

## Peter Ucko (1938–2007)

### Director of the Institute of Archaeology 1996–2005

Peter Ucko died in June 2007, less than two years after he retired as Director of the Institute of Archaeology. He achieved much in his all too short life, both before and after his time as Director. Many of these achievements – particularly the changes he brought about while Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in the 1970s, and the creation of the World Archaeological Congress in 1986 – have been and will be commemorated elsewhere. In this issue of *Archaeology International* we celebrate the contributions he made to the Institute of Archaeology during his nine years as Director.

We start with a reproduction of the obituary by Stephen Shennan that appeared in the *Guardian* on July 9 2007 and then an overview of Peter's contribution to the Institute, also by Stephen Shennan. There then follow a series of short articles on different aspects of his achievements and some personal reminiscences by members of staff. It is impossible to do full justice either to the man or to his achievements here, but these few pages should remind us how unpredictable, challenging and exciting life in the Institute was under Peter and how the Institute itself and many of the people who work here were irrevocably changed under his influence.



## Peter Ucko

*This obituary by Stephen Shennan appeared in the Guardian on July 9 2007. It is reproduced by kind permission of the Guardian.*

Professor Peter Ucko, former Director of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, who has died at the age of 68, after suffering from chronic diabetes, was always keen to develop his ideas on a broader canvas. The most important of these was to take archaeological issues to groups not normally involved in the discipline – such as indigenous communities around the world. He was a powerful character and never one to avoid controversy. His intensely questioning teaching and management style may not have been to everyone's liking, but it was extremely effective.

Peter came to wider prominence in 1986 when he organised the first World Archaeological Congress – originally planned as the 11th Congress of the International Union of Pre and Protohistoric Sciences, a staid and Eurocentric organisation. He was an outstanding organiser of conferences, and accepted the task on condition that the conference's structure would be thematic, covering contemporary issues, and would include participants from developing countries and members of indigenous communities such as Australian aborigines.

As preparations went ahead in 1984, it became increasingly clear that the congress was under threat from the academic boycott of South Africa. If participation by South African academics was to be permitted, the congress would be disrupted and many of those Peter most wanted to attend would refuse to come.

The eventual decision of the British organising committee to exclude South African participation led to international

uproar, a split in the archaeological world, and the withdrawal of the congress's recognition by the international union. A leader in the Times said that if the event went ahead it would be "a rump congress attended by a disreputable group of British communists and third-world archaeologists".

At a meeting of the executive committee in early 1986, most of its members resigned, allowing Peter to appoint a new committee. The congress took place as planned in Southampton and was an enormous success, with almost 1000 participants. Some of its most memorable sessions revolved around the contributions by members of indigenous communities.

This resulted in a series of books entitled *One World* which Peter initiated and edited. The congress represented a turning point in the development of archaeology, a very public recognition of its political "loss of innocence" and its need to engage with the wider world.

Peter was born in London. His mother was a child psychologist and his father a professor of endocrinology as well as a leading amateur orchestral conductor from whom Peter inherited his love of 18th century music. He went to Bryanston School, Dorset, and after a year at North West London Polytechnic, took a degree in anthropology at University College London (1956-59), opting for courses with a strong archaeological bias. Remaining at UCL, he went on to do a PhD on anthropomorphic figurines of the ancient Near East.

After receiving his doctorate in 1962, he joined the UCL anthropology department as a lecturer and founded the school of material culture. His publications

included a now legendary comparative study of penis sheaths. He also organised and published two influential conferences, *The Domestication of Plants and Animals*, and *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*.

In 1972 Peter became principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra, overseeing a rapid expansion. When he arrived it was entirely white, but Peter responded to increasing political activism by making Aborigines members of its council and committees.

In 1981 he was appointed professor of archaeology at the University of Southampton, where he pioneered new teaching methods. From 1993 to 1996 he was dean of arts in Southampton and enjoyed creatively turning the faculty upside down, to the delight of many of its younger members.

In 1996 he returned to London as director of the Institute of Archaeology, now part of UCL. This was not a popular appointment in some quarters, but he tackled it with characteristic forcefulness, making new appointments, overturning existing structures and overhauling the syllabus at all levels. Before he retired in 2005, he had established close relations with the school of archaeology and museology in Beijing University and a joint International Centre for Chinese heritage and archaeology was founded. This became Peter's main focus after his retirement.

Peter was for many an inspirational teacher and had a massive fund of human warmth. He was extremely generous with his time and his efforts on others' behalf. He sometimes did not recognise the enormous affection people had for him, but he was a person of charisma and dedication who inspired people with his vision and led by example. Even those who fell out with him from time to time recognised those qualities. One of them wrote to me in the last few days: "He was ultimately, for me a life-enhancing force".

He and his partner of 27 years, Jane Hubert, opened their homes in Southampton and London to anyone who was in need of help, conversation and glasses of sparkling wine. Peter depended on Jane in innumerable ways, practical and emotional, and she supported him totally, sometimes at the expense of her own personal and professional interests.

He is survived by Jane and her two children, Tom and Olivia.

*Peter John Ucko, archaeologist and anthropologist, born 27th July 1938, died 14th June 2007.*

*For his PhD, Peter Ucko studied anthropomorphic figurines of the ancient Near East, such as the one left, from about 3500 BC. In 1989, Ucko took part in a reburial of Native American remains in South Dakota, below.*





## Peter and the Institute

### Stephen Shennan

Peter had a great affection for the Institute, going back to the time he spent here as a student. As Director he had an enormous influence on all aspects of its activities, not least because of his prescience – he had an acute sense of where the discipline was going – and his strong belief that the Institute should be at the front of developing trends. In some areas of particular importance to him – for example all aspects of cultural heritage – he himself played a major role in pushing the discipline in directions that he thought important, but even in those areas of less interest to him personally he had a strong sense of future developments and acted to anticipate them.

The key theme of his directorship then was renewal and the most important single element of this was the creation of new appointments, at which he was remarkably successful in a university environment not especially favourable for expansion. The areas of these appointments ranged across the board and virtually without exception have been extremely successful. It is perhaps worth singling out the creation of the position of Professor of Archaeological Materials and Ancient Technology, to which Thilo Rehren was appointed, who has succeeded in making the Institute, with its outstanding laboratory facilities, perhaps the leading university in the world for this sort of research.

Apart from new appointments, a number of specific areas of impact can be identified. First is the new undergraduate curriculum which he introduced immediately on arrival, with its compulsory core courses in the first and second years, including compulsory theory and public archaeology, and its strong sense of progression, pioneered previously in Southampton. This new curriculum largely anticipated the benchmark archaeology curriculum developed nationally shortly afterwards, so that little needed to be altered. A key aspect of the new curriculum was that it was more general than the previous one and recognized that specialization was now the role of Master's courses. The result was the creation of a large number of new Master's degrees, currently more than twenty in total, which has given the Institute an annual cohort of well over 200 Master's students, by far the largest of any archaeology department in Britain if not the world, and has proved a major recruiting ground for PhD students.

