

Report from the Chair, 2009 AGM

Since this is my last report as Chair, I hope that I will be forgiven for beginning it with some reflections on the achievements of the past four years as a whole, mentioning also a few of the challenges that ASA faces in the future. The first thing that I should say is that what has been achieved during my period as Chair has reflected the hard work of exceptionally dedicated and capable committee members, including our administrator, Rohan Jackson. I thank everyone who has served on the committee during my period for their support and service, secure in the knowledge that my successor will benefit from the continuity that is built into the ASA's rotation of office holders.

Let me begin with matters that may seem mundane but are very important for the Association's future ability to concentrate its energies on our core intellectual activities and achieve a smoothly running, low overhead, administration. Under the streamlined procedures we have introduced, membership numbers have been growing slowly but surely, reaching 580 just before the Auckland conference in December last year. We have taken steps to ensure that the ASA is inclusive and welcoming to the diversity of colleagues who use their anthropology training in their professional lives, and to postgraduates. It is also important that our members are now mostly *fully paid-up* members, a situation that should be sustainable after we complete the transition from the old standing orders to variable direct debits. Along with the movement of our funds to the Co-op bank, this enables us to put the ASA's banking arrangements on a more modern, and a more ethical, footing. Although the financial crisis has hit the income accruing from the ASA's invested funds, the subscription increase agreed at the last AGM and efficiency savings in our administration, including the innovation of having some of our committee meetings online, mean that the Association is in good financial shape. For this I would like to express a sincere debt of gratitude to both the treasurers who have served during my period, Lisette Josephides and Raminder Kaur, and again to Rohan for facilitating many aspects of these changes.

I feel a slight disappointment that the longstanding project to replace the old directory of members with an expanded, searchable and member updatable online database will not now come to fruition on my watch, although its completion is now imminent. This year did, however, bring the first online publication of our Annals, along with other crucial initiatives that have only become possible with a redesigned website. We have launched the ASA Online series and our first short film competition. Although these initiatives are still in their infancy, and we clearly need to do more to cultivate the genre of the five minute ethnographic film as well as to overcome the barriers to open access publishing created by academic audit cultures, these are crucial steps towards offering members more services and for projecting the public face of British anthropology and the ASA itself to the wider world. Visitors to the site can now read Janice Body's 2008 Firth Lecture, given at the LSE conference on *The Pitch of Ethnography* last March, and join others from around the world in reading or posting comments in the Association's thematic blog. All these initiatives have reflected intense amounts of work on the part of present and former members of the ASA committee, of whom I would like to single out for special thanks on multiple counts, Simone Abram, whose dedication as secretary has taken a lot of weight off my shoulders, Trevor Marchand, Alberto Corsin-Jiménez and Nayanika Mookherjee. I would also like to thank all the friends and colleagues from inside and outside UK

social anthropology who have given generously of their time and expertise to contribute to the blog.

My tenure as Chair has seen some truly excellent annual conferences, attracting a broad international participation, and tackling themes that have attracted participants from other disciplines as well as our own. The success of recent conferences now leaves us in the enviable position of being able to reflect on the problems as well as advantages of the current scale of participation. But I think few members will lament the increase in the number of postgraduates wishing to present papers and the tremendous interest that so many scholars from around the world have been showing in organising sessions and presenting papers in our annual forum. This past year has seen a tremendously successful overseas conference, organized by old friends and longstanding Association members in Auckland, and held jointly with the New Zealand and Australian Associations. Despite the distance and costs involved, UK participation was impressive in numbers as well as quality, and many of the sessions were truly eye opening for all concerned. We were able to use the surplus handed back to the ASA from Pnina Werbner's extremely successful Cosmopolitanism conference at Keele in 2006, along with a generous donation from the RAI, to subsidise the attendance of some participants. So this proved a model that definitely has a future. The dialogue with archaeology embedded in this year's Bristol conference, and the interaction with multi-disciplinary tourism studies at the London Met conference in 2007, have all shown that the ASA is contributing to the projection of the discipline as an open one, which is likely to prove an asset as we confront some of the funding challenges facing the social sciences and humanities in the years ahead, both in the UK and globally. We are continuing to develop the Firth Lecture as a major event in the annual calendar, and are especially pleased to be able to welcome Professor Tapati Guha-Thakurta from India to give this year's lecture in Bristol. Further interchanges with scholars from South Asia are likely to feature in future initiatives, and another of my activities has been to continue Richard Fardon's active participation in the development of the World Council of Anthropological Associations, of which ASA was a founder member.

