



The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

DRAFT TO BE APPROVE AT AGM 2010

Annual General Meeting

7th April 2009 12.45pm (lunch provided)

University of Bristol

MINUTES

Present: John Gledhill (Chair), Simone Abram (Sec) Raminder Kaur, James Staples, Sam Hurn, Penelope Dransart, Anthony Knight, Aleksandar Boskovic, Robert Wallis, Jenny Blain, Marcus Banks, Jonathan Skinner, Jackie Waldren, Piers Locke, Garry Marvin, Roy Ellen, Madalina Florescu, Catherine Degnen, Ian Fairweather, Elizabeth Tonkin, John Argyle, James Fairhead, Judith Okely.

1) Apologies

David Parkin, Glenn Bowman, Henrietta Moore, Richard Fardon, Marilyn Strathern, Pat Caplan, Wendy Gunn, Nayanika Mukherjee

2) Minutes of the last AGM held at LSE on 17th March 2008

Approved with one correction – under Treasurer's report, the second paragraph should read 'why the current unrestricted funds have dropped to only £865'.

3) Matters Arising

Included in the Agenda

4) Election of officers: Chair, Media, Secretary

James Fairhead was elected and congratulated on taking up the position of Chair of the ASA on the retirement of John Gledhill.

Garry Marvin was elected and welcomed as replacement for Georgie Born as Media Officer.

The secretary agreed to remain in post for a further year to overlap with the new chair. The chair thanked Simone for serving the extra time, having taken up the post early in 2006.

5) Matters for Report

a) Report from Chair

JG reiterated the thanks to everybody who has served on the committee during his term of office and emphasized his appreciation of their dedication and support. The chair offered a summary of his report (which is available on the ASA website). He outlined his responses to consultations on ERIH, ESRC funding and training strategies, and on Research Ethics frameworks. He drew the meeting's attention the question of relevance the Academy of Social Sciences for the ASA (item 10 on the Agenda) and noted that the ASA has in the past nominated people to the Academy of Social Science, but has been disappointed in the return on the fee of £185, with meetings are arranged at the last minute when few members can attend (certainly from outside London).

Chair also summarized ASA response to a consultation by English Heritage on an

appeal by British Druids on reburial of remains. He raised the question of why it is felt to be necessary to show 'real' bones in museum displays rather than good facsimiles.

b) Report from Hon. Treasurer

The treasurer reported that the picture was much rosier than last year with a balance of £16,000 through a combination of savings – in postage and printing of Annals now they are online – and reduced costs – including in committee expenses. Subscriptions have also increased, as have royalties from book sales and conference income, which was about doubled from last year.

Subs are currently around £17,000 without the new increase, and this should thus rise to £20,000. Around £1000 is still to be collected in subs. Income from Auckland is still to be confirmed. The ASA bank account is now generating only around 1,5% in interest (compared with over 5% last year). This includes the Firth fund, which is used to fund postgraduate students and guest lectures.

The Treasurer encouraged members to help raise royalties by using ASA monographs and including them where possible/relevant on course reading lists. Accounts are now centralized with the Co-op. Firth fund is now in the Coop deposit account.

(agenda item 10) Treasurer proposed that the ASA committee wish to support the World Council for Anthropological Associations – this is based in Brazil, but is struggling to maintain administration. The ASA committee suggested a contribution of £300 to encourage other members to contribute towards a more efficient administration. This was accepted.

Treasurer also proposed that the ASA withdraw from the Academy of Social Sciences for the reasons laid out in the Chair's report.

Roy Ellen asked if it was the successor of ALCISS – he noted that we joined ALCISS when he was hon sec. and Edwin Ardener was chair. At that time they felt they could give it the benefit of the doubt even if it appeared not to be very effective, if only because it was better to be in than out. He noted that there is no reason why we should not withdraw now and rejoin at a later date if we believe it is becoming more effective. Marcus Banks suggested that the RAI might be a better candidate to join than the ASA. Roy Ellen felt that RAI council might not necessarily support ACSS as they are also making cuts at present.

Jonathan Skinner noted that the issue of nominations came up before, since Ronnie Frankenburg was nominated but felt unsupported as a member, and if the ASA withdraws altogether, it may make members feel less supported. JG shared this sentiment, but noted that members are also free to withdraw, especially if they had not been told how much it would cost when they were nominated.

John Gledhill suggested that ASA could decide not to pay, and tell ACSS that we are not satisfied with their performance.

James Fairhead asked whether there were circumstances where it could be useful to be a member of the academy. JG suggested that there might be, yet on the issue of Combatting Terrorism/Radicalisation in 2007, they were not supportive of the joint efforts of ASA/BSA/DSA. It could also have the opposite effect by being the lowest common denominator.

