Director's Report 2009-11

Stephen Shennan*

The Director of the UCL Institute of Archaeology reports on events since the twelfth issue of *Archaeology International* was published (for 2008/2009) and comments on current developments.

This year has seen a major milestone in the history of the Institute of Archaeology, with the signing last October (2010) of an agreement to establish a presence in Qatar, with the support of the Qatar Foundation and Qatar Museums Authority. This new UCL campus (UCL Qatar) will effectively consist of a new branch of the Institute, although it will be administratively independent, under the directorship of Thilo Rehren, Professor of Archaeological Materials and Technology at the Institute (**Fig. 1**), who will move to Qatar. Initially, it will offer short courses in museums and conservation but preparations are underway for two new Master's degrees – one in Conservation and Museum Studies, the other in the Archaeology of the Arabic and Islamic World – and there will be new appointments in all these areas, as well as support staff. In addition, UCL Qatar will be a centre for research in various aspects of the archaeology of the Arabic and Islamic world, including fieldwork and the materials research for which Thilo is famous. This new development (see also, pp. 28-9) is very much in keeping with the Institute's global role and it will provide many exciting opportunities which otherwise would be beyond our reach.

Back in London things continue to flourish and our outstanding staff to gain recognition for their achievements. There were a record

Fig. 1: Professor Thilo Rehren.

nine promotions last year: four new Professors (Cyprian Broodbank, Sue Hamilton, Liz Pye and Andrew Reynolds), two Readers (Ignacio de la Torre and Tao Wang) and three Senior Lecturers (Andy Bevan, Joe Flatman and Andy Gardner). Staff changes have also taken place. John Tait retired as Edwards Professor of Egyptology in September 2010. The Edwards Chair has been transferred to Prof. Stephen Quirke and a new Lecturer in Egyptian Archaeology has been appointed, Dr Richard Bussmann, a PhD graduate of the Free University of Berlin. Prof. Roger Matthews left earlier this year and has been replaced by Dr Mark Altaweel, who did his PhD at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute; he started in September, as did Prof. Ian Freestone, moving from Cardiff, to take over Thilo Rehren's archaeological materials and technology position on his move to Qatar. Last but not least, Dr Patrick Quinn, a specialist in the scientific analysis of ceramics, arrived in January 2011 as Senior

* UCL Institute of Archaeology,
London WC1H 0PY, United Kingdom
ioa-director@ucl.ac.uk

Research Associate, replacing what had previously been a technician position. In these financially straitened times these appointments represent an important vote of confidence in the Institute on the part of the Faculty and UCL as a whole.

Our commitment to teaching remains second to none, as anyone who knows the Institute will be well aware. In the 2010 National Student Survey, an increasingly important public measure of the quality of undergraduate teaching, we scored 100% for overall student satisfaction with our courses, and we have come first again in the new *Guardian* university guide for students entering in 2012, after a brief dip to second place last year. Our remarkable 100% record in the UCL Provost's Teaching Awards competition remains unbroken, with success for Sue Hamilton last year and Bill Sillar in 2011. We are now in the process of reviewing our undergraduate curriculum, the first major change since the late 1990s, to respond to the ongoing changes in the climate of university education in Britain as well as to changes in archaeology and its related disciplines.

We have also been revising our internal structures, likewise unchanged since the 1990s, replacing the five Research Groups with three new Sections – World Archaeology, Archaeological Sciences and Heritage Studies – which are concerned with teaching as well as research, and setting up a new system of bottom-up research clusters, more focussed than the previous Research Groups, with clearly defined goals and limited lifespans. More noticeable to most people will be the changes in how we present ourselves to the outside world. Thanks to a grant from the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences, we were able to build and launch a completely new website in 2009, with a vastly improved structure and appearance, and with news and events pages which are updated weekly by Jo Dullaghan in her new role as Institute Communications Officer, reporting to the new Communications Committee. Seeing the endless flow of new announcements

week after week brings home the amazing dynamism of the Institute's students and staff. Of course, a further fruit of this new approach is the completely changed appearance of this edition of *Archaeology International*, under its new editor, Emeritus Professor James Graham-Campbell, whom I wish to thank for agreeing to take this on, supported by Andrew Reynolds.

Fig. 2: Professor Sue Hamilton.