High profile international conferences produce excellent publications, and these are not restricted to the ASA monographs series published by Berg, as demonstrated by the number of other books and journal special issues now emerging from ASA conference panels. The monograph is, however, one of the major benefits of membership. On this front, we have had no problems maintaining quality, and although I have to report that factors beyond our control will delay the publication of the monograph from the 2007 conference, there is every reason to hope that progress on the book from the 2008 meeting will be sufficiently rapid to ensure that members are compensated for the absence of a volume this calendar year by receiving two volumes next year. We are also pressing forward with the production of the state of the art multi-volume *Handbook of Social Anthropology* for Sage, under the general editorship of Richard Fardon, supported by Olivia Harris, Mark Nuttall, Trevor Marchand, Cris Shore and Richard Wilson as volume editors, with an introduction by Jean and John Comaroff. An impressive range of contributors will give freely of their time to make this imaginatively conceived volume a landmark, and all royalties will be donated to ASA to contribute towards the funding of our postgraduate small grants programme. This is another example of the Association's ability to mobilise the

services of a dedicated group of longstanding and younger members to build for the future and sustain its core mission to promote the subject.

All these matters should be of interest to all ASA members, inside and outside the UK. I am always conscious in writing these reports that much of what the ASA does in terms of representing the professional interests of anthropologists living and working in the UK is of lesser interest to members abroad, even if it is a regrettable fact that the path that the UK pursues of “higher educational reform”, funding arrangements for teaching and research, postgraduate training regimes and research and academic evaluation often serves as a model for future (and generally unwelcome) developments elsewhere. So comparing notes internationally on these issues can be a useful exercise. Indeed, I have participated in several exercises of this kind as Chair, most recently at a meeting on the future of anthropology in Europe (with Europe defined inclusively enough to include Russia) in Madrid in September 2008, where I was asked to give a keynote lecture on the British experience. Such encounters provide opportunities to discuss intellectual trends as well as state interventions and the onward march of bibliometrics and other evaluation tools, and my participation in them has fortunately not had to be funded from ASA resources. This was also true of the meeting of WCAA Association Heads held at the University of Osaka in July 2008, which was entirely and generously funded by our Japanese hosts. Improving the international organization of the anthropology community is another challenge for the future but it is one on which I think we are making significant progress, in Europe, transatlantically, and globally.

From the purely British point of view, one of the most important issues that I had to address as Chair, early in my tenure, was the ESRC’s International Benchmarking Review of the subject, from which we emerged with flying colours and a higher profile in ESRC affairs in some respects, though not, it must be conceded, with significant improvements in funding for research or postgraduate training, nor, indeed, better representation on ESRC boards, despite considerable efforts on all these fronts. This is another area where the future is likely to prove challenging, for reasons detailed briefly later in this report, but the IBR did provide a convincing demonstration that social anthropology in the UK has continued to maintain its reputation for excellence internationally.

Here I also want to thank Hastings Donnan and all the other colleagues who served on the sub-panel assessing anthropology (as a whole) in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise. This was a particularly demanding kind of service, and we should be truly grateful for the way it was performed by all involved. RAE 2008 confirmed the generally high standard of anthropological research in the UK and HEFCE funding for the discipline will increase, by 10%, in 2009-2010, although what will actually happen in departments the repercussions will also be influenced by the broader impact of RAE 2008 on institutions’ funding, which are negative for many universities in which leading social anthropology departments are located. Furthermore, we have a whole new ball game to look forward to in the future, with the new Research Excellence Framework (REF) that will replace the RAE still evolving under active discussion, while deepening economic crisis prompts further discussions about future priorities in higher education and government spending on research. We will be having more discussion of all these issues at a Head of Departments meeting in Bristol immediately after this conference ends, and since Hastings will be able to give

us the benefit of his better informed reflections on the RAE process and current involvement in the discussions of the REF, I will not attempt to say anything more about them myself here.

I will say, however, that although, in the face of remorseless consultations about seemingly endless systemic transformations, I sometimes feel like one of R.H. Tawney's peasants, up to my neck in water waiting for the fatal ripple to drown me, I still think that there are causes for optimism about social anthropology's ability to maintain its place strongly in a changing world. On at least some issues, such as the undesirability of using citation indices as the main criterion in assessment of research impact and significance, we find our voice strongly supported, including by ESRC. The results of the last four years of disciplinary evaluation in the UK do not solve our all problems but they certainly help, and what they ultimately reflect is the continuing intellectual vibrancy and relevance of social anthropology, in the UK and many other countries.

