



A big welcome to all budding anthropologists:

After what seemed like a lengthy summer, once again we are back in St Andrews and the Editorial Team of the Ethnographic Encounters Journal has wasted no time in putting a new issue together; it is a proud moment for us to be able to see the second volume of our publication on the website.

On this occasion, we received submissions from the class of 2014, all of which are of outstanding quality, and a vast majority of which are ethnographies set in a highly local context. Papers written about Scotland include Hannah McInnes-Dean's exploration of locality from the perspective of Scottish producers and Fife food markets, as well as Fiona Fraser's investigation of ideas of privacy and the search for 'normalcy' in a Highland hospital. Some of these projects take us even closer to home, shedding light on diverse aspects of the very particular lives we lead as St Andreans; Zoe Caramitsou-Tzira's study of St Andrews' Steampunk Society reveals the alternative lifestyles followed by one of the University's more obscure communities; Ben Hildred questions whether a divide between locals and students exists in our town through a pub ethnography; Allie Stanislas examines one of St Andrews' most renowned traditions, the academic family, revising theories of kinship; and Jess Meagher analyses the meaning of friendship in St Andrews through her involvement in student theatre.

Three projects enlighten us on contemporary ways of doing farm work, as in Esther Kelsey's investigation about the lives of sheep farmers, or the merging of cityscapes and nature as portrayed by Helen Murphey's and James McLean's works on urban farms in Detroit and London respectively. Photography and anthropology intertwine in the ethnographies written by I Linca Vânău and Lily Elizabeth Stevenson. Alexander Archer explores power relations through gambling in an English working man's club; Dinora Smith discusses and challenges the stereotypes commonly associated to the life of nuns; and Une Kaunaite explores modern-day beliefs and superstitions held by Lithuanian basketball fans, whilst reminding readers of the possibilities that online anthropology can offer us.

This year we are also aiming to further expand our content by introducing a new segment to the journal, "Inspired by Ethnographic Encounters". This space has been created with the idea of diffusing more creative outlooks on what anthropology means to undergraduate students, near and far, without restricting published pieces to one specific type of work. We look forward to receiving contributions for this new facet of our project in the coming weeks.

Editors' notes:

Having initially applied to study English Literature at St Andrews, I took Social Anthropology in first year as an extra module and fell in love with it at once. Shakespeare quickly got replaced by Malinowski and here I am in fourth year, having just completed my dissertation fieldwork in Edinburgh studying cafe culture, and I am more in love with my subject than ever. Fran asked Sabrina, Sophie and me what it means to us to be anthropologists, and I spent a couple of days thinking about what I would write. Talking to my dad one evening after work I found myself telling him about the people I had met that day and the various social encounters I had and he replied laughing reminding that I was "off duty". And yet, I had still noticed an array of subtle social encounters that intrigued my inner anthropologist to explore and discuss further. In essence, this is what it means to me to be an anthropologist, to be alert and conscious to the social world around me, whether I'm studying at university or not, whether I am conducting fieldwork or not, I am always tuned in to and intrigued by the social and cultural habits of those around me. I've been told many times that I have an "anthropology voice" that kicks in when I animatedly start talking about Anthropology, whether it be a reading I found really interesting or an idea that I've had—once I get started I'm pretty much unstoppable! For these reasons, and many more, I think Social Anthropology is a diverse, intriguing and exciting discipline offering endless new insights about the world that we live in, relevant in all aspects of life. Social beings are the most curious, interesting and personal subjects of study there are; Social Anthropology offers a way of focusing upon human interaction and exploring what it is to be a social agent.

—Adele

Helping to edit this journal has been fascinating so far. As a joint honours student of anthropology and IR, I've always found that engaging with fieldwork encourages you to think more critically about politicised issues like globalisation, or feminism, or aid. The ethnographer is taught to enter the field without assumptions or judgements and to remain hyper-aware of their own biases, role and agency in carrying out their work. This is important in a multitude of fields, but can be especially useful in tempering the study of IR, which requires a somewhat top-down approach and is framed by broad theoretical categories. Reading fellow anthropologists' fieldwork papers has also made me pause to analyse more closely my own everyday interactions and habits, from taking travel photographs to participating in St Andrews' own academic traditions. I'm really excited to add to this volume in October with "Inspired by Ethnographic Encounters" and hope that students formulating their own fieldwork will find it useful to get an insight into what goes into a final paper.

