



2023 Annual Report
Professor Deborah Swallow
President, Royal Anthropological Institute

This is the second annual report since taking over as President. I should like to begin by congratulating my predecessor, Professor Lady Sue Black, Baroness Black of Strome, on her appointment to the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, the highest honour in Scotland. This is a remarkable achievement, a reflection of her extraordinary career, but also one that all anthropologists can take pride in. It shows, once more, the way that our discipline can lead to unexpected and wonderful paths during the course of a professional life.

By custom, these reports cover the previous year, and so I cast my mind back to 2023. Our major event in the spring was our Film Festival. During the period of Covid lockdown, we were uncertain, as were so many, as to the extent to which activities that we took for granted previously could be replicated in the post-Covid era. Gradually, though, we came to realise that however miraculous the possibility of meeting remotely appeared when lockdown was instigated, it would not substitute for face-to-face interaction, but accompany it. To this end, even as we planned the Film Festival, we realised that there would be an appetite from colleagues to meet once more at the Watershed in Bristol, and gradually the in-person element grew in importance.

In the end, therefore, we decided to experiment with a tri-part event, which was a great success. The competition films were shown on Festival Scope, a platform which enabled them to be viewed anywhere in the world. Additionally we organised an on-line conference entitled "Visual Anthropology and Speculative Futures", which built on the major AI conference that we organised the previous year. This was very popular, particularly those sessions which featured film makers, and those which enabled them to discuss their work in progress. Finally, the festival itself took place at the Watershed between 23-25th March. It was well attended, meaning that our hopes were sufficiently bolstered to assume that the Film Festival will regularly once again be face to face.

There were many wonderful moments during the festival, but one that will remain long in the memory was the evening devoted to Alanis Obomsawin and her work in celebration of her receiving the life-time achievement award. In an enthralling lecture, Alanis herself spoke about her work and showed excerpts from it. It is difficult to convey how impressive she was, a slight elderly figure holding a packed Arnolfini lecture theatre enthralled as she took us through her career, and the way that she had devoted herself to giving a voice to her people.

In April, we were privileged to be able to hold the launch of the fourth of the RAI book series, *A Touch of Genius A Celebration of Evans-Pritchard*, edited by Professor André Singer, which took place in Exeter College Oxford, E-P's undergraduate home, by kind permission of the Rector, Sir Rick Trainor, and with the support too of All Souls College, where E-P spent much of his working life. The discussions on that day included both an intellectual appreciation of his work and personal reminiscences. We are very pleased to say that the *A Touch of Genius* was subsequently named one of the TLS's books of the year.

The highlight of the autumn programme was, as always, the Huxley Lecture. Given this year by Professor Chris Stringer, it took place at the Natural History Museum, and featured the development of his 'Out of Africa' theory; that is, the assumption that human beings first emerged from Africa and then gradually dispersed throughout the rest of the world. First received to widespread scepticism, this theory is now widely accepted as one of the most important models that we have of early human diffusion, though naturally it is being continually refined and updated. To accompany Professor Stringer's lecture, we also held a one-day conference that looked at the ramifications and different applications of the 'Out of Africa Theory', one that brought a host of excellent speakers. We look forward keenly to the special issue in Biological Anthropology of the JRAI that is promised on its proceedings.

At the AGM, we also bade farewell to our archivist of many years, Mrs Sarah Walpole, who received the Patron's Medal. Her contribution to the work of the RAI and our understanding of its history has been immense. Other staff changes: Lavinia Cyrillo, Assistant Archivist, left the RAI to take up a doctoral studentship at McGill, her

alma mater, Caterina Sartori left her position as joint Film Officer, to be replaced by Hatty Bell. We wish her all good fortune in her work for the RAI.

Last year also saw the launch of the RAI's Teaching and Learning Platform, which is designed to provide CPD short courses, as well as general courses that might encourage the general public to take an interest in anthropology, or to take up the subject at university. This was by way of being a pilot year, but we were pleased at the take up. At present, all courses are remote, but taught live. Amongst those taught for the first time were three by Dr James Rose on Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology, which included careful consideration of the rights of indigenous peoples and cultural heritage preservation; another on the Anthropology of Art by our own colleague Dr Max Carocci, and another on the anthropology of craft and learning by Professor Trevor Marchand, which were also very popular. Fortified by the success of this pilot year, we look forward very much to the future expansion of this programme.