One of my major frustrations as incoming Chair was that it proved impossible to maintain ASA's very successful national training workshops for postgraduates, due to the combination of the shift to full economic cost funding and the priorities adopted by the ESRC Research Training Board. Although that situation has not changed, ASA has sought to re-enter this field through collaboration with C-Sap (the Subject Network for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics) and to this end we have co-opted Ian Fairweather, C-Sap Academic Coordinator for Anthropology, onto the ASA committee.

Turning back to wider issues of equal interest to non-UK based members, my tenure has also involved us in some principled battles, in particular against certain aspects of the securitization of research agendas, where we found we had strong allies in sociology and development studies amongst other fields. These issues have been described in earlier reports and debated as AGM resolutions, but we remain active on other fronts that raise important ethical issues, such as the use of indigenous peoples as a vehicle for a certain type of "reality television", as described later in this report. ASA does not seek to become a campaigning organization, but it does seem important that we address issues where our professional ethics and our professional expertise make a public stance desirable and useful, and we have also sought to maximise impact by collaborating with RAI in these areas.

One final point which is certainly relevant to the future vigour and standing of the ASA is the fact that we now have a new Life President in Dame Marilyn Strathern, memorably invested in her new office in Auckland with the support, through a precious gift and song, of our Maori hosts. Although fieldwork in Papua New Guinea prevents Marilyn from attending this conference, her career-long dedication to the profession and to the ASA is an asset from which I have greatly benefited as Chair, as will my successors.

I now turn, as briefly as possible, to a more detailed account of my activities as Chair since the last AGM.

1. Further to my last AGM report I did finally receive a response from AHRC on the **European Reference Index for the Humanities** Journal lists. Basically AHRC

said that they had only been involved with the project from the outset “on the basis of lists which fall within the AHRC remit”, and were not consulted on the lists for Social Anthropology. They have sent my letter to ESRC and claim that ESRC “has already expressed its concerns about lack of consultation with ESRC and UK national associations covering the social sciences” to ESF, with which AHRC’s Yvonne Hawkins, Director of Knowledge and Evaluation, understands ESRC has been in discussion with ESF “concerning further developments”. As I mentioned earlier in this report, I participated in a meeting on the future of anthropology in Europe in Madrid in September 2008, and this in fact provided me with an opportunity to revisit the vexed question of ERIH with the recently hired (and therefore entirely blameless!) young woman now in charge of the project, which the European Science Foundation hopes to extend beyond journals. She made it quite clear that AHRC failed to do what ESF asked it to do with regard to ERIH in the case of anthropology, and probably didn’t do all that it should have done even in the case of the other disciplines in its core constituency. Furthermore, the one member of the ERIH anthropology panel that drew up the initial lists who was present in Madrid said he himself was concerned by the lack of transparency and system in the original decisions, complaining that he had been constantly harassed by phone calls from editors from Eastern and Central Europe to get their journals boosted up a category. The people now responsible for ERIH have now made a big effort to get better data and to make the ranking consistent with the criteria and evidence available, but at the time of the Madrid meeting they still faced the problem that response rates from publishers and journal editors remained at 34%, probably a reflection of the lack of confidence which the scheme has generated. In the discussion we reached a consensus that (a) like it or not, the categories were being read as a ranking and (b) the final list would have to be convincing in the light of that. If ERIH is to be extended to cover other forms of publishing, they really have to get this right. AHRC has in fact said that it would not view such a proposal with enthusiasm before the work on journals is made more robust and that ERIH list rankings cannot at present be used as a measure of quality. But the fact that ESF considers anthropology to belong to the Humanities and AHRC has no desire to represent anthropology or even consult us is a continuing problem. No doubt controversy over all forms of publication ranking and the meaning of citation scores in the social sciences and humanities will continue to be a major issue. Alternatives to ISI such as Scopus do not seem much less problematic to me. Anyone interested in pursuing the debates around bibliometrics and evaluation should read the wonderful talk that Don Brenneis gave at the Madrid meeting, available at <http://www.ucm.es/info/antrosim/esp/documentos.htm>.