—Sophie

Reading over the articles I have been given to edit, I am reminded of the journey we all take as ethnographers—from the moment we arrive in the field, to the moment we

conclude our reports, and beyond. The papers I read reminded me of my own apprehension as an “outsider”, and the question we all ask ourselves: How am I going to fit in here? It’s a question that transcends our research, and at least in my experience, teaches us to interact with others while remaining conscious of our actions and position alongside informants.

The Ethnographic Encounters project introduces us to these questions on a smaller scale, and helps us begin to think not just about the people we are working with, but also reflexively about our own roles as researchers in their communities. Through these encounters, we have learned to do more than simply synthesize knowledge from other sources. While such a practice has its place, it could never prepare us adequately for the experiences we have in the field, of learning to respect those who share their lives with us both as research informants, and as individuals with unique life narratives to impart. Within the pages of this journal, you will find not only the stories of diverse human communities, but also the stories of those who met them, learned from them and, arguably just as critically, learned about themselves and the way they relate to others in the process. I hope the experience will be an insight to all readers, and a reminder that the Ethnographic Encounters project is a unique opportunity for students to reach beyond the theoretical, and learn about others from the standpoint of a peer, and for some, from the standpoint of a friend.

—Sabrina

Defining a discipline and justifying one’s interest in it is often a challenging task, and achieving this in anthropology is no exception. Before University I never thought about being an anthropologist, but I always sought to find an explanation for the world I inhabit and my position in it. It is perhaps anthropology’s lesson that the answer to this is borne not out of immediate understanding about other people, but rather from a longstanding engagement with the self, a reflective process that exposes how it is we are sometimes impaired from comprehending others’ meanings, and how to overcome these impairments in order to reach our goals as social scientists. My anthropological endeavours this summer were to an extent disappointing, yet not valueless despite of this. I now take it that anthropology is about patience and about accepting unanticipated turns, regardless of how far these take us from our original research questions; that participant observation is not about being a spectator or a visitor; that having a notepad in our hands does not, and should not, invest us with any particular privilege or power. Above all, this summer has made me reflect on the fact that if anthropology as a discipline is to be taken seriously in academia, as well as a wider context, it has to be taken seriously first and foremost by anthropologists themselves, young and mature alike. I hope this view is to an extent reflected in this latest issue of Ethnographic Encounters, and that those studying Social Anthropology in St Andrews can arrive at other similar and respectable conclusions of their own, step by step, with time.

—Francesca

In this Issue

Gambling in the Backroom	Alexander Archer
The Steampunk Society: a community focused on commemoration	Zoe Caramitsou-Tzira
Private Goes Public: An Exploration of the Translation of Social Reality within a Hospital Setting	Fiona Fraser
‘The Illusive Local’: Abandoning the Student/Local Dichotomy in St Andrews	Ben Hildred
The Need to Believe in a Secularised World: Practises among the Basketball Fans in Lithuania	Une Kaunaite
A Farmer's Life According to their Sheep	Esther Kelsey
Relative Locality: People, Land and Food in Fife	Hannah McInnes-Dean
Tower Hamlet’s “urban oasis”: the re-imagining of identity through volunteer work at Spitalfields Community Farm	James McLean
Webs	Jess Meagher
Harvesting Community from Conflict: Class Divisions and Reconciliation in Earthworks Urban Farm	Helen Murphey
Femininity, Society and the IHM Sisters	Dinora Smith
Fictive Kinship Relations: a Comparative Study of University and Immigrant Life	Allie Stanislas
What a Shot! An Anthropological Analysis of Travel Photography within a Tourist Culture	Lily Elizabeth Stevenson
The personal darkroom: keeping in touch with family photographs	ILinca Vânău

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Aims and Scope

Ethnographic Encounters is an undergraduate e-journal which provides a platform for the work of the social anthropology students of University of St Andrews. Established in 2011, the e-journal's main aim is that of publishing research projects conducted by students in their second year of study. Additionally the publication promotes visual and other experimental expressions of ethnographic interest. The e-journal is intended to present the work of the University of St Andrews' undergraduate, social anthropology students for two main audiences. In the first instance, Ethnographic Encounters presents a valuable resource for future students to draw on the experience and insights of their predecessors. In the second instance, Ethnographic Encounters offers a means for social anthropology students throughout the world to engage with their peers in St Andrews, establish new connections, share ideas and to begin to engage in an exchange of knowledge that is fundamental to the discipline.