We continue to be successful in obtaining research funding from outside sources. I was fortunate enough to obtain an Advanced Grant of €2,000,000 from the European Research Council for my four-year project 'Cultural Evolution of Neolithic Europe'. Sue Hamilton was awarded £642,620 by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council for her project 'Rapa Nui Landscapes of Construction', with Colin Richards of Manchester University (**Fig. 2**). Marcos Martín-Torres and Thilo Rehren were awarded c.€800,000 for their part of the EU-funded 'Narnia' Initial Training Network project on the material culture of the eastern Mediterranean, led by the University of Cyprus. Marcos was also successful in obtaining an AHRC Fellowship for his project 'The Archaeology of Alchemy and Chemistry in the Early Modern World'. We have had a large number of successes with the Leverhulme Trust: an Early Career Fellowship to Gabriel Moshenska for his

Fig. 3: Professor Felipe Fernandez-Armesto.

project on the history of public archaeology in Britain; a research grant of £280,674 to Andrew Reynolds for the project 'Landscapes of Governance: Assembly Sites in England, 5th-11th Centuries'; £101,806 to Simon Hillson for his project on 'Dentition and Early Hominin Diets'; a grant to James Steele of £91,985, for his part in a joint project with the University of Exeter, 'Learning to be Human: Skill Acquisition and the development of the Human Brain'; and £122,760 to Ignacio de la Torre for an International Network, 'Percussive Technology in Human Evolution'. Finally, Cyprian Broodbank obtained a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship of £55,781 to complete his book, *The Making of the Middle Sea*. There were many awards of smaller grants to members of Institute staff. The diversity of projects with major funding gives some indication of the enormous range of research that goes on at the Institute. It is worth emphasising too that there has been no decrease in the world-wide range of Institute fieldwork, as the map elsewhere in this issue shows (pp. 14-15).

As noted above, the events list on the Institute's website shows just how much goes on here so it is only possible to single out two or three recent events for special mention. These include the launch, in 2010, of the Institute's Annual Lecture, generously funded by a donor, with a characteristically lively lecture from Prof. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto on 'Why Cultures Change' (**Fig. 3**). Another is the 7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

Fig. 4: John Alexander.

Fig. 5: Nancy Sandars.

Fig. 6: Rachel Maxwell-Hyslop.

(ICAANE), jointly organised with the British Museum, which was held in April 2010. Pride of place though must go to 'Early History of the Institute Recalled: an Afternoon of Personal Memories from the 1930s to 1989', held on 11 November 2009, at which several people associated with the Institute from its foundation, in the 1930s, to the conclusion of John Evans' Directorship, in 1989, recalled their experiences of the place and the people who worked there during those years. Some, including Arthur ApSimon, Beatrice de Cardi, Peter Gathercole and Ian Hodder, were present in person. Others had had video or audio interviews recorded, including John Evans, John Alexander (**Fig. 4**), Nancy Sandars (**Fig. 5**) and Rachel Maxwell-Hyslop (**Fig. 6**).

Fig. 7: Martin Welch.

Sadly, four of the distinguished participants have died since then, including John Evans himself (Director: 1973–89), whose obituary is contributed below (pp. 7–10) by his successor, David Harris, together with John Alexander and Peter Gathercole, who had been students of Gordon Childe, and Rachel Maxwell-Hyslop. Rachel was not only one of the very first students at the Institute, with Mortimer Wheeler, but also subsequently became Lecturer in Western Asiatic

Archaeology and was of course a leading scholar in her field; she died at the age of 97. Much younger, alas, were Kira Marshall, a student on the MA in Museum Studies, and Martin Welch (**Fig. 7**). Martin had recently become full-time Faculty Tutor but had been a member of the Institute (and previously of the UCL History Department), and a distinguished scholar of Anglo-Saxon studies, for many years. His students and colleagues had prepared a Festschrift for him, but unfortunately it has become a memorial volume.

As in my last report, I have to conclude by stating that we face an uncertain financial future, with the removal of government teaching subsidy and the consequent three-fold increase in university undergraduate fees. The removal of subsidy also applies to Master's courses so the fees for these too will have to increase, though at present it is unclear by how much. The government's market-led reforms are also emphasising the importance of preparing students for employment and of generally improving the 'student experience'. At the same time applications for research funding and evaluations of its outcomes are increasingly expected to take into account the impact of the work outside academia. The Institute is strongly committed to this public engagement agenda and we have many initiatives in this area, not least through our Centre for Applied Archaeology (as described below, by Dominic Perring). We also believe that Archaeology provides an outstanding preparation for employment across a broad range of fields, thanks to its multidisciplinary nature and the experience it offers of teamwork, often in adverse conditions. Our track record on giving students an outstanding education is second to none, as I have indicated in an earlier paragraph, but we will have to redouble our efforts, as we prepare to celebrate our 75th anniversary (see p. 12), in order to maintain our success in the future.