

## Some highlights of the 2001/2002 academic year

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*The Director of the Institute comments on developments since the fourth issue of Archaeology International was published.*

Following what is now established practice, I start by referring to some of the initiatives noted on the back cover of last year's issue of *AI*.

- The new UCL Centre for Historic Buildings, Collections and Sites, now known as the UCL Centre for Sustainable Heritage, was awarded a contract by the European Parliament's Scientific and Technological Options Assessment unit (STOA) entitled "Technological requirements for solutions in the conservation and protection of historic monuments and archaeological remains". The Centre's report was subsequently accepted by the parliament and was highlighted in the news section of *Nature* on 6 December 2001.
- In December 2001, a team that included UCL's then Head of Fundraising, Tim Johnson, and our Nick Merriman and Sally MacDonald, lodged a Heritage Lottery bid for £12 million (out of the necessary £25 million) towards the construction of the Panopticon building and the rehousing of the Petrie archaeological collections (see p. 59 in this issue for an illustration of the front of the proposed building). The College has guaranteed £2 million, and a further £1 million has been pledged by a private foundation. The outcome of the bid will be known in July 2002.
- I am proud to be able to report that *Egypt in Africa* (edited by David O'Connor & Andrew Reid), the first volume in our Encounters with Ancient Egypt series, has been delivered to the University of Pennsylvania Press; it is expected to be published by the end of 2002. The second volume, *Views of ancient Egypt after Napoleon Bonaparte: imperialism, colonialism and modern appropriations* (edited by David Jeffreys), is on schedule for publication in early 2003. Work on the remaining six volumes is proceeding as planned.
- Although UCL was unable to provide resources (see below) for the new Archaeology of London MA degree, it has been successfully started this year. Not only did it attract sufficient students, but it was also awarded a grant of £10,000 by English Heritage to assist student recruitment. It is being taught by Nick Merriman, Gustav Milne (who has been seconded half-time to the Museum of London as Head of Archaeological Research at its new Archaeological Archive and Research Centre), Clive Orton and Jane Sidell (English Heritage Scientific Advisor for London, who,

with the agreement of English Heritage, will continue also to work for the Institute).

Moving on to other matters, I can report three outcomes of last year's Institute research seminar "Indigenous peoples and patenting the past": first, that an article by me entitled "Indigenous archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology" was published in *PIA*, volume 12, 2001 (see p. 64 of this issue of *AI*); secondly, that in 2002 one of the issues of the journal *Public Archaeology*, to be edited by Bill Sillar and Cressida Fforde, will be devoted to aspects of indigenous archaeology; and thirdly, that one of the topics discussed in last year's seminar, "Destruction versus conservation", led to Clifford Price choosing for this year's research seminar the theme "Thinking conservation". This choice has proved so successful that the seminar is, uniquely, continuing for all three terms of this academic year.

Since I last reported in *AI*, UCL has found itself in debt to the tune of £7–10 million and every department has therefore had to produce a savings-and-income generation plan. After considerable discussion, it was decided that the Institute must save £81,000 per year (at least this is less than the target of £450,000 per year originally proposed), either by leaving vacant posts unfilled or by increasing student intake. Also since my last report, the Institute has scored 23 out of the maximum of 24 in the national Quality Audit Assessment (the loss of one point is currently under challenge), and 5 out of a maximum of 5\* in the latest national

Research Assessment Exercise. I am particularly proud that in the latter all academic staff were returned as research active, each with at least four publications to their name.

In November 2001 five members of staff (Dorian Fuller, Thilo Rehren, Tim Schadla-Hall, Stephen Shennan and I) visited China to deliver lectures and visit sites. We each gave between one and three lectures in Beijing, and Thilo and I also lectured in Hefei, and Steve in Jinan. We all travelled to Xi'an to see the excavations and the Museum of the Emperor Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Army, and on to Anyang to visit the new excavations being carried out there under the direction of one of our postgraduate research students, Jigen Tang (Fig. 1). Following these two weeks in China, I drew up a possible five-year plan for training and research in Chinese archaeology at an estimated cost of some £250,000 per year for five years. Three of us presented it to the Provost of UCL at a meeting with him and other senior College administrators, making it explicit that such a programme (focusing on archaeobotany, archaeometallurgy and public archaeology) could not be undertaken without the appointment of a lecturer in Chinese archaeology (a development allowed for in the Institute's savings-and-income generation plan).

Finally, it is very satisfying to be able to report that the two-day meeting on South Asian landscape archaeology held at the Institute in February 2002 (described in more detail on p. 5 of this issue) was of such high quality that it is hoped to publish the papers following their revision.



**Figure 1** At Anyang Station, the excavation headquarters for the site of Anyang, northern Henan Province, China, November 2001; from left to right: Stephen Shennan, Jigen Tang (director of the current excavations at Anyang), Peter Ucko.