the ASA: D. MacLeod, B. Campbell, P. Thomas, M. Svasek, A. Schulenburg, J. Dash, R. Vincent, R. Goberman-Hill, M. Mills, R. Salih, B. Riccio, N. Al-Ali, M. Mangahas, G. De Neve, D. Anderson.

A question was raised whether the term 'the Commonwealth' had been deleted from the ASA's title. It was explained that the title remains 'the ASA of the UK and the Commonwealth'; although the ASA is predominantly a UK organisation, the membership of non-UK citizens is important and should be continued. In 2002 the Commonwealth connection would be confirmed by the ASA conference to be held at Arusha in Tanzania.

### **13. Conferences**

Members were reminded that besides the 2002 conference at Arusha, the 2003 Decennial would be held at Manchester. It was agreed that the 2005 conference be held at Durham. Shirley Ardener suggested that conferences should not be booked too far in advance, but Pat Caplan advised that a long lead time was needed for planning purposes. She also noted that we must have very tight agreements with host institutions in order to ensure that the ASA received a fair share of the conference profits.

#### **14. Caroline White, ASA member at the University of Natal**

A paper had been circulated about this case and the following questions were raised during discussion: Should the ASA get involved in openly supporting Caroline White? What has been going on at the University of Natal Anthropology department? What was happening to social anthropology as a discipline in South Africa? Should we contact the local anthropology associations?

The following points were made as these questions were discussed –

- a) Ralph Grillo argued that Caroline White was an ASA member and therefore should receive the ASA's support. James Woodburn mentioned the precedent of the ASA Committee's support for Stephan Feuchtwang when he was dismissed from SOAS for which Stephan had been very grateful.
- b) The new ASA Committee could pursue the question of what was happening to social anthropology as a discipline in South Africa with local anthropology associations.
- c) Wendy James suggested that a donation be made by the ASA to help defray expenses incurred by Caroline White in fighting the case.

The following proposal was agreed by 31 members attending the meeting, nem con:

1. the Association offers moral support regretting the circumstances under which Prof. Caroline White was dismissed from her post at the University of Natal.
2. The Association offers her both moral support and a donation for her legal expenses.
3. The Association should establish a Working Party to liaise with Anthropology Associations in South Africa and should seek to inform itself about the local situation in order to offer whatever support local anthropological associations deemed appropriate.

#### **AOB**

A vote was passed thanking Pat Caplan for all her efforts on behalf of the ASA as its Chair from 1997-2001.