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News

The Director's view, 2022–23

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The Director's view, 2022–23

Kevin MacDonald

When I was appointed as Director in 2022, having worked primarily in Mali since the 1980s, the last thing anyone would have expected was that I would be spending much of summer 2023 mattocking and trowelling in Suffolk, in eastern England. However, first and foremost I am a field archaeologist, and getting the Institute in a position to offer more diverse field training and to be increasingly field-present in the UK were my initial goals. I also will not deny that it has been great fun excavating with our students in a finds-rich environment at (Roman) Norton with excellent preservation and an outstanding atmosphere of camaraderie (Figures 1 and 2). Having a horse burial in a ditch terminus in the area I was supervising certainly helped matters, not to mention firing the imagination of visitors (Figure 3).

The original vision of our Institute – as conceived by Mortimer Wheeler in 1932 – was very much as a centre of specialist field training in British archaeology. That's certainly where Tessa and Mortimer Wheeler's roots were – think Segontium, Verulamium and Maiden Castle... Technical expertise was always a big part of our agenda, and by 1974 the Institute became wedded to a field unit which was set up to deliver training and rescue archaeology in Sussex (the then Field Archaeology Unit, led by the late Peter Drewett). Its descendant, Archaeology South-East (ASE), is now also present in Essex and London under the leadership of Louise Rayner. Although the Institute in Bloomsbury had long been a 'living encyclopaedia' of world archaeology, or an ark where the specialists 'go in two-by-two', the arrival of Peter Ucko in 1996 profoundly changed things. His was a dawning



Figure 1 Norton excavations: the trowel line with incoming rain in the distance (Source: photograph by Kevin MacDonald)

moment of global, politically relevant and Indigenous archaeology focusing on Heritage issues – and we still largely follow in that crucial path. But there was also a tacit (and sometimes explicit) view from Peter that British archaeology was parochial and boring. With this latter view I do not agree and contend that there is room at the Institute for excellence in both UK and international archaeology.

In a time of climatic and decolonial priorities, one could argue that it makes sense to both be flying less and focusing our work abroad on enabling and answering the needs of our partner institutions (rather than using other countries for the primary training of our students). In other words, undergraduate student training might be best done in the UK from an economical and ethical perspective. I posit this as someone who has been taking Institute students abroad (to Mali and Louisiana) successfully since the 1990s. I think our focus when we are abroad must be on the needs of our foreign partners, and that may or may not allow training our students there. The global priorities of archaeology are changing and we are part of that.



Figure 2 Digging in the rain, smiling through gritted teeth: left to right, Kevin MacDonald (IoA Director), Charlotte Frearson (Deputy Fieldwork Tutor) and Stuart Brookes (Norton Excavations Director) (Source: photograph by Charlotte Frearson)

Future prospects for Institute-wide UK field projects are considerable. We are currently looking into long-term, multi-staff, collaborative field training and research projects in Suffolk, Norfolk and Sussex (primarily from the Roman and early medieval periods). We have already created a new post-excavation room at the Institute for students to be trained in essential object-based skills by staff over the course of the academic year. It is hoped that our various new UK research projects, led by specialists in British archaeology, will also attract the participation of other Institute staff who can offer their specialist knowledge, whether geographic, environmental or material. Such pan-Institute collaborations will hopefully lead to greater innovation and more frequent collaboration between our staff members regardless of the situation of their primary research.



Figure 3 Norton horse burial (Source: photograph by Kevin MacDonald)

The global nature of ideas and the utility of comparative approaches is being made very clear in our new series of Director's Symposia, in the first instance organised by Andrew Reynolds and myself on magic and monotheism. This symposium, with 12 participants from across Europe, considered the themes of materiality and landscape regarding the endurance of folk ritual and magic in the face of major world religions. Concentrating on Christianity and Islam in the medieval and post-medieval periods as broadly defined, we examined cases from the continents of Africa and Europe. The contents of the symposium are already in the process of being made into a book.

When one considers the great moments of research in UK archaeology over the past century, their commonality is an agreement on the 'big issues' and atmospheres of constructive debate. Palaeoeconomy in 1970s Cambridge, the Renfrew/Hodder Processual/Post-Processual nexus of the 1980s and 1990s and Peter Ucko's World Archaeology at UCL c. 1996–2006 are strong examples of hotspots for tension and creativity in our field. I can only hope that the current Institute will find the time, in an increasingly bureaucratic and businesslike academia, to rekindle this

sort of intellectual passion, given our many key thinkers about the past. Making space for that debate is one of my aims for the coming years.

