

## The sixth issue of *Archaeology International*

**L**ike its predecessors, this issue of *AI* contains articles that reflect the wide range of research currently being undertaken at the Institute. My main aim as editor is to present a representative selection of the themes, places and periods that engage the research interests and skills of the Institute's community of some 80 staff and 125 research students. This year the articles range from Kent and London via Romania, Malta and the Aegean, to Central and South Asia, the Arabian Gulf and the Levant, and across the Atlantic to Louisiana and the Caribbean.

Two of the articles introduce new themes to *AI*: Kevin MacDonald's on colonial Louisiana raises fascinating questions about the public perception of America's colonial legacy and the African diaspora, and Peter Jordan shows how contemporary ethnographic investigation can enrich our understanding of the cultural landscapes of hunter-gatherer communities. Innovative approaches to archaeological evidence are to be found in Clive Orton's numerical examination of Roman pottery production, in Reuben Grima's GIS-based re-appraisal of the factors that determined the location of Malta's Neolithic monuments, in Todd Whitelaw's demonstration of how the study of surface finds can contribute to knowledge of site diversity and interaction in the Bronze Age Aegean, and in Rachael Sparks's illustration of how objects in the Institute's Petrie Palestinian Collection can throw light on interaction between Egypt and Palestine, also in the Bronze Age. Surprising discoveries are reported in three articles: Casper Johnson's description of two warrior burials found in Iron Age Kent, Rob Carter's report of very early (Neolithic) boats and maritime trade in the Arabian Gulf, and Thilo Rehren's account of how liquid steel was being made at several locations in Asia some 1000 years before it was manufactured in Europe. This issue also includes reports on three continuing overseas field projects: Peter Drewett brings readers up to date with his research on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands (which he described in the first issue of *AI*), Kris Lockyear introduces his project at the multiperiod site of Noviodunum on the lower Danube, and Tim Williams describes the start of the Institute's second major project at the World Heritage Site of Merv in Turkmenistan.

The retrospective articles that have become a regular feature of *AI* continue this year with a contribution by Sheppard Frere, who held the Chair of the Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at the Institute from 1955 to 1966. In it he recalls his initial years at St John's Lodge and the Institute's move to Gordon Square in 1958, as well as his experiences as director of the excavations at Roman Verulamium from 1955 to 1961 and his involvement in much other fieldwork and in the study of British Iron Age coinage.

Speaking retrospectively, I must also report, with great regret, the death on 25 October 2002 of Joan Sheldon. It was only last year that she recalled in *AI 2001/2002* her 35 years on the staff of the Institute and reflected on the development of environmental archaeology over that period. Sadly too, I must mention the death of Barbara Adams on 26 June 2002. She was research curator of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, which she had served loyally for over 35 years. She also carried out fieldwork in Egypt at the site of Hierakonpolis, where, among other achievements, she made the unique discovery of a 5700-year-old elephant burial (described in her article in *AI 1998/99*).

Finally, let me thank everyone – those who have assisted behind the scenes, as well as the authors of the articles – who has helped to produce another issue of what I like to think of as the Institute's research window on the world.

David R. Harris

### Mission statement

The Institute of Archaeology is a researched institution recognized also for the excellence of its teaching. Its mission is:

- To be internationally pre-eminent in the study, and comparative analysis, of world archaeology.
- To enhance its national and international reputation for the quality and breadth of its multidisciplinary and thematic approach to the study of the human past.
- To promote best practice in the management of cultural heritage and in the care and preservation of archaeological artefacts.
- To promote awareness of the problems caused by illicit trade in antiquities and the destruction of archaeological heritage that it entails.
- To ensure that the social, political and economic contexts of the practice of archaeology are taught and appreciated.
- To be at the forefront of international research in archaeological sciences.
- To play a major role in furthering the understanding of London's archaeological and historical past.
- To provide archaeological opportunities of the highest quality to all, regardless of background.

### Citation of radiocarbon and calendric dates

The 1997/98 issue of *AI* included a note (on p. 2) explaining the differences between "conventional" and "calibrated" radiocarbon dates and their relationship to calendric dates. *AI* has adopted the recommendation of the Twelfth International Radiocarbon Conference on how dates should be cited, and uses the following typographical conventions:

- calendar years – AD, BC, BP (= before present, defined as before AD 1950)
- conventional radiocarbon years – ad, bc, bp
- calibrated radiocarbon years – cal AD, cal BC, cal BP.