2. A few other points about the **Madrid meeting**. Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, it was a development of the Wenner-Gren funded *Mapping European Anthropology* project. Some other aspects of it bear reporting. It was interesting to see that other Europeans thought the British were particularly good at seizing the opportunities that EU funding provided (though there was a lot of complaint about the amount of report writing that principal investigators ended up doing rather than research as such). We also had quite a lot of discussion of the Bologna agenda, especially with regard to Masters courses. I remain puzzled by the fact that discussions in my own institution (and I imagine elsewhere) seem to be totally detached from Bologna if not diametrically working against it, and ASA

may want to do more work in the future on how we see the future of anthropology training here relating to the future that is being shaped in Europe.

3. **ESRC representation and research grant success rates.** ESRC failed to select a single one of our three nominees to vacant Board positions in the first round of nomination calls. We also failed to get David Mills onto the Research Resources Board in a further call for nominations. The ASA nominees to the ESRC Virtual College, Cristina Toren and Pnina Werbner, were appointed. Sara Randall from UCL is now on the Research Grants Board, Harvey Whitehouse having left it, but not as an ASA nominee, and probably not as an anthropologist as distinct from a demographer, although Sarah's invitation might have reflected ESRC trying to kill two birds with one stone. Sara is willing to feed back general information on the state of play in terms of applications and success rates from RGB, subject, of course, to normal confidentiality conditions, and I had a virtual conversation with her and Tim Ingold (our last ASA nominated RGB member) about that. ESRC already concedes that it has been unable to meet its target of 25% success rate for all grant applications. Currently the success rate on standard grants is down to below 15%. Social anthropology fell to twelfth place amongst all subjects in terms of the ratio of applications to grants awarded in 2007, but went to first place in terms of this measure in 2008. The total numbers of grants awarded is, however, so small that such a measure has little meaning, and the implication of the current amount of funding available is that standard grant applications which attract universal praise from reviewers and high priority scores may still not get funded, which is dispiriting for applicants and peer reviewers alike.
4. In large measure the situation just described reflects the transition to the **Full Economic Cost** system of research funding, which impacts on the costs of most postdoctoral fellowships as well as research grants awarded by the British Academy as well as research councils such as ESRC and AHRC. With only 80% of FEC actually covered by external funding, the new regime has also created problems within many institutions over the way the funds received are allocated to the research project and principal investigators, including the buy out of the time researchers are dedicating to the project, because of the need to cover the remaining 20% of FEC. But the vastly increased cost to external funding bodies of every grant awarded under FEC obviously affects the number of projects that can be funded. It also seems that some institutions are no longer willing or able to contribute their share of the costs of grants that remain outside the FEC framework, such as Leverhulme postdoctoral fellowships.
5. **ESRC strategic consultation.** The problems that the low success rate for ESRC standard grants posed was one of the points that I made in ASA's written response to ESRC's consultation on its strategic plan, formulated, as always, in consultation with HODs. Our suggestion was that resources be transferred from the budget for larger scale investments to the standard grants programme, but it will come as no surprise that ESRC does not accept that the former may not offer the greater bang for bucks in terms of costs relative to academic outcomes that is attributed to them. In January I attend a "town meeting" in Manchester in which Ian Diamond, ESRC CEO, gave a presentation responding to the responses to the consultation. It transpired that no major changes are envisaged from the directions already set by the last strategic plan. "Impact" will be a watchword in research evaluation, and one aspect of this that Ian Diamond stressed was that applied research and research that produced reports rather than academic publications should not be valued less than academic publications, a position that continues to

seem somewhat at odds with the principles enshrined in the RAE and looking likely to be replicated in the REF that will succeed it. There were plenty of assurances that ESRC would continue to fund a variety of different kinds of research, that fundable research did not necessarily have to claim any direct social or practical “impact”, much less utility for the UK economy, and that it was not necessary to relate one’s project to ESRC themes (which will not undergo radical changes, though there will be a few additions and tweaks). But although most of those present at the meeting felt a sense of relief on hearing that no major shifts were going to occur in ESRC’s strategic direction in the near future, few took comfort from Ian Diamond’s response to my question about the low standard grant success rate, which was that this problem would not be solved by redistribution within the existing budget priorities and would depend on future government funding decisions.