The changing face(s) of the Institute

The past year has seen a greater than usual set of goings and comings at the IoA. A number of our long-standing staff members voluntarily retired at the end of this academic year as part of a university scheme financially incentivising retirement: Martin Bridge, Andrew Garrard, Elizabeth Graham, Simon Hillson, Richard Macphail, James Steele, Tim Williams and Karen Wright departed in summer 2023. In addition, Dominic Perring retired as Director of ASE in December and was succeeded by Louise Rayner. Their contributions, in their various research and teaching areas and departmental roles, over the years have been outstanding, and I want to thank all of them most sincerely for their service to the IoA and UCL. Of course, this is not really goodbye as most will continue their association with us in Honorary or Emeritus capacities.

We also said goodbye to the following research staff whose appointments have come to their end or who have obtained positions elsewhere, including David Fallon, Thomas Fitton, Francesca Fulminante, Brenna Hassett, Hallvard Indgjerd and Hazel Reade.

Furthermore, it was with great sadness that we marked the passing of our friend and colleague Tim Schadla-Hall, who was a long-standing member of the IoA staff, retiring only shortly before his death in January 2023, and being conferred Emeritus status. Tim was instrumental in establishing public archaeology as a sub-discipline which became integral to IoA teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels from the late 1990s. Tim also helped to found the influential international journal *Public Archaeology*. A memorial event was held at UCL in April, and it may have been the largest such event in IoA history. Over 250 friends and colleagues were in attendance, with several moving and (at times) hilarious speeches. Of course, many cases of wine were opened to toast our dear departed Tim. He would have had it no other way.

I would also like to mark the passing of Lys Drewett (1946–2023), who I had the pleasure of getting to know shortly after my arrival at the IoA in the 1990s. Lys, who passed away in April, was an archaeological

illustrator who made enormous and lasting contributions to both ASE and the IoA. She taught archaeological illustration to the IoA's undergraduate and masters students and ran short courses and study days on archaeological illustration for members of the Sussex Archaeology Society and the CCE Archaeology programme at the University of Sussex. At the IoA, she and her husband Peter Drewett were the founders of the annual ArchaeoTech course for new undergraduates.

Over the course of the year several familiar faces have been brought into the permanent staff of the Institute. Long-time IoA post-doc medievalist Stuart Brookes has been welcomed into a lectureship (teaching) and Matthew Pope from ASE will now be half-time Associate Professor (teaching) in Palaeolithic Archaeology at Bloomsbury. We are currently in the process of appointing three replacement posts for our retiring colleagues, all entry-level lectureships. The first of these on Silk Roads Archaeology went to Paul Wordsworth, who has done an outstanding job as Corisande Fenwick's teaching replacement in Islamic Archaeology over the past two years. At the time of writing the other two posts – Meso-American/North American Archaeology and British Archaeology – are still at the stage of interviewing.

This academic year we also welcomed a number of contract-based research and teaching staff, including Heba Abd El Gawad (AHRC Research Fellow working with Alice Stevenson on the project Mobilising Collections Histories for Institutional Change), Nadia Bartolini (Associate Lecturer [teaching] in Cultural Heritage Studies, providing teaching replacement cover for Rachel King), Cristina Castillo (NERC Research Fellow working with Dorian Fuller on the project Evolutionary Dynamics of Vegetative Agriculture in the Ethiopian Highlands: Integrating Archaeobotanical and Genomic Science), Rafie Cecilia (Associate Lecturer [teaching] in Museum Studies, providing teaching replacement cover for Alice Stevenson), Baoping Li (Associate Lecturer [teaching] in Chinese Archaeology, providing teaching replacement cover for Yijie Zhuang), Janice Li (AHRC Principle Research Fellow working with Andrew Bevan on the project Qin Imperial Iron, Tomb M1 and the First Emperor's Mausoleum), Veronica Occari (AHRC Research Fellow working with Corisande Fenwick on the project ISLAMAFR: Conquest, Ecology and Economy in Islamic North Africa), Sarah Wexler (NERC Research Fellow working with Rhiannon Stevens on the project Unlocking Wetland Ecologies and Agriculture in Prehistory Through

Sulphur Isotopes) and Alice Williams (AHRC Research Fellow also working with Alice Stevenson on the aforementioned project).