Peter devoted particular attention to the area of Heritage Studies and Public

Archaeology, both in terms of pursuing new directions and updating existing ones. Thus, the Conservation degree was completely revised after a review and new Master's degrees in Public Archaeology, Cultural Heritage Studies and the Management of Archaeological Sites introduced. He also created the journal *Public Archaeology* and strongly promoted Widening Participation initiatives. These innovations addressed new needs arising from changing perceptions both within the discipline and in the world at large of the role of archaeology and heritage. Their importance to the younger generation is indicated by the large number of students now doing PhDs at the Institute in these fields.

A rather different aspect of Peter's heritage interests was the significance he attached to UCL's and the Institute's extremely important archaeological collections and the outreach potential they offered, which he strongly encouraged. More generally he gave great importance to what he regarded as the unrealized potential of teaching through objects, something he had done from the beginning of his career in anthropology. This is another gathering trend that Peter anticipated. One of his very last initiatives was the exhibition of the Petrie Palestinian Collection, which he organized after he retired, but he also recognized that the basic work of cataloguing the Institute's collections properly and ensuring that they had satisfactory storage conditions badly needed doing, and one of his last appointments was the creation of a permanent position of Keeper of the Institute's collections to ensure that this work would continue.

The final area to single out is Peter's creation of links with China and the introduction of Chinese archaeology to the Institute, with two novel developments: the creation of two positions in Chinese archaeology jointly with SOAS and the setting up of the International Centre for Chinese Heritage and Archaeology (ICCHA) jointly with the School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University. He was actively pursuing his role as Director of the Centre until a few days before his death. It has led to the creation of new research projects in China, the organization of an international conference on the teaching of field archaeology in Beijing (now in press), an agreement on research projects with the Terracotta Army Museum and the award of Masters and PhD studentships from Hong Kong and Chinese sources for Chinese students to study at the Institute. These developments will continue.

His legacy in all these different areas will remain for a long time to come.

## Heritage heretic: Peter Ucko and one world heritage at the Institute of Archaeology<sup>1</sup>

Beverley Butler

Like any radical intellectual – including Nietzsche, Adorno, Benjamin and Derrida to name but a few to come before him – Peter Ucko was initially quite rightly ambivalent towards making academic ententes vis-à-vis the study of cultural heritage at the IoA. The critical anti-heritage genealogy – the “rage” against the museum and heritage – is entrenched within modernity's metaphysical debates and within deconstructionist and postcolonial alternatives and is undeniably a discourse inextricably bound-up with the political “real” and with mounting moral-ethical concerns.<sup>2</sup> In his transformation of archaeological (and anthropological and material culture) studies into a “one world” discourse Ucko was committing himself to an urgent “politics of recognition”<sup>3</sup> and to an “othering” of Euro-North American “heritage industry” that has marked, in particular, the post-[Second World] war period. Moreover, the resurgence of New Right politics in the 1970s–1990s led to a particularly repressive neo-nationalist appropriation of the “heritage industry”. The threats this particular commoditization of culture and the past held – and continues to hold – for social and cultural justice and for the co-existent politics of diversity and difference has quite rightly prompted opposition from the academy, media dons, intellectuals and from activists and people world-wide striving for basic human and cultural rights.

Crucially, however, it was this very opposition and its accompanying cultural struggle that united diverse groups of academics, activists and public institutions such as museums and heritage spaces and that also provided the basis for apprehending a range of reconstructed and alternative cultural heritage discourses. It is therefore clear that for any vision of cultural heritage studies to be pioneered at the IoA it had to be defined around Ucko's “one world” vision with all the complexity this demands. Under Peter's direction the long-standing Conservation and Museum Studies degrees were thus joined by an MA in Archaeological Site Management, Public Archaeology and in Cultural Heritage Studies. The MA in Cultural Heritage is now celebrating its tenth year and we are still striving to articulate and to critically understand the diverse, changing and alternative patterns

of cultural transmission, of material and intangible heritage representation, of temporalities, memory-work and meaning-making and both the cultural conflicts, neo-colonialisms and the more positive strides being taken towards shaping new, more humane heritage values, and more “just” technologies of representation, recognition and redistribution. The course is also committed to affording cultural heritage studies the same intellectual weight and academic worth as any other university discipline and intellectual field. With the success of the above mentioned “heritage-related” degrees increasing numbers of MA and MPhil/PhD students are producing research work capable of realizing this objective. At the same time a new series of *Critical Heritage* publications (in association with Left Coast Press) is similarly striving to secure academic affirmation and cutting edge research work. One can truthfully say that at the IoA a cultural heritage discourse has been formed worthy of a “one world heritage” title.

#### Notes

- 1 Thanks to Jane Hubert, Peter’s partner and contributor to WAC’s *One World Archaeology* publications, for her insightful characterization of Peter as a “heritage heretic”.
- 2 D. Maleuvre, *Museum memories: history, technology, art* (California: Stanford University Press, 1999).
- 3 C. Taylor, *The politics of recognition in multiculturalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

## Managing archaeological sites and landscapes

Nicholas Stanley-Price,  
Gaetano Palumbo  
and Tim Williams

*Nicholas Stanley-Price:*

Others have described elsewhere Peter’s very broad view of archaeology, as not only a field for research but also as a discipline always embedded in a political and social context. The raw material of archaeology has to be preserved for study and re-study in the future, and also interpreted and re-interpreted for specialist and layman alike. The Institute has been a pioneer in archaeological conservation, training generations of conservators to work in the field and in museums; and an MA in Museum Studies has been successfully offered by the Institute since 1986.

In 1997 Peter expanded substantially the Institute’s commitment to the rapidly developing heritage field by inviting

applications for three new appointments in Museum and Heritage studies. One of them was to focus on heritage sites, contributing teaching to the MA courses in Museum Studies, Public Archaeology and Conservation and also to the undergraduate courses in Public Archaeology. But the real attraction to me, having been persuaded by Peter to apply for the post, was the idea of introducing at the Institute a new MA specializing in heritage site management. There was an evident need for such a course worldwide and the Institute was the obvious home for it. Peter convinced me that my international experience would blend well with the ambitious ideas he had for the Institute’s involvement in heritage projects in different countries, while also appealing to the internationally diverse student intake that the Institute had always attracted.

So it came about that, in the first year in 1998, the MA heritage students could take an optional course in “Conservation and management of archaeological sites”, a title borrowed from the quarterly journal of the same name that I had founded earlier. During the same year UCL approved a proposal to introduce, from 1999, an MA under the same title, which continues to flourish. Peter’s enthusiasm for the topic and strong support for the new MA were crucial. In the same year, he somehow found time to compose a long-promised article on “Enlivening the past”,<sup>1</sup> in which he analysed, sometimes indulging in his wry humour, some of the attempts made to enliven archaeological sites for the non-specialist public.

The way that the MA has evolved, and the impact that it has had on the work of the Institute and of others, are better explained by my co-authors. As it happened, I had to tell Peter in April 2000 that I had been successful in my application to be Director-general of ICCROM and that I would have to resign. He was understandably upset, having made an extraordinary commitment to promoting the new MA and to integrating awareness of site management needs into the mainline work of the Institute. Fortunately, his commitment continued to be realized, thanks to his appointment of my successor.

