

Some highlights of the 2007/2008 academic year

Stephen Shennan

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

The year 2007–8 has been one of (supposed!) professorial retirements at the Institute. Ruth Whitehouse and Clifford Price left at Christmas, having stayed on beyond September in order to be counted in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (which was explained in last year's Director's Report), but as you can see from the *AI* contents page Ruth has kindly agreed to continue as the journal's editor and also as Chair of the Institute's Publications Committee. Fekri Hassan, Petrie Professor of Archaeology, retired at the end of September 2008 and has returned to Egypt, where he is very actively involved in setting up a new Egyptian Heritage Institute, with which we hope the Institute of Archaeology will be closely involved in the future. Clive Orton and Ken Thomas have both retired but remain very active and in evidence; Clive was also joint winner of the Ralph Merrifield award this year in recognition of his contribution to London archaeology over many years through his work on *London Archaeology* magazine. Gustav Milne too has supposedly retired but is in fact leading the Thames Discovery Project, a new community archaeology project monitoring sites on the Thames foreshore, thanks to a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund; he is also Project Director of the Gresham Ship project, along with Dean Sully of the Institute. I'm very pleased (and relieved!) that all these people are so keen to stay actively involved in the life of the Institute.

Unfortunately, the year was also marked by the death of one of the Institute's most distinguished former members of staff, Professor Nicolas Coldstream, Yates Professor Emeritus of Classical Art and Archaeology, whose final public appearance at the Institute was as the speaker at the opening of the Institute's new A. G. Leventis Gallery of Cypriot and Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology. His many achievements were recorded in newspaper obituaries and one appears elsewhere in this issue of *AI*. It is noteworthy that two places that were very important in his career, Knossos and the island of Kythera, are still today foci of Institute research, with Todd Whitelaw's Knossos Urban Landscape Project and Cyprian Broodbank's Kythera Island Project.

The new Leventis Gallery is a major enhancement of the Institute's facilities

and enables the exhibition of some of our most outstanding collections from Cyprus and the East Mediterranean whose origins go back to the early days of the Institute. It was made possible by the generosity of the A.G. Leventis Foundation and a number of members of the Leventis family were present at the reception and lecture by Professor Coldstream that marked the opening on 8th November 2007.

The outstanding work of Institute members of staff continues to be recognized. There were four promotions in 2007–8, in contrast to the two in the previous year. Stephen Quirke, who works in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology but is also a member of Institute staff became Professor, while Kevin MacDonald became Reader in African Archaeology and Beverley Butler and Mark Lake were promoted to Senior Lecturer. Mark Lake also won one of the Provost's Teaching Awards, as did Judy Medrington for all her work in support of teaching. This is only the second year these awards have been given but we won one last year and now two out of eleven this year, so the Institute has an impressive record that reflects the importance we give to teaching and to looking after our students, something also seen in the excellent scores our students give us in the National Student Survey. Similar recognition comes from our first place in the ranking of UK Archaeology Departments in the Guardian Good University Guide this year, beating our second place last year.

New academic arrivals in 2007–8 were Anna Clement, working with Simon Hillson and Ignacio de la Torre on a Leverhulme-funded postdoctoral project, and Ceri Ashley and Felix Riede, who have joined the Institute with British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships for three years. These Fellowships are very difficult to obtain; the awards reflect extremely well not only on the young scholars themselves but also on the Institute as the place they have decided to hold their awards. No other Archaeology Department obtained more than one such award.

As usual there are many other instances of individual recognition. Tim Williams has become Editor of the journal *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*. Andrew Reynolds has become Executive Editor for archaeology of the new international journal, *Anglo-Saxon*, and has joined the

editorial board for the interdisciplinary monograph series *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture*. Kevin MacDonald has taken over editorship of *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* and Dorian Fuller has become joint editor of the new journal *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* and has also joined the editorial board of *Genetic Resources and Crop Evolution*. Ignacio de la Torre has been invited by the long-standing US team at Olduvai Gorge to work with them at this world-famous early human evolution site. Stuart Brookes, a postdoctoral researcher working with Andrew Reynolds, was the first recipient of the Society for Medieval Archaeology Martyn Jope Award for the best article published in their journal. Finally, Claire Cohen (a PhD student) was nominated for and won an Abbey "1-UCL" Excellence/Endeavour Award for her volunteer position with *Angelfish* (a pilot swimming and water therapy project for disabled and deprived children in Cambodia). The award of £1,000 is being donated to *Angelfish*.

There is ever more pressure on university staff to obtain research grants and PhD studentships and the number of awards made to members of the Institute is too great to list them all individually here. Some of the major ones include a Leverhulme Trust grant to Simon Hillson and Ignacio de la Torre for their project on human tooth-wear in relation to recent hunter-gatherer and Palaeolithic toolkits; a British Academy grant to Fekri Hassan for his project on palaeoenvironments, landscape dynamics and cultural development in middle Egypt; and a grant, also from the British Academy, to Roger Matthews, for his Central Zagros Archaeological Project. This latter project is particularly worthy of note not only because it exemplifies a recent resurgence in UK-Iranian collaborative projects but also because it represents specifically a return to work on the early Neolithic in Kurdistan, where so many of the major studies of the origins of farming were carried out in the 1960s and 70s. Roger has also been very involved in obtaining funding for Iraqi scholars to spend time in Britain after the disasters of the Iraq war. Ceri Ashley's success in obtaining a British Academy UK-Africa Partnership Scheme grant for her research on Landscape Histories: Human Environment and Interactions in Western Victoria Nyanza (Uganda) should also be mentioned here because it involves a major element of funding for local Ugandan archaeologists, and so should David Wengrow's success in obtaining funding from the UCL Futures scheme for research towards a sustainable archaeology in Israel-Palestine, involving cooperation with and between Israeli and

Palestinian archaeologists. It is also relevant to record here the Institute's continuing involvement in Widening Participation activities, thanks in particular to the work of Sarah Dhanjal, working with a number of London schools and hosting the Camden Young Archaeologists' Club.