Finally, I am pleased to announce the success of Beverley Butler, Corisande Fenwick, Katie Hemer and Alice Stevenson in UCL's Senior Academic, Research and Teaching Promotions. Beverley has been promoted to Professor of Cultural Heritage and Memory Studies, Corisande to Professor of Late Antique and Islamic Archaeology, Alice to Professor of Museum Archaeology and Katie has been promoted to Associate Professor.

The passing parade: key achievements, 2022–23

I begin here with a shared achievement. We are proud to remain ranked third in the world in the Archaeology Subject QS World Rankings – although we wish to be higher – while UCL is ranked ninth in the 2024 QS World University Rankings.

Corisande Fenwick received a Philip Leverhulme Prize for Archaeology for 2022. Awarded annually by the Leverhulme Trust, Philip Leverhulme prizes recognise and celebrate the achievements of outstanding researchers whose work has already attracted international recognition and whose future careers are exceptionally promising. Corisande was also awarded a Visiting Fellowship at the RomanIslam Center at the University of Hamburg, Germany, during summer 2023 to work on a writing project, *Building Islamic Ifriqiya: Urban Aesthetics and the Economics of Architecture in the Aghlabid Period*, which forms part of her ERC-funded project *EVERYDAYISLAM: Becoming Muslim: Cultural Change, Everyday Life and State Formation in Early Islamic North Africa (600–1000)*.

Elizabeth Graham was invited by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to present the Rhind Lectures 2023 on the theme 'What Has Maya Archaeology Done for Us?' The Rhind Lectures, a series of six lectures delivered annually on a subject pertaining to history or archaeology by eminent authorities, have been given since 1876.

In March, Sue Hamilton was invited to present in the Distinguished Lecture Series at Stanford University, USA, giving lectures entitled 'The Breaching of Sensory Archaeology: Senses in the Field' and 'The Making of Rapa Nui: Materialising Island Worlds'.

Rodney Harrison was invited to address the Council of Europe's 11th plenary session of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape in Strasbourg in November. Rodney spoke about the importance of integrated cultural and natural heritage management, drawing on his AHRC-funded Heritage Futures work and follow-on project Landscape Futures and the Challenge of Change: Towards Integrated Cultural/Natural Heritage Decision Making, as well as his contributions to COP26.

I was elected President of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA) for a two-year term. SAfA is the international organisation of archaeologists and researchers from associated disciplines who research African pasts.

Louise Martin was awarded funding from the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL) for a Residential Fellowship in Jordan during spring/summer 2023, allowing her to undertake research on People and Animals in the Jordanian Badia, Past and Present.

Judy Medrington has received a Faculty Education Award for Student Support and was shortlisted for a UCL Provost's Education Award.

Sada Mire received a National Geographic Wayfinder Award and joins the newest cohort of National Geographic Explorers. Wayfinder Award recipients are individuals who have proven themselves to be the next generation of influential leaders, communicators and innovators whose critical work inspires us to learn about, care for and protect the wonders of our world.

Corinna Riva was invited to the University of Pavia, Italy, as a Visiting Professor, in the spring to contribute to their international masters in Mediterranean Archaeology programme, teaching a course on Etruscan Archaeology.

Collaborative research involving Rhiannon Stevens and Hazel Reade, with colleagues from the Natural History Museum and the Francis Crick Institute, and published in *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, explored the first genetic data from Palaeolithic human individuals in the UK – the oldest human DNA obtained from the British Isles so far.

David Wengrow had many travels, awards and media events this year following the international success of the best-selling *The Dawn of Everything* (Graeber & Wengrow, 2022). Among these, he was named 2023 Albertus Magnus Professor at the University of Cologne, one of

the university's highest academic honours, for his work on comparative archaeology around the world. He was invited to give the Sigmund H. Danziger Jr Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities 2022–23 at the University of Chicago in November, the opening Plenary Lecture at the TAG43 conference in Edinburgh in December, took part in two literary festivals in India and was also invited to present in the Stanford University Distinguished Lectures series in April. David then visited the University of California, Santa Barbara, as a SAGE Center Speaker for 2022–23, joining an elite group of academics.

Congratulations are also due to Mark Altaweel, Andrew Bevan and Sue Hamilton who have been appointed to UCL Faculty roles from 2023–24 onwards and will play an important role in developing and delivering the Faculty's strategic initiatives. Mark has been reappointed as Vice-Dean Innovation, Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange (IEKE) for another term, while Andrew has been appointed as Vice-Dean Post-Graduate Research and Faculty Graduate Tutor and Sue as Vice-Dean Research, Innovation and Global Engagement.