*Gaetano Palumbo:*

I applied for the position left by Nicholas, in part as an opportunity to return to Europe after several years spent at the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles. I was really surprised, however, to receive an invitation by Peter to go to London for an interview within days.

When the day of the interview came, I entered his office without knowing exactly

what the interview would be, and what kind of welcome I would receive, but I felt immediately at ease and the interview soon became a pleasant conversation. It was the easiest interview of my life, but, again, I was surprised when he called me at my hotel a few hours later to offer me the position, asking me to reply by the evening. Here was the demanding and uncompromising Peter that I had not met earlier. The decision taken, I only had a few weeks to prepare for my move to London, but also to prepare for the course starting in early fall 2000. Fortunately Peter and Nicholas helped me to a smooth transition. Again, I was surprised by his availability to answer my questions and help me to understand the obligations of being a teacher in a British university, but also giving me freedom of organizing the course in the way I thought could be most useful to the students.

Mixing doctrinal lectures, practical experiences, and giving voice to a number of invited guests, but also to the students’ own experience, the course gave to the participants the possibility of increasing their knowledge on the theory and practice of site management planning. I like to think that the formula was successful, and Tim Williams after me has developed this approach even further. Peter has always been there to advise, criticize, challenge, but always leaving final decisions to the teachers. He did not like to reduce site management planning to formulae or recipes, and was critical of many of the fundamental charters and guidelines regulating international conservation approaches. I think however that his criticism was not so much on the content of these charters, but rather on how they were developed, with relatively little interaction from scholars other than western or western-educated ones.

In the two years I spent in London (in 2002 I was captured by the World Monuments Fund with an offer to work in Paris, where my family was, that was impossible to reject) I probably learned more than I gave, thanks to Peter. Conversations with him always turned into challenging ordeals, forcing me to a continuous defence of my position. I do not know if he was a chess player: if he was, I am sure he liked to attack, not defend. In any case our discussions always had a humorous side. He did not like to learn that I was going to leave the Institute after only two years, but as he helped me to be welcomed at the Institute, so he also facilitated my departure, and I naturally felt obliged to help in the transition to the next instructor of the course in Managing Archaeological Sites, Tim Williams. Peter and I met many times after my departure, and my deep regret is that I could not

satisfy his half-serious demand to be my consultant for one of WMF's projects.

*Tim Williams:*

**M**y involvement with the course came about through a chance conversation with Peter in 2000. At the time I was working with English Heritage and, for once, I had turned up early for a meeting. Peter was concerned to develop the long-running Institute of Archaeology project at the Silk Roads city of Merv (Turkmenistan). With the imminent retirement of Georgina Herrmann in 2001, Peter very much wanted the project to not only continue, but to build upon the platform that Georgina had created by helping to get Merv World Heritage status the year before.<sup>2</sup> Peter was passionate about the wider contemporary social context of archaeological work, and rightly saw that Merv presented an opportunity to develop archaeological site management alongside archaeological research with a view to creating more a holistic approach to the interaction of archaeology in a post-colonial context.

Gaetano and I worked alongside the Turkmen Ministry of Culture in 2001 to develop approaches to the holistic management of the site, examining conservation, research, site management, interpretation and other needs. In 2002 Gaetano left to the WMF and Peter drew me into the Institute. The offer was a great one: to take on the Masters course that Nicholas and Gaetano had done so much to establish, and to take Merv forward as a research project, into not just the archaeology of this crucially important Central Asian city, but also as an integrated programme of capacity building, training, conservation and education.<sup>3</sup>

Recruitment on the Masters course has grown in strength, not least from Peter's vision of developing complementary areas of study in Cultural Heritage, Public Archaeology, Conservation, etc. Each year Peter gave a customary brilliant opening lecture on authenticity. Students were amazed by the range of his knowledge, sparkling wit and cutting remarks, and his ability to stand in silence waiting for them to respond to a question he had posed the class: no easy avoidance of his assertions and challenges. Peter was always inspirational, never less than challenging; argumentative, but also full of encouragement. The course has been a delight for me to develop, especially as it often resulted in debates with Peter, the best late at night as the Institute began to grow quiet.

Most importantly, for me, Peter had an ethical core which questioned why we intervene in archaeological sites and for whose benefit. Archaeology happens now,

not in the past, and we are as concerned with the living as the dead. How we interact with others over the management and interpretation of the archaeological resource, and how we situate ourselves in respect to others' values and needs, lies at the heart of our discipline. The social and political context of our work is crucial, and I have seldom felt so comfortable with a vision shared. I miss Peter, but he helped me to decide where I wanted to be.

#### Notes

- 1 P. J. Ucko, "Enlivening a 'dead' past", *Conservation and management of archaeological sites* 4, 67–92, 2000.
- 2 G. Herrmann, "A Central Asian city on the Silk Road: ancient and medieval Merv", *Archaeology International* 1997/1998, 32–6, 1998; G. Herrmann, *Monuments of Merv: traditional buildings of the Karakum*, (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1999).
- 3 M. Corbishley, *The ancient cities of Merv: a handbook for teachers*, (Colchester: Institute of Archaeology, UCL, 2005); T. Williams, "Ancient Merv, Turkmenistan: research, conservation and management at a World Heritage Site", *Archaeology International* 2002/2003, 40–3, 2003; T. Williams, "Conservation issues of Ancient Merv monuments", *MIRAS* 14, 140–4, 2004; T. Williams, "Training courses at the old Silk Road city of Merv, Turkmenistan", *Archaeology International* 2005/2005, 53–7, 2007.

## Peter Ucko, Africa and me

Kevin MacDonald

**W**hen I shared my last dinner with Peter Ucko at our much-frequented Chinese restaurant on Leigh Street, he cleared up the final mystery of our friendship. Years before, shortly after his contested appointment as the Institute's Director, I had written him a letter offering to leave the Institute, in part because of the role I had played in opposing his appointment (on ethical rather than *ad hominem* grounds). I stated something to the effect that I was keen to expand African archaeology in the UK, and understood that he might be sympathetic to this, but if he would find it difficult to work with me to this end, I would pack my bags. Instead, he invited me to the first of what became many Chinese dinners, and our friendship blossomed. The missing part of the story, which I learned at our last dinner, was that at first he had crumpled my letter and muttered something like, "who does this b\*\*\*\*\* think he is?" He took it as a sort of ultimatum – support Africa or I quit. But he stopped himself, remembering that he had written a very similar letter to a new head of department when he was

a young lecturer in UCL Department of Anthropology. He concluded, "maybe he is the same kind of b\*\*\*\*\* as me..." And the rest is history...

Peter's commitment to Africa and to African students was an inspiring one. There was not much that he would not do to this end. Indeed, I know of instances when he reached into his own pocket to subsidize the living expenses of African students and visitors. This is because we were not always successful in raising funds – and I remember scurrying about with him at short notice to many VIP lunches and meetings to make pleas to potential donors (usually without result). But, because of Peter, the Department of Archaeology at Legon got a new Land Rover, students were brought over from Mali and Zimbabwe amongst other places to do degrees, and many African researchers enjoyed sabbatical periods at the Institute. Using his well-honed skills of persuasion and advance-spending he worked with me to create a joint BIEA/UCL second post in African Archaeology at the Institute, which was eventually made permanent. This position, occupied by Andrew Reid, has supplied a breadth to our African archaeology teaching at the Institute which other UK institutions lack.