The number and remarkably wide distribution of Institute fieldwork projects is apparent from the project map and reports elsewhere in this issue of *AI*. Fieldwork obviously continues to be one of the Institute's great strengths. Of the projects that took place in 2007–8 it is particularly worth singling out Andrew Garrard's Qadisha Valley Prehistory Project in northern Lebanon in collaboration with Corinne Yazbeck of Lebanese University. The first two years of fieldwork took place in 2004 and 2005, but the 2006 war and resulting political instability meant that subsequent fieldwork was impossible and it was beginning to look as though the project would have to be drawn to a close prematurely. However, the calmer conditions of summer 2008 finally made possible completion of the fieldwork. Other projects took place in more stable circumstances. Matt Pope's excavations at Beedings, West Sussex, attracted a lot of media attention with their confirmation of the authenticity of one of the most important Early Upper Palaeolithic assemblages from northwestern Europe and evidence for at least two phases of occupation by Neanderthal hunting groups. The Çatalhöyük field season was also a highly successful one, producing architecture and *bucrania* installations similar to those found in Mellaart's 1960s excavations.

As always, scholarly events at the Institute in 2007–8 were far too numerous for them all to be mentioned here. Pride of place must go to *IKUWA 3: the 3rd International Congress on Underwater Archaeology*, which took place in July 2008, organized by Joe Flatman of the Institute, in association with the Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). The congress was the largest ever such meeting of underwater archaeologists in Europe, and was over three years in the planning by an international steering committee. The theme of the congress was challenges to and advances in underwater archaeology, how underwater archaeology can be interlinked across boundaries, and how boundaries – real and imagined, institutional, environmental, political, legislative or other – can be dissolved. Other major events were the conference on *Cultures of Commodity Branding* organized by David Wengrow and Andy Bevan, the winner of the Institute conference award for this year, further supported

by additional funding from the British Academy; the conference on *The Ancient Levant* organized by Karen Wright and supported by funding from the Council for British Research in the Levant; and the conference arising from their Leverhulme-funded research project, "Landscapes of Defence in the Viking Age: Anglo-Saxon England and comparative perspectives" organized by Andrew Reynolds and Stuart Brookes, which brought together experts from various disciplines to discuss key issues in the defence of territories during the period of the Viking incursions of the late eighth to eleventh centuries.

As part of its developing collaboration with the Anthropology Department, the Institute co-sponsored the series of Leverhulme Lectures on "Bridging Disciplines and Transcending Time: across the boundaries between Archaeology and Ethnography" in May 2008, given by Anne Pyburn and Richard Wilk (both of the Departments of Anthropology and Gender Studies, Indiana University, visitors to UCL on Leverhulme Trust Visiting Fellowships). The major one-off

event during the year was the Wheeler Lecture, given, very appropriately, by Dr Mark Kenoyer of the University of Wisconsin, on his exciting work on the Indus civilization and especially the Harappa Archaeological Research Project.

It is very clear from all this that the Institute continues to thrive and to maintain its long-standing place at the centre of the archaeological world, not just in Britain but much more widely. The fact that we have students from 47 different countries studying at the Institute is also a strong indication of that. Moreover, its staff and students are outstanding; the external examiners' reports on the work of our students and the quality of the teaching and support they receive are always a pleasure to read. The British university system's financial future, however, looks increasingly dark and it seems safe to say that Alice's Red Queen, running ever faster to stay in the same place, will be our model for the future. Fortunately, we're better equipped than most to stay ahead.

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 2007/2008 academic year.

The Environment and Culture Research Group

Coordinator: Simon Hillson

Deputy Coordinator: Ignacio de la Torre

Student Coordinators: Brenna Hassett and Anke Cross

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 (see report on pp. 10–11)

Research projects

This was the first year that the project office for the Çatalhöyük Research Project was based in the Institute of Archaeology and this has made close participation considerably easier. Several members of the research group continue to be involved. Louise Martin and her PhD student Liz Henton work with the faunal remains team in collaboration with Nerissa Russell (Cornell University) and Katheryn Twiss (Berkeley). Liz is using stable oxygen isotopes and tooth microwear to look for seasonality in breeding and mobility.

Simon Hillson continues to coordinate the human remains team jointly with Clark Larsen (Ohio State University). This year a substantial start was made on re-inventorying the Neolithic human remains, with 300 being completed. These data are being entered into a new database which will be an important tool for both the human remains team and other areas of research in the project. Arlene Rosen has been working with her PhD student Philippa Ryan on phytoliths which are particularly well preserved at Çatalhöyük. She is using the phytoliths to examine the diversity of plant use on the site and to reconstruct the range of environments exploited in collecting them. A fuller account of the work at Çatalhöyük appears later in this issue of *AI*.

Louise Martin is also collaborating with Yvonne Edwards on animal bone material from Epipalaeolithic sites in Jordan, concentrating on evidence for the exploitation of wild animals. This year she has joined the Epipalaeolithic Foragers in Azraq Project, based in the Leverhulme