Major funding awards for new research in 2022–23

Several Institute staff had their outstanding international research activities recognised by external funding and institutional awards, of which a selection are mentioned here.

- Corisande Fenwick is part of an innovative ERC Synergy project, MEDGREENREV, exploring how medieval societies inspired a 'green revolution'. With support from a €10 million (£8.8 million), six-year European Research Council grant, running from 2023 to 2029, the project teams, at the universities of Reading, Barcelona, Granada, York, UCL, Basel, València, Murcia and INSAP (Rabat), will study how climate, plants, animals and land use changed over the course of a millennium in Spain, the Balearic Islands and Morocco.
- Rodney Harrison is part of a European collaborative project, led by the University of Stavanger, Norway, with nine partners, including UCL, looking at Petroculture's Intersections with the Cultural Heritage Sector in the Context of Green Transitions (PITCH).

- Viva Sacco has obtained a British Academy International Fellowship to be hosted at the IoA for three years. Viva will undertake her project on *The Islamic Glaze Revolution: Artisans and Consumers in the Medieval Central Mediterranean*, working with Corisande Fenwick.
- Rhiannon Stevens, with colleagues at UCL Earth Sciences, has received NERC's Exploring the Frontiers of Environmental Science Research funding for their project *Archaeo-Zn: Expanding the Prospects of Zinc Isotopes as Palaeodietary and Palaeoenvironmental Proxies*.
- Raoni Valle (Federal University of Western Pará [UFOPA], Brazil, collaborating with Manuel Arroyo-Kalin) was awarded a British Academy Visiting Fellowship at UCL to undertake research on *Rock Art Inter-Ontologies: Ethnography and Digital Safeguarding of Kumuañ Knowledge on Petroglyph Sacred Places in Northwest Amazonia*.
- Tim Williams and Gai Jorayev have been awarded supplementary funding from the Arcadia Charitable Trust for their *Central Asian Archaeological Landscapes* project that aims to raise the awareness and promote the protection and research of the unparalleled archaeological heritage of this vast region.

Hot off the press: monographs

See the 'Bookshelf' section in this volume and on our website for a fuller list of recent books by the IoA community. Here I have picked out a selection to highlight our output and the breadth of our published works:

- *Inspired Geoarchaeologies: Past landscapes and social change. A volume of essays in honour of Professor Charles A. I. French*, co-edited by Manuel Arroyo-Kalin, has been published as part of the McDonald Institute Conversations series. This volume presents research and reflection from across the globe by colleagues in tribute to Charles, under whose leadership the Charles McBurney Laboratory, at the University of Cambridge, became a beacon of geoarchaeology.
- *Life-Writing in the History of Archaeology: Critical perspectives*, edited by Clare Lewis and Gabriel Moshenska, has been published by UCL Press. This open-access book brings together critical perspectives on life-writing in the history of archaeology from leading figures in the field. These include studies of archive formation and use, the

- concept of ‘dig-writing’ as a distinctive genre of archaeological creativity and reviews of new sources for already well-known lives.
- *Stonehenge for the Ancestors: Part 2 – synthesis*, the second of four volumes resulting from the collaborative Stonehenge Riverside Project, led by Mike Parker Pearson, is now available from Sidestone Press. The volume provides an overview of Stonehenge in its landscape over millennia from before the monument was built to the last of its five constructional stages. It includes a chapter placing Stonehenge in its full context within Britain and western Europe during the third millennium BCE.
 - *Repeopling La Manche: New perspectives on Neanderthal archaeology and landscapes from La Cotte de St Brelade*, a new volume co-edited by Matthew Pope and published by Oxbow Books as part of the acclaimed Prehistoric Society Research Papers series, provides a starting point for approaching the Middle Palaeolithic record of the English Channel region and considering the ecological opportunities and behavioural constraints this landscape offered to Neanderthal groups in north-west Europe.
 - *Ancient Egyptian Gold: Archaeology and science in jewellery (3500–1000 BC)*, a vast new open-access volume, published in the McDonald Institute Monograph series, aims to provide a new level of synthesis in the study of gold jewellery made in Egypt between 3500 BCE and 1000 BCE, integrating the distinct approaches of archaeology, materials science and Egyptology. It is edited by Maria F. Guerra, Marcos Martín-Torres (formerly of the IoA and now based at the University of Cambridge) and Stephen Quirke.
 - *Arqueología de las Sociedades Locales en la Alta Edad Media: San Julián de Aistra y las residencias de las élites rurales*, co-edited by IoA honorary member Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo (University of the Basque Country) and Andrew Reynolds, was published open access by Archaeopress and is a major report on the extensive archaeological investigations of the early medieval elite type-site of San Julián de Aistra in the Álava province of the Basque Country in northern Spain.
 - Recent ASE monographs and occasional papers include the titles *Two Millennia of Marshside Settlement: Excavations at Pocock’s Field, Eastbourne, East Sussex* by Giles Dawkes, Anna Doherty, Alice Dowsett and Trista Clifford and *Out of the Weald, The Secret Weald* by