I am certain that Peter's love for Africa was a deep and abiding one – despite the fact that, comparatively speaking to his work in Australia, he never spent much time there. I think it was because he was always for the underdog and the under-valued. It was magical to watch his face warm as he conversed with African colleagues and did everything within his means to be of use of them (whether sending books, paying airfares, or – as always – trying to set up some new initiative). In the face of a total lack of support from the EU and the British Council, he insisted that we press on with the MA in African Archaeology. As a result, there are now 32 graduates of this degree who form a large part of the new cadre of researchers in African archaeology.

Before closing this overly brief tribute, I must acknowledge the role that Peter played in keeping me energized and committed to my vocation in African archaeology. I am sure that moments of doubt in our vocation come to all of us from time to time. My first doubt came as a beginning research student in 1990 when, deep into my glasses of whisky in a Dakar bar, I had finally resolved to leave archaeology and go into development anthropology instead. Providence sent me a retired Senegalese historian sitting on the bar stool next to me, who said "You must think very little of us Africans if you



think our lives are worth saving, but that our culture is not." Yet, in 1999, tired of continual malaria and various struggles with continental colleagues and American Afrocentrists, I considered throwing in the towel once more. But, Peter swept me away to his cottage in the country and spent a weekend with me arguing from every conceivable angle that I should fight on – that talk has carried me this far.

## Peter and the Institute collections: a personal note

Rachael Sparks

I first met Peter Ucko back in June 1999 when I was summoned unexpectedly to a job interview at the Institute. I found myself facing a larger-than-life presence, somewhat florid and wild of hair, prone to sudden enthusiasms and full of his latest mission – to rescue the Institute's founding collection of archaeological artefacts from obscurity and neglect. He had recently written an article on the history of this material<sup>1</sup> excavated by Flinders Petrie in British Mandate Palestine back in the 1920s and 1930s, and was now looking to find someone to take on the task of getting it all properly catalogued and researched. The interview went swimmingly, I was called back for a second meeting that evening, and by the end of the day Peter had told me that the job was mine.

The oddity of finding myself at this interview only emerged later, when Peter told me how he had managed to track me down. Some years previously I had visited the Institute and worked with the Petrie Palestinian Collection while researching my doctorate. A report I had sent on this work brought me to Peter's attention. It placed me at the University of Sydney, but in typical fashion Peter had decided that the best way to get hold of me was to ring an old mate of his in Canberra. This led him back to Sydney, who directed him to "possibly Oxford or Cambridge". Actually, I'd gone off to excavate in Jordan, but never mind. Peter then rang another contact in Cambridge. As luck would have it he not only knew who I was, but had a phone number for my partner in London – who I coincidentally happened to be visiting after the end of my field season. For anyone but Peter, this idiosyncratic approach would have resulted in a complete lack of results, but then perhaps fortune favours the optimistic as well as the bold.

When I arrived to take up my new job at the Institute, the most useful piece of advice I was given was to "show no fear"

when dealing with Peter (the source will remain anonymous). While not always easy to follow, Peter did seem to appreciate a forthright response, being himself a man of strong opinions. For example, he hated staples with a passion and always insisted on any papers being sent to him being held together with paperclips. Inevitably, these would get intertwined, the papers dislodged and disordered, and Peter frustrated. After a few months, I got into the habit of keeping copies of any paperwork sent upstairs, as there was a good chance I'd get a request for another copy whenever the paperclips got the upper hand.

Then there was the intrigue of the messages that came back, scrawled on the top of emails and other sundries. I knew they would be a succinct command to do something, probably urgently, but what? Fortunately, Peter's secretaries have all proved to be skilled cryptographers and disaster was usually averted in time for me to do whatever it was that needed to be done. Strangely, although I managed to decipher Flinders Petrie and Kathleen Kenyon's handwriting within a fairly short time of being at the Institute, Peter's script was always in a class of its own, a perfect example of the difficulties faced by archaeologists in interpreting overly short texts.

The Petrie Palestinian Collection thrived under Peter's attention: over 12,000 objects got catalogued, money was found to get the metalwork x-rayed, and through a magnificent sleight of hand he even managed to turn my temporary MA placement student into a full time assistant. While I have always suspected that Peter kept an illegal banknote press under his desk for times such as these, I was never able to catch him at it. When I left the Institute for a stint at the Pitt Rivers Museum, my assistant Elizabeth Grey took over as Curator of the Palestinian Collection, and continued the project under Peter's eagle eye. During that time, he pulled off another miracle: raising £100,000 to fund a major exhibition of this material at the Brunei Gallery. By the time of his retirement, he already had a full agenda for the coming year, juggling exhibition development and the production of a catalogue to accompany it.<sup>2</sup> I came back to the Institute at this point, to a permanent post as Keeper of Collections (created by Peter in a final blitz of college-defying generosity) and the exhilarating task of curating my first exhibition. Titled "A Future for the Past: Petrie's Palestinian Collection", this opened in January 2007, and drew excellent responses from both the Palestinian community and the general public. Its centrepiece was a reconstruction of a Palestinian dig house

of the 1930s, drawing people back into colonial archaeology in its heyday, while challenging their perceptions of peoples, places, and world heritage – themes very dear to Peter's heart.

I'm surrounded by Peter's legacy every day. As a direct result of his persistence in raising the profile of the Institute of Archaeology Collections, these have gone from being a largely forgotten backwater to a thriving centre of activity – with two permanent members of staff, one temporary researcher and five student volunteers currently working on improving artefact documentation, interpretation, storage and access. The collection is in the process of being computerized and digitized, with plans to put it online in the near future, making it even easier for staff, students and researchers to make use of this fabulous resource. None of this would have been possible without Peter's enthusiasm, commitment and drive – and, I suspect, sense of humour. Our current and continued success will stand as a monument to his vision.

### Notes

- 1 P. J. Ucko, "The biography of a collection: the Sir Flinders Petrie Palestinian collection and the role of university museums", *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 17(4), 351–99, 1998.
- 2 R. T. Sparks & S. Laidlaw, *A future for the past: Petrie's Palestinian collection. Essays and exhibition catalogue*, 2007.

## With Peter Ucko in China

Thilo Rehren

Peter and China: two words which are welded together in my memory so that I can't think of one without thinking of the other. It began in November 2001 when Peter first took me to China as part of a group of colleagues from the Institute, visiting Beijing, Hefei, Anyang and Xi'an. He opened an entirely new world for me; a world where lumps of slag were considered worthy museum exhibits, a world of long travel and never-ending wonder.

