

Some highlights of the 2006/2007 academic year

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

The most important event for the Institute in 2006–7 was the sadly premature death of Peter Ucko, who was still very actively involved in Institute activities despite his retirement and who will be very deeply missed. His obituary and other articles about his achievements are to be found elsewhere in this issue of *AI*.

In the light of this other news rather pales into insignificance but, of course the staff and students of the Institute have continued to be as active as ever and to have their activities recognized.

The Institute came second in The Guardian league table of UK Archaeology Departments and there were many instances of individual recognition. Todd Whitelaw was promoted to Professor of Aegean Archaeology and Jeremy Tanner to Reader in Classical and Comparative Art. Thilo Rehren was elected President of the Society for Archaeological Sciences and also received one of the first Provost's Teaching Awards, recognizing the outstanding contribution of members of staff to excellence and innovation in teaching at UCL. Mark Roberts, director of the Boxgrove Project, was awarded the triennial Henry Stopes Medal by the Geologists' Association for his contribution to Quaternary Geology and Palaeolithic Archaeology. Roger Matthews was appointed Chairman of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and Andy Garrard became Honorary Secretary of the Council for British Research in the Levant. Elizabeth Graham was awarded one of the small number of prestigious Resident Research Fellowships at Dumbarton Oaks Centre for Pre-Columbian Studies in Washington, D.C., to be taken up in 2007–8. Xander Veldhuijzen, a former PhD student returned to the Institute at the beginning of May 2007, having won one of the extremely competitive Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowships. Mention should also be made of David Martin (Historic Buildings Officer within Archaeology South-East, part of the Institute's Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA)) for winning the Sussex Heritage Person of the Year Award (sponsored by West Sussex County Council) awarded by the Sussex Heritage Trust last summer. The award is given for "The recognition of one person's outstanding commitment to the heritage of Sussex".

In contrast to the massive changes in recent years, 2006–7 was a quiet one

on the staffing front but there were still some new developments. The UK part of the Çatalhöyük Project, including the field director, Shahina Farhid and other project staff, was finally re-located to the Institute of Archaeology from the MacDonald Institute, Cambridge, after all the administrative complications were at last sorted out, and Corinna Riva started as Lecturer in the Archaeology of the Mediterranean in the 1st millennium BC.

The Institute's links with China continue to go from strength to strength and the year was marked by the signing by UCL's Provost of a Memorandum of Understanding between UCL, Peking University and the Kwok Foundation, based in Hong Kong. The MOU established three PhD studentships generously funded by the Kwok Foundation, to be held at UCL on topics relating to archaeological science and heritage development. Three excellent students were selected by a joint panel from the Kwok Foundation, Peking University and the Institute in Beijing in June 2006 and started at the beginning of the current academic year.

As usual, staff and students were involved in a large number of field projects all over the world: in Belize (Jim Aimers), Ethiopia (Ignacio de la Torre), at Pella, Jordan (Rachael Sparks), the island of Antikythera, Greece (Andy Bevan and James Conolly), Knossos, Crete (Todd Whitelaw), Merv, Turkmenistan (Tim Williams), Cane River, Louisiana, USA (Kevin MacDonald), Noviodunum, Romania (Kris Lockyear), Aistra in the Basque country of Spain (Andrew Reynolds), Puerto Rico (José Oliver) and in the Tavoliere-Gargano, Italy (Ruth Whitehouse and Sue Hamilton). Most far-flung of all is Sue Hamilton's landscape project on the Pacific island of Rapa Nui. Much closer to home the West Dean student excavation and fieldwork training project in Sussex entered its second year, while Dr Andrew Gardner began an excavation with colleagues from Cardiff at Roman Caerleon, a site that has a long-standing connection to the history of the Institute since Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler excavated there when he was at the National Museum of Wales.

The number of events of various kinds that take place at the Institute is so great that it is impossible to mention even a small fraction of them, but some must be singled out. Dominic Perring and Sjoerd

Van Der Linde of the CAA organized the conference "Archaeology in Conflict - cultural heritage, site management and sustainable development in conflict and post-conflict states in the Middle East", sponsored by the British Academy, the British Council, the Global Heritage Fund, the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, as well as the Institute and the CAA. Together with colleagues from Birkbeck Andrew Gardner and Kris Lockyear organized the joint 7th International Roman Archaeology Conference and 17th Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, while Kevin MacDonald and Andrew Reid organized two meetings on aspects of African slavery in connection with the national Abolition 2007 programme, supported by the British Academy and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The Institute's weekly seminar series are always interesting but 2006–7 saw two particularly strong series that attracted a great deal of outside interest. The first, entitled "Social intelligence, technology and language: integrating concepts in the evolution of human cognition", was organized by members of the Institute's Palaeolithic interest group and the second, "Discussing Evolutionary and Interpretive Archaeologies", by Ethan Cochrane and Andrew Gardner. Finally, in the first of what will be an annual series of lectures that makes reference to the work of those who founded and established the reputation of the Institute, Prof Ian Hodder, a former Institute undergraduate, gave the Childe lecture on his work at Çatalhöyük, an event made possible by the kind sponsorship of the Continuum Group.

The students have been as active as the staff, with events including the conference on "Island Identities" organized by the Forum for Island Research and Experience (FIRE) and the second annual IoA Graduate Student Conference, entitled "Method to Madness? Methods and Methodologies in Archaeology". Two PhD students, John Giblin and Jane Humphris, recently returned from their fieldwork in Rwanda, where their projects are helping to build a new post-genocide history of that country, while Sada Mire travelled for her PhD fieldwork to her native Somaliland and was given a position that makes her the first native Somali archaeologist.