6. **ESRC postgraduate training.** ASA also made representations on this question in its response to ESRC’s strategic consultation, and members will no doubt already be aware of the tremendous amount of work that Jonathan Spencer, David Mills and other colleagues put into ESRC-sponsored studies designed to address some of the problems that cause such frequent complaints about the ESRC training regime. Since ESRC has still not released his report, there will be less awareness of the study that Glenn Bowman conducted on research funding and postgraduate training in social anthropology. Despite these energetic efforts by social anthropologists to engage with ESRC policy on these issues, the proposed new system for postgraduate training that ESRC also opened up for discussion at its January “town meetings” around the country, runs in very different directions to those that anthropologists have consistently advocated. In essence, ESRC plans to abandon the “recognition” of disciplinary outlets and concentrate resources on new Doctoral Training Centres, to which quota awards would be attached, and Doctoral Training Units, not given quotas but eligible for other kinds of ESRC postgraduate training awards. These new training entities may be located in single institutions or be constituted by multiple institution consortia, but all will be focused on providing “inter-disciplinary” generic training, and it is the quality of that which will secure their recognition. There are a lot of further details that it is not appropriate to go over in this report, since the regime is still subject to some negotiation at the time of writing it. But it is clear from the response that I received at the Manchester meeting from the LSE’s Judith Rees, Chair of the Training and Development Board, that the only guarantee that social anthropology will retain even the number of quota awards that it had in the last distribution under the old recognition regime is the “steer” that the Training Board will give the centres and units created on what discipline areas should receive what. The main priorities will continue to be economics and quantitative research. So there is a clear danger that concentration of what is already limited ESRC funding for training our postgraduates will increase yet further under a regime that is clearly designed to create “centres of training excellence”. Furthermore, the generic agenda has advanced, despite protests, and to some extent under an embrace of a mantra of “interdisciplinarity” that has no clear intellectual justification and is much more restrictive in scope than the actual interdisciplinary relations in which social anthropologists already engage. ESRC will now be leaving the content of discipline specific training up to institutions. I have communicated the collected views expressed by various colleagues about these proposals to Jeremy Neathey, the ESRC Deputy Director for Resources and Training. These include Scottish

protests that the disciplinary training consortia recently constructed in economics as well as social anthropology are now apparently to be superseded by a radically different approach. It is clear that there is a widespread discontent about the new model in a variety of disciplines, but also necessary to recognise that some institutions are very keen on embracing it for reasons of self-interest as potential “hubs”. There is a clear possibility that the new system could exclude even more excellent research units from easy access to ESRC postgraduate training funding, and this could be seen as yet another dimension of the broader problem that government seeks to concentrate resources to maintain “international competitiveness” in the face of global crisis, despite the fact that RAE 2008 has just demonstrated the wide distribution of excellence in social sciences and humanities research through a range of pre- and post-1992 universities.

7. The ESRC also saw fit to launch a consultation on its **Research Ethics Framework** (as a “living document”) in February, with a relatively short response deadline. I discussed this with Nayanika as Ethics Officer and also had some discussion with Jonathan Spencer and Pnina Werbner (as noted earlier, one of the anthropologists that we successfully nominated for the Virtual College), though I failed to get any input from heads of department, despite promptings. I hope that this means that institutional ethics committees are not causing problems for anthropologists and that the REF itself (with apologies for the unfortunate convergence of acronyms here) has not proved problematic. I therefore focused the comments that I made on behalf of ASA on the lessons that ESRC itself concedes were learned from the “Combating Terrorism” fiasco, suggesting that ESRC might put something about its own ethical responsibilities and systems for guaranteeing the independence of the research it sponsors, into the REF.
8. **Academy of Social Sciences.** This august body is under new management but continues to send invitations to meetings in London at impossibly short notice. On November 10th there was a hastily arranged meeting of affiliated learned society CEOs that I couldn’t attend. Email dialogue with Sally Hardy of the Regional Studies Association, convenor of this gathering, revealed that I am not the only member of this Academy to be perplexed about what it spends its subscriptions on. Even the room for this meeting had to be paid for by the participants, on top of travel costs and lunch. I did not receive the promised report on this meeting, though I did receive a report on a CEOs’ meeting held in London on 3 March to which I had not been invited. This may be because the ASA committee decided at its November meeting that it would not pay the latest subscription request, and would raise the issue of whether ASA wishes to continue to belong to the Academy again at the Bristol AGM. The Academy did, however, subsequently send three copies of its journal to ASA, which is supposed to be a benefit for association subscription, although they were delivered to Richard Fardon, despite my four years of trying to communicate. So it is difficult to believe that they could have been efficient enough to have noticed whether ASA paid its subscription or not. The committee also decided that we would not nominate anyone else as an individual academician: the costs increase every year, currently standing at £185, with a modest discount for paying by direct debit, so this has almost become more of a punishment than an honour, though the Academy does now sell academicians a more upmarket certificate to hang on their walls should they wish to impress their friends. There is clearly still a case for ASA belonging to a body that aims to speak for the whole of British social science across the range of government consultations and does play some role in boosting social science through the

debates and lectures that it organises. But in many ways we seem to have a more effective voice within the British Academy, which has been responsible for a number of significant reports (on peer reviewing, for example), as well as consultation responses that accord strongly with our views, over the last few years.