Penny Dransart said that from a Lampeter perspective, this is yet another body based in London which pays no attention to grave problems for Anthropology in Wales, and they cannot see the benefits of being members.

JG requested a show of hands on withdrawing. 18 agreed.

Action: New Chair will write to AcSS outlining why the AGM decided we are not willing to continue our subscription.

6) Membership issues

a) Confirmation of new members

A list of confirmed new members was read to the meeting. A list of applications pending was also read out for information. No objections were raised.

7) Publications

James Staples reported that we have 2 monographs in process, running slightly late on the ASA07 volume, *Anthropology of Tourism*, which should be received in July and will be published early 2010. The volume from New Zealand should be out in good time later that year. He also noted that the committee will ask Veronica Strang to send papers not included in the volume be submitted to ASAonline. A general call for papers to ASAonline is also current. Simone noted that ASAonline has one paper published so far, but several in the pipeline including special collections. She encouraged members to submit papers to this fully refereed publication series. She also noted a suggestion from David Mills to include papers on Education in Anthropology, which the meeting agreed was a good idea.

John noted that ASAFilm had a limited number of entries, but Trevor Marchand intends to liaise with course directors of visual anthropology courses to integrate 5-minute films in their courses.

8) ASA Conferences

a) Report on ASA Conference 2008 (New Zealand/Australia)

A report on the conference was displayed on the data projector and accepted by the meeting. The committee reported that the conference had attracted a wide range of delegates, including a significant number from the UK who managed to find funding. The committee thanked the British Academy for supporting their attendance at the conference. Secretary proposed that the meeting congratulate Veronica and Mark on an extremely successful conference. Meeting agreed and applauded the conference.

b) Update on ASA Conference 2010

Jonathan Skinner reported on progress towards the ASA2010 conference at Queen's Belfast, which will be entitled 'The Interview – theory, practice, society'. The conference seeks to consider the relationship between the interview and anthropology, the nature of the interview, theory and practice. The conference will be managed by NomadIT, and will be held at Stranmills College, QUB Belfast.

c) 2011.

Penny Dransart invited ASA to hold its 2011 conference in Lampeter. Accommodation restrictions make April a very difficult time to obtain accommodation, so she invited the ASA to hold the conference in September 2011. The invitation is supported by the Vice-Chancellor. The university is currently in merger talks with Trinity University College Camarthen so will by 2011 be a new institution.

With colleagues Piers Locke, Sam Hurn and Nick Champion, the theme proposed is Human Interactions with Living Things, due to a particular research strength with Anthrozoology. The proposed theme aimed 'to examine and to reinvestigate human interactions with non-human animals, other non-human entities and organisms', a definition wide enough to include aspects of Medical Anthropology, questions about transplants, and a wide range of related issues of interest to anthropologists. The invitation was gratefully received and accepted.

Jenny Blain suggested that it would need to be early September to avoid clashes with new terms starting. James Staples noted that term starts early in Scotland, and requested that organizers consult with Scottish departments on dates.

9) Media issues – correspondence with Ofcom

(see Chair's report) Chair outlined the exchange with Ofcom on the Cicada issue and the committee's ambition to discuss ethics of film making. The meeting supported the committee's actions in this regard. Judith Okely suggested that since the 'Ross' affair, the BBC might be more sensitive to producers' and ethical responsibilities. Garry Marvin suggested that he will contact the Independent Producers' Association to pursue this avenue.

10)ASA membership of ACSS

see under Treasurer's report.

11) Members' resolutions

None received.

Several members left the meeting at this point to attend panels.

12)AOB.

Chris Knight from UEL told the meeting that he was suspended 3 weeks ago for having been reported (by London Evening Standard) to have held a placard saying 'Eat the Bankers' which was taken as an active threat. His email was immediately shut down, delaying the publication of his book on language that was to be launched at this conference. The alternative G20 summit was cancelled by UEL, who turned away notable speakers (such as the now very elderly Tony Benn) and refused to offer them hospitality or refreshments (which were offered only to police officers).

Piers Locke asked what the ASA can or should do. Chris knight asked for words of support. Ian Fairweather suggested writing a letter to UEL. Simone noted that such a statement from the ASA could only legitimately address the future of Anthropology at UEL. Judith Okely asked whether Chris had thought of using British libel law to prosecute the Evening Standard. He agreed that this was a good idea.

Hon Sec noted the committee's proposal to consult on conference development, having circulated a note to that effect, but that there was not sufficient time to discuss it at the meeting.

Hon Sec thanked John Gledhill for his unstinting devotion to the ASA over the past 4 years and presented him with a gift symbolic of better things to come.

The chair brought the meeting to a close at 14.30.