As readers will have gathered from the passing references above, the Institute's Field Archaeology Unit has gradually been transformed into a Centre for Applied Archaeology under its Director, Dominic Perring. This process was completed over the summer, to coincide with the relocation of the Archaeology South-East

team to new offices in Portslade near Brighton. The main reason for changing the Field Unit into a Research Centre within the Institute is to extend the range of activities that it undertakes, mirroring changes in the research mission of the Institute as a whole. It will allow the Unit to expand beyond its regional base and develop professional services in areas such as site management and interpretation, outreach, and environmental impact assessment. It is hoped that links between the Unit and the Institute at large will be improved, helping the development of new research projects involving collaboration between Institute staff and those of the CAA. The contract division of the CAA (Archaeology South-East) was exceptionally busy in 2006–7 and, unlike what might be called “Institute Central” has continued to recruit new staff.

The Institute’s AHRC Centre for the Evolution of Cultural Diversity, directed by James Steele, also got fully into its stride in 2006–7, making several post-doctoral appointments in association with the various research projects in its main programme and on its related EC-funded programme on the evolution of human technology and language. It also held a symposium at the University of British Columbia, organized by Centre member Mark Collard, on “Culture in Evolutionary Perspective”, bringing together local researchers and prominent national and international experts who are studying culture within the framework of Darwinian evolutionary theory.

On the research front one of the main activities of the year was preparation for the national Research Assessment Exercise that takes place in 2008. It is based on an evaluation of the publications produced by members of staff as well as of research grants obtained and facilities available, and is vital because its outcome determines future funding for a number of years. Colleagues were busy ensuring that last minute publications went to press in time to be published by the deadline of 31st December 2007, while members of the Institute’s Policy Group had to read all the publications proposed for submission to make sure that only the best were selected. It remains to be seen whether their judgements will correspond to those of the national judging panel. At the Institute, as in other departments up and down the land, 2007 will have been a bumper year for publications.

One of the very few disappointing features of the Institute in the last few years has been the level of its undergraduate recruitment, in contrast to the huge success of its Masters programmes, which recruit nationally and internationally on a very large scale. In order to try and change

this situation a number of initiatives have been taken. A new BA degree in Classical Archaeology and Classical Civilisation was approved in 2006–7 and will take its first students in 2008–9. The first steps were also taken to introduce a new 4-year BA in Archaeology with a Year Abroad, and a BSc in Archaeology and Anthropology, both of which will start in 2009–10. This latter development is long overdue. UCL has two of the best Anthropology and Archaeology Departments in the world and this combination of subjects has long been very popular. Collaboration between the Institute and Anthropology is also the basis for the new Master’s degree

in Palaeoanthropology and Palaeolithic Archaeology, which was also approved in 2006–7 and will start in 2008–9.

No institution can stay still because the world is always changing, and the Institute will always be looking for new initiatives, anticipating and responding to changing environments. However, the demand for the highest standards of world archaeology and the emphasis on the need to address heritage and public archaeology issues important far beyond academia, which characterized the work of Peter Ucko, are goals to which the Institute will continue to be committed.

The Institute’s primary research groups

The coordinators of each of the Institute’s five primary research groups report on their group’s activities during the 2006/2007 academic year.

The Environment and Culture Research Group

Coordinator: Simon Hillson

Student Co-ordinator: Andrew Shapland

The Environment and Culture Research Group provides a link for staff, research students and honorary members of the Institute whose research concerns past interactions between people and the environments they occupied. Several members of the group also participate in the activities of the AHRC Centre for the Evolutionary Analysis of Cultural Behaviour which is directed by James Steele. Ignacio de la Torre became the new deputy Research Group coordinator and Andrew Shapland again served as student coordinator this year.

Research projects

Research Group members continued their active participation in the international Çatalhöyük Research Project, based on the famous large Neolithic tell site on the Konya plain of central Turkey. The overall project director is Professor Ian Hodder of Stanford University but this year the project office moved from Cambridge University to the Institute of Archaeology, together with the Field Director and Project Coordinator, Shahina Farid. This is an important and very welcome development for the Research Group as so many members, both students and staff, are involved in the project. One of the particular features of Çatalhöyük is the presence of deposits rich in phytoliths, microscopic silica bodies that are found in many plants. Arlene Rosen coordinates the phytoliths team, and has been working with Emma Jenkins as research assistant and Philippa Ryan whose PhD project centres on the

site. Arlene has published this year on the environmental context of Çatalhöyük. Louise Martin is joint coordinator of the faunal remains team with Nerissa Russell (Cornell University) and Katheryn Twiss (Berkeley). They continued this year to record many thousands of animal bone fragments, bringing their total to an impressive 800,000 specimens recorded. Sheep and goat remains continue to be a focus of particular interest at Çatalhöyük. Liz Henton’s PhD project involves a stable isotope study of life history in sheep remains. Jane Sidell continues to work on eggshell from the site, although she has now left the Institute of Archaeology for a post at English Heritage. Simon Hillson is joint coordinator of the human remains team with Clark Larsen (Ohio State University). Large numbers of burials continue to be found in the houses at Çatalhöyük and much of the team’s work involves work on site and preliminary study in the laboratory. This year, a new human remains database has been developed and in the coming year the priority will be recording of all the Neolithic remains, together with re-storage following advice from Institute of Archaeology conservators. Ongoing research projects include: studies of dental pathology and stable isotopes in relation to diet, limb bone morphology in relation to activity, and the pattern of biological relationships between people buried in different houses. Çatalhöyük includes a particularly large proportion of children’s burials and Simon Hillson will be starting a project on the rate and pattern of growth in their skeletons and dentitions.