Little did I know then what was in store for me and how this would develop; but before long I was back in China, in mid December 2003, for the opening ceremony of the International Centre for Chinese Heritage and Archaeology (ICCHA) at Peking University. It was probably then that I experienced Peter at his most intense, talking to friends and colleagues, reacting to last-minute changes in the programme, but most importantly seeing one of his dreams taking shape, moving into reality. He seemed to be



December 2003, opening ceremony of ICCHA. Above: Professors Zhang Wenbin of Peking University and Malcom Grant of UCL on the right; Wang Tao, Peter Ucko and David Norse, on the left. Below: Peter Ucko and Gao Chongwen after signing the protocol establishing ICCHA.

happy to sit on the side seeing the powers to be to take centre stage: here, Professors Zhang Wenbin and Malcom Grant, the heads of Peking University and UCL, respectively. However, it was the two heads of department who signed the protocol establishing ICCHA, Peter Ucko and Gao Chongwen.

What was the reason behind these travels and ceremonies? Peter had worked hard in close collaboration with Professor Gao Chongwen, director of the School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University, and Professor Li Boquian of the Centre for the Study of Chinese Civilisation, to establish this joint centre as a permanent academic organization.

The aim of ICCHA is to promote the preservation of Chinese cultural heritage, and the development of Chinese archaeology and associated fields. For this, a programme of training and international academic exchange and engagement in important academic research is planned, involving not only staff and students from Peking University and UCL, but also from other archaeological institutions and departments. It was agreed that the focus of the Centre's work initially will be on archaeometallurgy, archaeobotany, artefact and site conservation, public archaeology, museology, site management and field techniques and analysis, playing to the strengths and interests of both partners.

A number of projects have already been implemented under the auspices of the ICCHA; among these are:

- a series of studentships for Masters' training in Conservation, Managing Archaeological Sites, and Archaeological Materials from 2004 to 2008, funded by the Sun Hung Kai Properties Kwoks' Foundation in Hong Kong
- the first group of three three-year doctoral scholarships for Chinese students



at the Institute of Archaeology who started in 2007, again most generously sponsored by the Sun Hung Kai Properties Kwoks' Foundation in Hong Kong, as enshrined in a Memorandum of Understanding between the SHKP Kwoks' Foundation and UCL

- two international conferences sponsored by a very significant donation from the Simon Li Fund, the first of which took place in 2006, on the *Teaching of Archaeological Field Methods*; the second is planned for November 2008, on *Sharing Archaeology*
- a five-year joint project with the Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses of Qin Shihuang to study the organization of metal production of the Army's 30,000+ bronze weapons

- a project sponsored by the Sino-British Fellowship Trust on early metallurgy (the Zhouyuan Project, on an important bronze casting workshop) as well as several other projects in which ICCHA is involved in one way or another.

Moving ICCHA into the future will be an important task for the Institute of Archaeology as a world-leading department with a global outlook on archaeology, and a particular interest in comparative studies, and a major challenge for me. Peter worked on this with unbridled energy both when he was still director of the IoA, and after his so-called retirement; a hard act to follow but worth every effort!

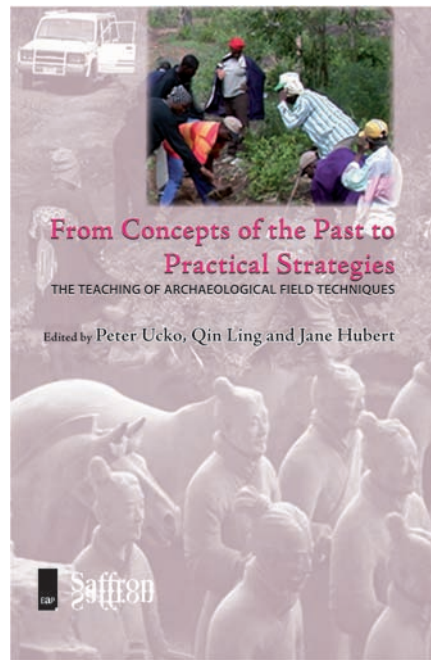


## Egypt and China – Peter's last passion

Wang Tao

Peter was an Egyptologist. His first book *Anthropomorphic Figurines of Predynastic Egypt and Neolithic Crete* (1968) established his name in Egyptology, as well as his comparative method. In his late years he was deeply attracted to China. His first encounter with Chinese archaeology was in the mid-1980s when several leading Chinese archaeologists came to the first World Archaeology Congress (WAC) organized by Peter at Southampton. Some years later, when Professor Li Boqian (by now Head of the Archaeology Department, Peking University) and Professor Ren Shinan (by now Director of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) visited the UK, they found Peter had taken up the Directorship of the Institute of Archaeology at UCL. Peter welcomed them to the IoA, made special arrangements for them to visit Stonehenge, and that evening invited them for dinner at a restaurant in London's Chinatown. Professor Li and Peter became friends. This resulted in Peter's paying a number of visits to China and eventually the birth of ICCCHA – a joint venture between Peking University and UCL. Peter was in love with China – the country and its people fascinated him – even if, in his heart, Egypt remained his first affection.

It is not so much of a coincidence then that Peter's last academic work touches upon both China and Egypt. It was a chapter for the publication of the conference he organized in Beijing in 2006: *From Concepts of the Past to Practical Strategies: the teaching of archaeological field techniques*. Peter was so excited when he discovered that a number of Chinese archaeologists, including Xia Nai, the doyen of Chinese archaeology, had studied in London in the 1930s, and had excavated under Flinders Petrie and Mortimer Wheeler. Xia's PhD thesis was on Egyptian beads. This set Peter thinking about the close relationship between Chinese archaeology and archaeology in Britain. It was detective work that threw a great deal of light on the nature of archaeological practice in a world context in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Peter was working on this, and on the editing of the book,<sup>1</sup> in his hospital bed, almost till the final moment of his life. Although he never claimed that he had become an archaeologist of China he had become passionate about that country and was determined to make his voice heard in China. In 2006, we travelled together to ten Chinese cities and interviewed students and academic staff at a dozen



Cover of Peter's last book, which came out of the conference which took place in Beijing in 2006.

universities where archaeology is taught as a degree course. It was on one of our many long train journeys that we talked for hours about writing a book together, comparing the archaeology that is taught in China's universities and in the UK. Without Peter, the book will not appear, but his influence in China will not diminish; his contribution has become an important chapter in the history of Chinese archaeology.

### Notes

- 1 Peter Ucko, Qin Ling and Jane Hubert (eds). *From Concepts of the Past to Practical Strategies: the teaching of archaeological field techniques*. (London: Saffron/EAP, 2008).

## Peter and Egyptian archaeology at the Institute

David Jeffreys

As an undergraduate in the early 1970s I certainly remember Peter as a brooding postgraduate presence around what was then the Egyptology Department in Malet Place, but for ten years after graduating in 1975 I was employed year-round in fieldwork in the UK, Egypt and the Near East, and to a certain extent "dropped out" due to the distance from and lack of communication with UK archaeological politics; certainly I was only dimly aware until later of the controversy surrounding the Southampton World Archaeology Congress.