Our journals too have gone from strength to strength throughout the year; the JRAI Special Issue for 2023 was entitled *After Failure: Temporalities and Traces*, edited by Professor Catherine Alexander (University of Durham); a most intriguing publication on an important topic, one that goes to the heart of our intellectual life. Likewise *Anthropology Today* appears with unfailing regularity, and is full of excellent content. Our open access journal *Teaching Anthropology* continues to grow, providing a forum for discussion of a topic that is essential to us all. Our on-line pamphlet series continue to attract most interesting submissions – please feel free to offer one!

I have space here only to touch upon a small proportion of our many activities, which are pursued so creatively and with such success by our staff and Fellows, working together. But I should like to mention one more, very positive development. In 2023 we were awarded a European Union grant from the European Co-operation in Science and Technology programme (COST) of approximately 450,000 Euros over four years (PI: Professor Livia Holden), which aims to bring together a network of junior experts who are interested in building capacity in cultural expertise and its application in court cases, both nationally and internationally.

In spite of the global turmoil that we saw in 2023, the institute's finances have remained sound. However, I should like once more to stress to Fellows how very grateful we are for any gift that they are able to provide. We are only able to maintain this level of activity because we have so many committed Fellows, who have continued to support us over many decades. I am aware of how much this means to the RAI and would like to thank you all. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the staff for their outstanding contribution to making the RAI such an exciting and successful institution.

Professor Deborah Swallow, President, RAI.

Treasurer's Report

During 2023, I am pleased to say that the RAI maintained its steady financial position. Uncertainties remain, not only in terms of the international position and the reliance of the institute upon dollar income, but also in terms of the viability of the journal publishing market which is the institute's largest source of income. We continue to work on diversifying our income and developing new areas of interest.

Last year, I reported that we invest with two main ethical investments platforms CCLA's COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund, and Sarasin's Endowments Funds. The value of these funds had contracted by approximately 10% as of 31 December 2022. However, they have since recovered as of December 31 2023 by approximately 8%. Our rental houses remain fully occupied, though we need to be cautious going forward with regard to these as the regulatory framework continues to evolve.

In sum, therefore, the RAI continues to operate in budget surplus and has no debts.

Dr Fiona Bowie, Honorary Treasurer



**ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024
preceded by the Huxley Lecture**

The 2024 AGM will take place on Thursday 24 October 2024 at 2.30 pm at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and on Zoom.
It will be followed by the 2024 Huxley Lecture.

All are welcome. Only RAI Fellows may vote at the AGM. Formal notification of the AGM has also been published in *Anthropology Today* and on the RAI website.

Programme

2.30 pm: AGM

6.00 pm: 2024 Huxley Lecture
by Prof Alex DeWaal, Tufts University

AGM AGENDA

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 7 November 2023
2. Annual Report of the Council for 2023
3. Appointment of Auditors (Current auditors: Friend-James, Chartered Accountants)
4. Election of Officers and Council for the year 2024-2025 (see overleaf for House List)
5. Announcement of elections of the Huxley Memorial Lecturer and Curl Lecturer for 2025
6. Rivers Memorial Medal for 2024
7. Marsh Awards for 2024
8. Public Anthropology Award for 2024
9. President's Lifetime Achievement Award for 2024
10. Lucy Mair Marsh Medal for 2024
11. Any other business

HOUSE LIST

(for election of Officers and Council under agenda item 4)

Names proposed by Council (new nominations marked with *)

All nominations are subject to the election of candidates as RAI Fellows for the year(s) in which they hold office. Former Presidents are *ex officio* Vice Presidents and not listed below.