9. **Avebury Reburial.** In February I responded to an English Heritage consultation on the request by the Council of British Druids for the reburial of the human remains in the Alexander Keiller Museum in Avebury, on which we received the invaluable help and advice of Jenny Blain. We took the view that for the time being the remains should be retained in the museum, but that the question of whether real bones needed to be included in public displays would bear further thought. Although there were some methodological problems with the way English Heritage approached collection of evidence, the seriousness with which the issue had been taken and the dialogue that was opened up with the Druids seemed very welcome and the whole issue raises significant questions that it was good to see anthropologists asked about.
10. **CICADA Productions in Peru.** The activities in Peru of a British TV production company, Cicada, contracted to make reality TV programmes focused on the adventures amongst “lost” or “isolated” “tribes” of Mark (Anstice) and Olly (Steeds), attracted general media attention after the production crew were banned from re-entering the Manu National park following an outbreak of respiratory illness which led to fatalities amongst indigenous groups subject to special protective measures. ASA was approached by anthropologists with expertise in the area and commissioned a detailed report from Daniel Rodriguez, which is available on the website. Although the general controversy died down, and Cicada disclaimed wrongdoing, the information we received from anthropologists working on the area suggested that the company’s defence was flawed. We also felt and feel that the programme that Cicada did subsequently make outside the Manu national park raises further questions. To cut a long story short, Georgie Born as media officer took up this issue on two fronts. One was to work with the RAI to see if we can promote the introduction of an industry code of good practice through constructive dialogue with programme commissioners. The other was to make a complaint to Ofcom, the TV regulator, about this particular episode. As Georgie discovered, getting action from Ofcom is complicated by a number of issues, including the fact that they are a post-broadcast regulator. She did, however, establish that there might be an interest in looking at ethical issues that affected “vulnerable people” and on this basis I sent a letter to Ofcom, enclosing Daniel Rodriguez’s report and based on a draft that Georgie kindly prepared, with some minor amendments based on legal advice, given the seriousness of the accusations made in Peru against Cicada. Although an “informal investigation” was conducted of our complaint, the Cicada version of the story seemed to be accepted more or less at face value, and Ofcom maintained that the affair was outside its remit since the programme that was to be made in the Manu Park was not made or broadcast (directly contradicting points from Georgie’s notes on her conversations with Ofcom). I contacted our anthropological experts again and we have gone back to Ofcom with a detailed rebuttal of Cicada’s rebuttal, plus the observation that the programmes that have now been broadcast cannot be seen as separate from the original research trip by the production team since the programme concept has remained constant and it is only the location of the filming that had to change (after Cicada were banned from further filming inside

the park). Glenn Shepard, an expert on the Matsiguenka of twenty-five years standing, who actually spoke to the Cicada team and questioned the risks they seemed to be taking, has written his own response to Ofcom's response to me on the subject, which I included with ASA's reply. There, at the time of writing the matter rests, since we have not yet received a further response from Ofcom. Whatever happens, we feel that energetic pursuit of these issues is opening up space for broader debate and reflection and that even, as seems likely, nothing substantial should come of the approach to Ofcom, the limits of existing regulation could itself be an issue that could help sustain campaigning on the deeper questions. There is evidence from blogs associated with this particular programme that it not only raises a issues about documentary ethics as well as good taste, but is promoting irresponsible forms of adventure tourism. So hopefully with further efforts at venues such as the forthcoming RAI Film Festival in Leeds we can advance the broader campaign to secure an agreed industry set of ethical guidelines, which is the main reason for continuing to press the Cicada issue. I would like to thank Georgie for the work she put into this particular issue as media officer and for her broader service in this role, which she is relinquishing after her successor is elected at this AGM. There will be an opportunity for further discussion of these issues at the AGM itself.

John Gledhill