



# **The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth**

## **COMMITTEE MEETING – COLLATED PAPERS**

**19 Amherst Road, Manchester. 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2007, 12.00 – 17.30**

### **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of 9.3.07**
- 3. Matters arising**
- 4. ASA finances review and development plans**
- 5. Reports (Minimal and urgent verbal reports only please)**
  - a. Chair**
  - b. Administrator**
  - c. Treasurer**
  - d. Publications**
  - e. Media – new officer required**
- 6. Mary Douglas memorial**
- 7. Marilyn Strathern's retirement**
- 8. ASA conferences - review and plans**
  - a. Firth Lecture – LSE conference**
  - b. ASA 2007**
  - c. ASA 2008**
  - d. ASA 2009**
- 9. Dates of meetings 2007/8**

## Chair's Report

My main preoccupation since the ASA conference has been with the continuing saga of the ESRC "Radicalisation and Violence" call. But to begin with other things:

- (1) The ESRC has called for another meeting of the IBR steering committee to discuss "progress", which has been fixed for October 3<sup>rd</sup> in London. This will presumably give us the opportunity to discuss the decisions for next year with regard to postgraduate grants and training arrangements, inter alia, as well as the results of a survey of ESRC grant holders conducted by Glen Bowman.
- (2) I attended Mary Douglas's funeral and wrote a condolence letter to her daughter (both corporate and personal). Celebrating Mary's work should be something else to think about for ASA 2008.
- (3) I also wrote a letter to the widow of Peter Ucko (whom I knew well). Given his importance in transcending the archaeology-anthropology boundary this seemed appropriate, especially with ASA 2009 coming up.
- (4) As instructed by the AGM, I wrote to the ministers at the foreign and home offices responsible for Iraq and immigration. Kim Howells at the FCO did reply personally, and even saluted me with his own hand. The first paragraph of the letter conceded that Iraq was a disaster. The rest pointed out that the FCO has no say in immigration matters and was more formulaic. But I did at least appreciate his taking the matter seriously and acknowledging that this was an issue. The Home Office minister, Liam Byrne, will only accept correspondence from constituents or letters passed to him via MPs on the behalf of their constituents. When my MP passed the letter to him, he passed the matter to his parliamentary under-secretary, Joan Ryan, who sent my MP a completely formulaic response about asylum procedures and appeals. At no point did this letter recognize that this was a motion from a Learned Society, and I became Mr Gledhill the constituent of John Leech, MP. So it is basically a waste of time communicating with the Home Office.
- (5) I fielded a series of enquiries about "radicalisation and violence" from a journalist, Mandy Garner (a friend of Gustaaf's), who used to work for THES and published her piece in *The Independent* on June 15. I instructed her on what to ask ESRC (which remained economical with the truth) but prevented her from attributing anything to me or to the ASA. John Sidel in fact blew the gaffe on the resignations from the committee and I thought the article did more good than harm by making it clear that there were serious grounds for doubts about the "venture" without adding greatly to the risk factor. It did also report the ASA AGM Resolution, of course.

So now to radicalisation and violence itself. Following the HODs meeting I drafted a letter focusing on the governance issues as well as our basic objections to the call which was sent to all academic and lay members of ESRC Council (several of whom appeared to respond sympathetically in private emails, including David Walker of *The Guardian*). This letter was co-signed by BSA, the Sociology HODs and the DSA. The response was slow in coming but when it came represented a total rejection of all our arguments, though it offered a "dialogue" on how to avoid problems in the future. We responded to this with a reiteration of our objections, a call for any debate to be public and a reiterated call for an independent body to monitor the long-term impact of the

programme. These requests have also been rejected, and the ESRC Council Chair, Lord Adair Turner of Standard Chartered, took the view that “no amount of correspondence will resolve the differences of perspective on these important matters”. The dialogue as proposed will cover many issues not germane to the issues raised (though not without interest in themselves perhaps). It will also be controlled by ESRC, be an invitation only event and include a multitude of stakeholders. It is easier for committee members to read the letters (annexed) than for me to plod through their content in detail, but you will appreciate that a lot of correspondence went into forging this alliance of the unwilling, and that we have forged it is probably an achievement that we can build on, despite the disappointing results.