President: Professor Deborah Swallow

Hon Vice Presidents: Professor Emma Gilberthorpe*
Professor Ann MacLarnon*
Professor Maya Unnithan*

Hon Secretary: Professor Simon Underdown*

Hon Librarian: Professor John Gowlett*

Hon Treasurer: Dr Fiona Bowie

Ordinary members of Council

Dr Hazel Andrews
Dr Judith Aston*
Professor Paul Basu*
Professor Sara Cohen
Professor Ann R. David
Professor Richard Fardon
Professor Haidy Geismar*
Professor Rachael Goberman-Hill
Dr Nichola Khan
Professor Paul Lane
Professor Garry Marvin
Dr Will Norman*
Dr H el ene Neveu Kringelbach
Dr Celia Plender
Professor Jamie Tehrani
Keith Thorpe, OBE
Dr Richard Vokes
Dr Shireen Walton

Article 18 of the Charter of Incorporation states:

In addition to those names on this Council list, any Fellow may propose any Fellow to be placed on a General List to replace those who are vacating their position through retirement from Council, provided that they lodge such proposed names at the RAI offices one calendar week before the annual general meeting takes place.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2023**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
INCOME					
Donations and grants	7,312	-	82,673	89,985	53,666
Investment income	171,478	288	24,234	196,000	154,837
Miscellaneous fees	7,831	-	-	7,831	6,595
<i>Income from charitable activities:</i>					
Fellowship and Membership	122,443	-	-	122,443	115,786
Publications	737,181	-	-	737,181	759,142
RAI Collection	153,274	-	-	153,274	88,465
Education Programme	23,538	-	-	23,538	82,773
TOTAL INCOME	1,223,057	288	106,907	1,330,252	1,261,264
EXPENDITURE					
<i>Expenditure on charitable activities:</i>					
Policy and Profile	129,649	750	23,334	153,733	153,446
Fellowship and Membership	76,862	-	-	76,862	72,487
Publications	379,005	-	-	379,005	374,938
RAI Collection	227,194	-	10,205	237,399	175,236
Library	48,740	-	-	48,740	58,670
Education Programme	159,221	-	42,392	201,613	180,703
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,020,671	-	75,931	1,097,352	1,015,480
Net income for the year	202,386	288	30,976	232,900	245,784
Gain/(loss) on investments	154,713	8,085	49,222	212,020	(337,140)
Transfers between funds	(98,950)	98,950	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	258,149	107,323	80,198	444,920	(91,356)
Fund balances at 1 Jan 2023	1,669,675	1,903,032	1,314,808	4,887,515	4,978,871
Fund balances at 31 December 2023	1,927,824	2,010,355	1,395,006	5,332,435	4,887,515

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	673,504	674,554
Freehold investment property	1,075,000	1,067,500
Listed investments	3,530,878	2,847,075
	5,279,382	4,589,129
Current assets		
Debtors	188,157	191,318
Cash at bank and in hand	298,136	466,338
	486,293	657,656
Creditors-amounts falling due within one year	(433,240)	(359,270)
Net current assets	53,053	298,386
	5,332,435	4,887,515
Income funds		
Restricted funds	1,395,006	1,314,808
Unrestricted funds		
Designated funds	2,009,605	1,903,032
Other charitable funds	1,927,824	1,669,675
	5,332,435	4,887,515

These summarised accounts are extracted from the full unqualified audited accounts approved by the trustees on 04 July 2024. For further information, the full statutory accounts, which have been filed with the Registrar of Companies and the Charity Commission, should be consulted. These can be obtained from RAI offices at 50 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5BT.

Auditors' statement on the summary accounts to the trustees of the Royal Anthropological Institute

We have examined the summary accounts set out on pages 5 to 6 inclusive.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

These summary accounts presented on pages 5 to 6 are the responsibility of the trustees. It is our responsibility to report our opinion on their consistency with the full accounts, on which we reported on 18 July 2024. Our report on the full accounts of the Institute includes information on the responsibilities of the trustees and the auditors relating to the preparation and the audit of those accounts and on the basis of our unqualified opinion on those accounts.

Basis of opinion

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summary accounts are consistent with the full accounts from which they have been prepared.

Opinion

In our opinion the summary accounts on pages 5 to 6 are consistent with the full accounts of the Royal Anthropological Institute for the period ended 31 December 2023.

Friend-James Limited
Chartered Accountants, Statutory Auditor,
4th Floor, Park Gate
161-163 Preston Road,
Brighton BN1 6AF

Dated: 18 July 2024