Peter obviously assumed a far greater role in our professional lives after his appointment as Director of the Institute of Archaeology. Egyptology had been subsumed into the Institute not long

before, and for me personally this period provides a sequence of rather chaotic memories: my own recent appointment to UCL; the administrative departmental adjustments involved in joining the Institute, and the initially lukewarm reception of Egypt into its teaching structure; my (enthusiastic but ill-judged?) suggestion just before this that an Egyptian Archaeology BA might be a good idea; and my appointment as a very green Faculty Tutor at a time of other equal, or greater, administrative ructions as the new Social and Historical Sciences Faculty (comprising the Anthropology, Archaeology, Economics, Geography, History, and History of Art departments) was carved away from the existing Arts and Natural Sciences structure – and all this on top of recent parenthood.

So for me (perhaps in a way that runs counter to the experience of some other members of Institute staff) Peter's appointment represents a lively and interesting, though relatively stable, passage in my time at UCL. He was a great supporter of the teaching of Egyptian Archaeology here, and I have often wondered what his position would have been if he had been Director of the IoA at the time of the demise of the Egyptology Department: would Egypt have been welcomed into the IoA fold? Would the pressure to merge have been resisted?

Peter was – inevitably perhaps, given his research background – determined to take a direct interest in the way Egypt was taught, and was extremely persuasive in getting us to change the time-honoured syllabus (originally designed for the existing undergraduate degree courses in Hebrew and Egyptian and Ancient History and Egyptology, neither of which had been particularly popular) to something more comparable to and compatible with the archaeology courses taught at the Institute. He also took an active position over the running and future direction of the Petrie Museum, which remains a vital teaching resource for Egyptian archaeological teaching at all levels. In recent times Egyptian Archaeology has recruited respectable numbers, with applications comparable to BA Archaeology and bringing in about a quarter of IoA students each year, many of whom have gone on to play an important part in the life of the Institute.

On a more personal note I have to record my gratitude to Peter for agreeing to be my PhD supervisor: after a long hiatus due to administrative and teaching duties, I finally picked this up again in the late 90s, and I might very well still be at it had it not been for his persistence in enquiring (hounding might be a better word) how things were progressing – long before the days of student logbooks!



## Peter and Encounters with Ancient Egypt

John Tait

The first hint of the encounters to come reached the Institute some time before Peter became Director in 1996. A query came through a colleague as to the ancient Egyptians' attitude towards the monuments and sculpture of the past that must have been an obvious feature of their surroundings. We had some discussion of this, and sent back a measured response.

No more was heard until a good while after Peter had taken up the directorship, other matters being naturally more urgent. However, in due course Peter unveiled his ideas for a wide-ranging conference that was meant to shake people up. It was not just to be about the then fashionable "Egyptomania", nor what the leading subject-bibliography at that time disdainfully consigned to the heading "History and Progress of Egyptology". The core question was to be how ancient Egypt can hold such an exceptional (or disproportionate) fascination both for academics – including Peter himself – and for the general public. Issues of heritage and the present-day Egyptians' rights to their own past were to be prominent.

I was keen to be involved. Both Peter and I were delighted that we could persuade Dominic Montserrat to join me as an organizer for the conference. Dominic shared particular interests with Peter: Sigmund Freud and his collection of Egyptian antiquities – and he had already written his book on the reception of Akhenaten.<sup>1</sup> He had also had a large input into the Petrie Museum's exhibition "Ancient Egypt: digging for dreams", at the Clock Tower, Croyden, a visit to which became part of the programme. Sadly, Dominic died in 2004, and already at the time of the conference was not well. He still bravely insisted on leading the Sunday tour of Egyptianizing monuments within London. This, by a brilliant idea of Olivia Forde's, who effectively was the third organizer, was ferried about by a red London double-decker bus, the top floor of which was irresistible to participants from abroad. There was difficulty in finding a catchy title for such a wide-ranging event, but it was Dominic's idea to call the conference "Encounters...". As ever, Peter found many objections to this, but adopted it. One of our harder tasks was to convince Peter that the conference could not be held quite as rapidly as he wished: "We will all be dead first" was his comment, but eventually the event was scheduled for December 2000.

Peter had very clear ideas as how things were to be run. There were of course to be no parallel sessions, and (as with WAC) papers should be circulated in advance, and not read but discussed on the day. This mostly worked well. Lavishly illustrated papers presenting art had naturally to be given in full, and some speakers were almost unstoppable in their enthusiasm. We were very lucky with those colleagues who consented to act as Chairs. The speakers included a galaxy of Peter's friends and associates, and also some of Dominic's and mine, but also many others were attracted by the ideas behind the conference. Peter himself almost entirely avoided speaking, but he was ever present, watching out for any potential glitches or oversights. The participants were very diverse, and the sessions proved as attractive to London's community of enthusiasts as to professionals. The conference's profile on the web happily meant that many Egyptians who could not think of travelling to London were able to feel included.

It was clear that Peter always intended that the conference should lead to a very substantial publication. This had to take the form of coherent volumes that each had their own clear focus and would add up to a contribution to archaeology and to all the subject areas represented. One consequence was that, painfully, some excellent papers had to fall by the wayside, and a number have been published elsewhere. I particularly regret that Ancient Egypt in Education never became a volume, but Peter was right that no satisfactory book looked like taking shape.

Peter took detailed charge of all aspects of the editing of the eight books, which between them had a dozen editors, seven from the Institute. The project became a key part of his plans to resurrect a UCL Press with a commitment to archaeology. That enterprise soon afterwards entered stormy waters, but happily is now back on course. Nevertheless, Peter was proud that the production of the volumes, once edited, was achieved in record time.<sup>2</sup>

The reception of the conference publications cannot yet be assessed. There have been rather few reviews, which may be a sign that the books do not present a ready target for snipers. All the books are to an extent interdisciplinary, making it difficult for a single reviewer to sit in judgement even on one of them. Within the Institute, there has been a clear influence on teaching and student projects. Outside, the most obvious impact has been made by Ancient Egypt in Africa, as the issues there were already very much alive and discussed by Africanists and at least some who work on Egypt. Indeed, it

is the one volume so far to be reprinted. There have since been conferences and publications that relate to one aspect or other of the series. Encounters cannot claim to have been the original inspiration for all of these: good ideas usually occur to more than one person at once. What was special was Peter's vision of the enterprise as a whole.

### Notes

- 1 D. Montserrat, *Akhenaten: history, fantasy and ancient Egypt* (London: Routledge, 2000).
- 2 The full list of books, published in 2003 and now marketed by Left Coast Press, is: D. O'Connor & S. Quirke (eds), *Mysterious lands*. R. Matthews & C. Roemer (eds), *Ancient perspectives on Egypt*. D. Jeffreys (ed.), *Views of ancient Egypt since Napoleon Bonaparte. Imperialism, colonialism and modern appropriations*. P. Ucko & T. Champion (eds), *Wisdom of Egypt. Changing visions through the ages*. J. Tait (ed.), "Never had the like occurred". *Egypt's view of its past*. S. MacDonald & M. Rice (eds), *Consuming ancient Egypt*. J.-M. Humbert & C. Price (eds), *Imhotep today. Egyptianizing architecture*. D. O'Connor & A. Reid (eds), *Ancient Egypt in Africa*.