We should, I think, participate in the ESRC dialogue event, and see what we can do within it to shape the agenda. But I doubt that this will get to the heart of the matter posed by overseas research shaped by an interventionist security agenda and we will have to continue much of the debate now in public, and in the light of the research that actually gets funded. It may be necessary to demand further events, and the suspicion is clearly that this “dialogue” is cynically designed to put the lid back on the pot, though Marilyn Strathern takes the view that there is always an opening on these occasions to find a chink in the defences. Furthermore, the fact that there a lot of people outside anthropology now worrying about the nature of overseas research in the epoch of the war against terror (including other research council and DFID projects) suggests that there is plenty of scope for putting further pressure on ESRC not to do dangerous things in following the money outside this framework. So far, however, I can only report that we have been battering against a very solid brick wall with ESRC itself: it seems quite easy to silence doubters on ESRC Council and very difficult to make ESRC’s internal processes more transparent when the CEO does not wish them to be transparent.

The Academy of Social Sciences signed up to the first letter but then decided to offer its services as “honest broker” in future dialogues. I think we may need to discuss again whether there is any point in continuing to belong to it, but we can leave that until a future occasion.

## **Admin report**

- we have 540 members & all were invoiced a month ago. only £1.3k 2007 subs outstanding. £6k previous yrs arrears still on our books! all outstanding have been mailed a 10 day reminder, to be followed with a 48hr reminder in 10 days time. after that we will begin to terminate memberships (and arrears) - but will circulate list to committee for a final personal touch to friends/colleagues!
- new website design template is finished/tidied, and 'new site' will be available for comm review in ~2wks. once approved i will move the domain (site and email) to a different host. hopefully this will reduce spam. if not we need to consider paid spam filtering (perhaps £400/yr).
- online directory functionality is currently under test, but will hopefully be ready for launch shortly after deployment of new site
- RAI membership will be held within NomadIT's database by year-end, which should at last allow the joint student members to be properly recognised by ASA.
- the annals/directory are being proofed and should be going to layout next week.

## ASA PUBLICATION OFFICER'S REPORT

1. *Update: 2006 'Cosmopolitanism' Conference, University of Keele. Cosmopolitanism & Anthropology, Editor Pnina Werbner.*  
The volume proposal was received and accepted by the ASA Committee on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2007. Editor's and Contributors' contracts were sent out following the Berg board meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup>. As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, there are several contributors' contracts outstanding. Once received, copies of all contracts will be forwarded to Berg. The complete manuscript is due for delivery on June 8<sup>th</sup> (mid-July at the latest) for a scheduled publication in April 2008.
2. *Update: 2007 'Anthropology & Tourism', London Metropolitan University*  
Proposal guidelines and a proposal form were issued to Tom Selwyn and Julie Scott following the conference and both editors have been contacted to find out what progress they have made to date.
3. *Berg Website and ASA Volumes*  
It appears that finding the ASA monographs on-line is difficult. Berg seemingly does not list the series in a way that is obvious to the visitor, and the volumes are not numbered. I have therefore inquired whether there is any possibility that the Berg website could improve the visibility of our ASA monograph series. Hannah Shakespeare has assured that the website is currently undergoing a massive redesign and things will soon look different. My concerns will be relayed as appropriate for the new site.
4. *Rising Postage Costs for ASA Volumes*  
The original agreement for covering postage cost was that the £10/13/15 collected from UK, European and Overseas members respectively would be transferred to Berg to cover the costs of the volume and mailing. In face of rising postage costs and rising costs of the actual monograph, however, Berg is experiencing a diminishing budget. It was therefore agreed that the ASA will cover the annual increments by paying the publisher for any extra postage cost incurred each year.  
  
Note that this year's postage costs were higher than usual because of the combined mailing of *Anthropology & Science* and *Creativity & Cultural Improvisation*, totalling £7559.
5. *ASAFilm website*  
Please see the attached (revised) draft of the blurb for the *ASAFilm* website. I have circulated the idea to several colleagues involved with ethnographic film and received encouraging support for our ASA initiative. I have also contacted the RAI committee to get approval for the ASA-sponsored short film competition and the possibility of having winning entries screened at the bi-annual RAI film festival, starting in 2009. I will circulate any developments on this and hopefully the site will be operational later this summer.

## **ASAFilm**

The ASA is pleased to announce the launch of *ASAFilm*, an on-line website featuring short ethnographic films for general viewing.

In our aim to make anthropological research relevant and more accessible to a wider public, the ASA is promoting visual anthropology as a means of extending ethnographic representation beyond text. Much of what we study as a discipline contains a strong visual component and film provides a highly appropriate vehicle for conveying rich and complex information. Our intention is to move ethnographic film into the mainstream and promote dialogue between anthropologists and a general viewing audience. The ASA encourages a wider distribution of ethnographic film in festivals, conferences, library holdings, course curricula and television programming.

### **Submission of Works**

Short documentary submissions are welcome from anthropologists and students of the discipline who employ film as a means of recording and communicating field research. Films of maximum five-minute duration and with clear ethnographic content are welcome. The ASA encourages filmmaking of the highest quality as well as experimental films that challenge documentary conventions. Submissions may be stand-alone shorts or trailers for longer works.

All submissions are reviewed for approval by the ASA Committee and an editorial board. Film submissions should abide by ASA ethical guidelines. Films whose content is deemed compromising to the well-being of its subject(s) in any manner, or which may be potentially exploited by a third party in a damaging way, will be declined. Content must be original and sole authored by the named filmmaker(s). It is the responsibility of authors to acquire necessary permission for the use of all copyright materials including images, sound bites and film clips.

Accepted works will be streamed on the *ASAFilm* site for an extended period. Films will be linked to a 'commentary page' where site visitors can express views and rate films. After removal from the main site, films will be archived and listed, and made available by the ASA upon request.

Please send submissions to [admin@theasa.org](mailto:admin@theasa.org). All entries should be made in Quicktime format, and length must not exceed five minutes. See the General Submission Guidelines for more details. Filmmakers who already host their short films on an existing streaming server may prefer to send the link to the ASA rather than the actual movie file.

### **ASAFilm Competition**

The ASA is hosting a bi-annual competition for new film entries completed after February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. Winning entries will be screened at the RAI Film Festival in 2009. The deadline for the first *ASAFilm* competition is January 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. [\*for approval by the RAI \*]

### **General Submission Guidelines**

Please be sure to include the following with you submission:

- ❖ Copy of film in Quicktime format. Videos should be saved in MPEG-4 (Divx, Xvid) format; 320 x 240 resolution; 30 frames per second; MP3 audio.
- ❖ Film title
- ❖ Names of director(s), producer(s), writer(s) and cameraperson(s)
- ❖ 100-word abstract describing the film
- ❖ Location
- ❖ Running time (not to exceed 300 seconds)
- ❖ Date of completion
- ❖ Screening history and prizes or awards

### **ASA Committee Reviewers**

John Gledhill, Manchester  
 Simone Abraham, University of Sheffield  
 Trevor Marchand, SOAS  
 Raminder Kaur, Manchester  
 Alberto Corsin-Jimenez, University of Manchester  
 Cathrine Degnen, University of Newcastle  
 Andrew Garner, DSTL  
 Ian Harper, University of Edinburgh  
 John Postill, Sheffield Hallam University

### **Editorial Board**

(\*\*NB names below are preliminary suggestions – individuals have not been consulted\*\*)

Felicia Hughes-Freeland, University of Wales  
 Massimiliano Mollona, Goldsmiths  
 Alan Macfarlane, Cambridge  
 Ziba Mir-Hosseini, SOAS  
 Richard Tapper, SOAS  
 Stephen Hughes, SOAS  
 Lisette Josephides, Queen's University Belfast  
 Sarah Pink, University of Loughborough  
 Etc.....

## Conference report

### ***asa07***

bottom line ~£3k, of which ASA gets half - when all money is in.  
the bottom line is reduced by BA grant refusal; ASA not giving 500 seed money;  
committee attendance costs (£460); higher NomadIT costs largely due to e-paper  
system and higher delegate numbers (200). however the e-paper technology is now  
there in place for future conferences at no extra charge. we are currently seeking  
feedback on e-papers.

### ***asa08***

website is done, but VS is requesting i beautify it, causing a delay in its release.

### ***asa09***

title, dates, location and keynote (Michael Herzfeld) agreed. short of suitable accom  
however - but seeking options and funding to assist access to more expensive private  
accom. the organisers are interested to know whether the ASA would be sympathetic  
to the Musuem bidding to hold the RAI film festival adjacent to the conference.