## Peter and Institute publications

Ruth Whitehouse

Developing the Institute's publications was one of Peter's major interests: he took on the Chairmanship of Publications Committee from the time he became Director and he continued in this role after his retirement, right up to his death. One of his aims was to increase the quantity and quality of publications by Institute staff, in the context of the Research Assessment Exercise (the 2001 RAE was a major preoccupation during the middle years of Peter's directorship); another was to raise the profile of the publications by creating one or more distinct series of books that would be clearly identified with the Institute. He thought, rightly in my opinion, that the lack of such a publications series constituted a gap in the profile of the Institute as one of the largest and most prestigious departments of archaeology in the world. A third aim was to establish a new in-house journal, as well as one or more other journals associated with the Institute.

### The journals

The first issue of *Archaeology International* (1997/1998) came out in 1998. Its purpose was to combine the roles of

the former *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology* and the *Annual Report* and to do so in an annual publication that combined short research reports with news of other research-related activities of the Institute. David Harris initially took on the editorship for one or two issues and went on to edit eight – yet another example of Peter's powers of persuasion! The publication has been well received and constitutes some of the Institute's most effective advertising material. The other journal that Peter initiated was *Public Archaeology*. Unlike *Archaeology International* it is not produced by the Institute but by a separate publisher (initially James & James, more recently Maney); however the editor from the beginning has been Neal Ascherson, honorary lecturer at the IoA, and the journal has a formal relationship with the Institute, through its Publications Committee. *Public Archaeology* was first published in 2000 and comes out four times a year; it covers all the issues of heritage, politics and ethics that were so close to Peter's heart. It remains the only journal specifically devoted to this rapidly developing field of archaeology.

### The books

The books took rather longer than the journals to be developed. Before Peter's time, the organization of Institute publications was rather low key. Staff were encouraged to publish elsewhere if possible, with publication by the Institute reserved mainly for books that were considered academically valuable but not commercially viable. There was no attempt to standardize publications in terms of format or styles – and certainly no idea of creating what today would be called a "corporate identity". Storage and distribution were always problematic, since the Institute has little storage space and could not afford dedicated staff time to deal with advertising or book orders. Distribution was normally undertaken by Archetype, under Jim Black, who also advertised Institute books, initially in a printed catalogue, later on the Archetype website. All this worked quite well and we are grateful to Jim Black for his help, both with printing and with distribution, but it is fair to say that Institute books were not promoted very actively and did not reach as wide a public as they might have done. Peter was determined to change all this.

He believed that the best route for the future of Institute publications was to secure an agreement with an established publisher. The opportunity to do this arose in 2003, when he initiated discussions with representatives of Cavendish Press, who developed the UCL Press<sup>1</sup> label, as they expanded beyond their core interests in law books to develop

academic publishing in the humanities. A productive two years followed: Publications Committee was put on a more organized footing, Marion Cutting was appointed as Committee secretary (vastly improving its efficiency) and more than a dozen books were published with UCL Press. These included the eight volumes of the *Encounters with Ancient Egypt* series and Peter's own Festschrift, *A Future for Archaeology*, edited by Robert Layton, Stephen Shennan and Peter Stone, which was presented to Peter at a memorable day-long meeting celebrating his work, held in January 2006.

At about the same time as this celebratory meeting, the productive relationship with UCL Press came to an end. Cavendish Press was sold off to Taylor & Francis and for a few months it was unclear whether UCL Press would survive as an entity and what would happen to the Institute books. There were long discussions both in Publications Committee and behind the scenes as to whether we should agree to publish with Routledge (part of Taylor & Francis), or whether we should seek an entirely new deal with another publisher. During this period Peter met Mitch Allen, an American publisher who had just founded a new press, Left Coast Press. Peter opened discussions and by the March 2006 meeting of Publications Committee, was able to present the details of a proposed new deal with LCP. After considerable debate, the proposal was accepted and the contract with LCP signed in July 2006. This deal represented a huge leap of faith on both sides. On Peter's side this was because Left Coast Press was a new foundation with no track record (although this was not true of Mitch Allen himself, who had previously established AltaMira Press, a very successful publisher of academic books, especially in archaeology and anthropology). On Mitch's side there was considerable risk in taking on a commitment to publish so many books (the complete list that had been previously agreed with UCL Press), not all of which were obviously commercially attractive. However, the deal can be seen as a resounding success. As well as taking over the books already published by UCL Press, Left Coast Press has published 14 new books for the Institute: 1 in 2006 and 13 in 2007. Many of these books were needed for the RAE submission date of the end of 2007 – a deadline responded to in truly heroic fashion by Mitch. As well as the main series of Institute publications with LCP, Peter initiated the establishment of a number of sub-series with specific themes, the most developed of which is Beverley Butler's series on Critical Perspectives on Cultural Heritage, of which three volumes

are already published, including Beverley's own book, *Return to Alexandria*, and two more are in preparation.

Not content with these achievements, Peter also sought a relationship with another press, to publish a specialist series on Asian archaeology, and in October 2006, he signed a contract with Saffron Press to this end.

In relation to publications, as to so much else, Peter has left the Institute a highly productive legacy.

### Notes

- 1 An earlier incarnation of UCL Press had ceased to trade some years before.

## Memories of Peter 1

Liz Pye

We certainly lived in interesting times while Peter was Director. Like some others, I was apprehensive at his arrival and this seemed justified by his visible suspicion of both conservation and museum studies – for the first three months or so of his directorship we wondered if both were for the chop. We fought hard, and I felt we had probably won once he started to claim that he had a far better grip on conservation than any of us. Museum Studies seemed more uncertain and I can remember lying awake the night before a decisive meeting. In the end, screwing up my courage, I suggested it would be possible to keep the Masters degree in Museum Studies as well as introducing degrees in Public Archaeology and Cultural Heritage studies. The wind was completely taken out of my sails when, smiling indulgently, he agreed.

I will be forever grateful to him for giving me a year's sabbatical. This came with the condition that I produced a book on conservation. He was taking a risk as he had no idea whether I had a book in me (nor did I). For me it was an enormously refreshing experience to have so much time for reading, thinking and writing. Having only written in short bursts before, I found I really enjoyed the whole process of wrestling with ideas and capturing them in writing. I am also grateful that he was always willing to look at what I had written – this was never a comfortable experience, in fact it was often excoriating, but his comments were always interesting.

Other memories: of his unnerving habit of leaving his door open and the feeling that he might pounce at any time as you went past in the lift or along the corridor; of his habit of prowling about the building; of his taking a group of us to Norway, telling us to bring only hand luggage (quite a challenge in winter),



then expecting us to wait at Oslo airport while his rather more extensive luggage was disgorged from the hold and onto the carousel; of his willingness to spend a day watching and listening to teaching of conservation practice so he could understand what we did and how we did it; of his warm support for the museum development project I was involved with in sub-Saharan Africa.

And who can forget his inquisitiveness and omnivorous interests, his charm, and the days when it was not safe to go near him. He stirred us up and widened our horizons, and life is certainly calmer now.

## Memories of Peter 2

### Ruth Whitehouse

I first met Peter in 1986, when the 11th Congress of the International Congress of Pre- and Protohistoric Sciences was being transformed into the first World Archaeological Congress, and I took over one of the sessions abandoned by the original organizer. Like most people involved in that first WAC, I found it an exciting, inspiring and above all a politicizing experience, which left me with a profound admiration for the man who could bring it about. Nonetheless, when his appointment as Director of the Institute was proposed, I opposed it – not because I doubted he would make an excellent director, but because of the way the deed was done. Peter undoubtedly knew who had taken which stance in relation to his appointment, but he never showed any sign of holding it against me.

Peter had such a multi-faceted character and held such strong views that life around him in the Institute was always something of a roller-coaster. I crossed swords with him on a number of occasions, when I felt I had to take a stand on an issue of principle. I rarely (if ever) won these arguments and I may never have influenced Peter's views at all, but the fact that one could disagree with him quite vehemently and then move on, with no residue of hard feelings, was something I valued greatly.

Peter was always very supportive of me professionally but what I remember best is his great personal kindness. One example occurred in 1999 when my partner John had to have a major operation. I mentioned this to Peter some time in advance, but we didn't discuss it again until the day of the operation itself, when he phoned me in the evening to ask how it had gone. That he had recorded the date and remembered to ring me at a time when I was feeling particularly vulnerable was typical. Like many others, I feel I have lost not only a colleague and professional inspiration, but also a friend.

## Memories of Peter 3

Bill Sillar

I gained so much from Peter both personally and professionally, a debt that I can only hope to repay by trying to contribute to archaeology and life with some of the same critical enthusiasm and inclusiveness that Peter achieved.

At a time of crisis Peter gave me the life-line of inviting me transfer a research fellowship to the Institute of Archaeology, UCL. He then challenged me to help coordinate an undergraduate course on Indigenous Archaeology, which we developed into a series of public seminars that filled the Institute with lively people and lively debate. Peter had a nagging distrust of the status quo – he drew attention to inequalities, injustice or exclusion that others either didn't see or choose to ignore. He was also a superb academic match-maker: he would bring people together and identify shared interests that were often somewhat tangential to their better-know specializations, he would then find some point of debate or dispute and niggle away until they were all deep in discussion. Frequently Peter and Jane offered food, drink and hospitality to ensure that any other plans people had for the day, evening or week were abandoned as they were drawn into Peter's web. This all came at a cost. It was rare to leave Peter without having been given some further task to perform, and it was usually only after you had left that you realized quite the enormity of what you had just agreed to do. But the cost was far greater for Peter and Jane who gave their own time and resources to work relentlessly at many and varied projects particularly organizing meetings and editing thousands of papers from colleagues around the world. The demands he placed on colleagues and his willingness to be openly critical of individuals as well as policies did lead to some major falling-outs. Yet, Peter never lost sight of the individual, he took time to find-out about people's personal lives: their relationships, family life and health and showed a genuine concern to anyone who shared their problems with him. Sadly he would not accept the same personal concern from those around him. His unwillingness or inability to slow down the hectic pace he set must have contributed greatly to his health problems and his untimely death.

But for me Peter is still here. I gained many friends through Peter, much of my professional work has been shaped by Peter's influence, The Institute of Archaeology is a lively and sociable place

to work largely due to Peter, and the discipline of archaeology has become more interesting and more conscious of its social obligations because of Peter. Hardly a day goes by without me thinking about and thanking Peter for this.

## Memories of Peter 4

Renata Peters

I think Peter Ucko was unaware of how important he was for me as he was unassuming about his influence in people's personal lives. My first interaction with him was when as a student at the Institute I was conserving one of his objects, a *woomera*. I was fascinated to hear him tell of how he had been given it by a friend, an aboriginal Australian man, and of how and why they had met many years before. Later, when I was having problems reconciling my academic degree and personal life, Peter Ucko offered me the best advice I had at the time. He told me to go home and spend time with my father, who had been diagnosed with a terminal disease, while he was alive. Because of Peter's support I was able to spend three months in Brazil then, until my father died.

When I was interviewed for the job I currently hold at the Institute, Peter was by far the most challenging interviewer of the panel. He was too smart, fast and meticulous for one to get away nonchalantly. But what really scared me about him was the fact that he would only accept the best from you. He hired me in January 2005. However, due to some technicalities that are beyond the scope of this account, the Home Office denied me a work permit and requested me to leave the United Kingdom permanently. Unfortunately for the Home Office, Peter Ucko had other plans for me. He thought that I should stay and make my contribution to the Institute. That meant the Home Office had to change their minds and offer me a leave to stay and a permit to work in the United Kingdom! This was a long process, however, and at one point I found myself in the office of an immigration solicitor, and by my side was Peter Ucko. The solicitor, totally captivated by Peter, gave us advice and wrote a letter with what Peter considered "perfect wording". To our total amusement, at some point the solicitor "stopped the clock" and told us an intriguing story related to a very well known (and extremely dubious) Brazilian politician he had represented in the past. The politician had recently died and that was why the solicitor thought "he could share the story with us". After the interview, Peter very cautiously told

me: “don’t tell your mother your lawyer represented that man!”

I feel very honoured to have been hired by Peter Ucko as I always had profound admiration for him. But as time passed, Peter became a kind of a father figure for me. He sometimes pushed me to my limits, but when I needed it, he supported me and cheered me up – very much like my own dad once did. But above all, Peter showed me it is always worth fighting for what you believe in. I will never forget him.

## Memories of Peter 5

### Marcos Martín-Torres

#### January 2005

**P**eter storms into the scanning electron microscopy laboratory. In my five years at the Institute of Archaeology, this is the first time that I see him down there.

*Peter:* “I don’t know why I gave you an office if you are not there when people need you. I’ve been looking for you. Your research partner for the Chinese project is waiting upstairs.”

*Me:* “My what? China?”

*Peter:* “I need your project proposal by tomorrow to see if I can get the funding sorted.”

Needless to say, I had never heard of my involvement in any project in China, and even less so of “my” Chinese partner. But I did attend the meeting and, to my excitement, that person would indeed become my research partner.

#### March 2006

*Peter:* “And why don’t you take her with you?”

*Me:* “Peter, are you seriously suggesting that I combine my honeymoon with a research visit to an undetermined spot in China?”

*Peter:* “Quite. There is a lovely little museum next to the airport in Xi’an... she will love it! It’s a fantastic idea. You would be stupid if you missed this.”

Thankfully, on this occasion I managed to negotiate, and I eventually went to China, but on my own and a few weeks after the honeymoon. What ensued was one of the most personally enriching and unforgettable experiences of my life. Encouraged by Peter’s uncanny doses of warmth, bravery, scolding, energy, intimacy, backside kicking and support – all in phenomenal amounts – my approach to archaeology and archaeologists, and my academic career, were distorted and expanded in completely unforeseen ways.

#### June 2007

Peter has died, but I cannot be with him at his funeral service. Once again, I am not where I would have envisaged, but where he would have wanted me to be. I am in Beijing, signing an agreement that he secured, and which will provide funding for three Chinese students to come to London for doctoral studies. This time I have brought my wife with me.

In the most unpredictable ways and always with reassuring confidence, like one’s own father, Peter changed the lives of countless individuals by empowering them. I am grateful, and honoured, to be one of them. This has little to do with archaeology, and a lot with his extraordinary human nature.