Andrew Margetts, Anna Doherty, Catherine Douglas, Hayley Nicholls and Simon Stevens. Full details of all ASE publications are available on their website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology-south-east/our-research/publications>

In the community: outreach

The Institute has a strong presence in the London community and farther afield, as revealed by a few notable examples from the past year.

A new exhibition – *Objects of the Misanthropocene: Unearthing Futures* – curated by Dean Sully from the IoA and colleagues from the Slade School of Fine Art, in collaboration with UCL Museums and Cultural Programmes, was displayed in the Octagon Gallery at UCL from September 2022 to February 2023.

I was invited to present the UK Home Office lecture for Black History Month in October. This hybrid event, with over 140 participants, including some MPs, was entitled *Ancient Civilizations of Sub-Saharan Africa: Cities and States – What Europeans Don't Know*. I was also invited to speak at Rugby School in the autumn term, as part of their academic enrichment programme in history, and presented on *The Heritage of West African Civilizations: Pillage, Objects, Sites and Museums*.

Sakshi Surana (fourth-year undergraduate) and Michael D'Aprix (PhD researcher) organised a student outreach event for London Schools' Climate Kick-Start 2022, held as part of COP27 and the Mayor's Let's Go Zero 2030 campaign. They highlighted the links between archaeology and climate change, covering topics including recycling and reusing built heritage to lower emissions from construction, as well as understanding historical and ancient sustainable practices, and the ways archaeology can potentially contribute to the mitigation of some of the negative effects of climate change.

ASE's award-winning community archaeology project, the Stiances Archaeological project, had an entirely unexpected spinoff of research into a casualty of the First World War, Richard Henry Page, which was commemorated on the anniversary of Armistice Day.

Lorna Webb (ASE) continued her online 'medieval corner' in December where she explored medieval approaches to Midwinter and Advent as well as forgotten medieval Christmas traditions. She was also

interviewed on BBC Radio 3 about Christmas carols in the medieval period.

Hackney Borough, in north-east London, has a rich and celebrated record of Ice Age archaeology, including stone artefacts and the bones of extinct animals such as the woolly mammoth, woolly rhino, hippo and lion. ASE geoarchaeologists Letty Ingrey and Matthew Pope helped launch Hackney Museum's new exhibition of local Ice Age archaeology to show school children what Hackney was like in 300,000 BCE.

Mike Parker Pearson was invited to open the Secrets of Stonehenge international exhibition at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, New Zealand, in December. The exhibition had previously been on display at various museums in Europe and North America and presents the recent discoveries of Mike's Stonehenge Riverside Project and other investigations.

In February, the Brighton Young Archaeologist Club (YAC) visited Archaeology South-East's office in Portslade, having a tour of the facilities, listening to talks and examining a range of artefacts from our excavations. The YACs were able to write their own stories and draw storyboards, sharing their fantastic work with the ASE team afterwards.

To commemorate International Women's Day, in March, we highlighted our research and engagement activities led by women at both ASE and the IoA, which have a long history of women's leadership and expertise in the discipline.

David Wengrow collaborated on an exhibition at the Venice Biennale Architettura 2023, which opened in May, exploring the concept of cities and urbanism through the lens of a 6,000-year-old Ukrainian archaeological site. The Nebelivka Hypothesis, a multimedia video exhibition, premiered at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of the Biennale di Venezia, The Laboratory of the Future. This may be the first time that archaeology has been represented in this major forum.

Johanna Zetterstrom Sharp and colleagues contributed to the Council for British Archaeology's Letters to a Young Archaeologist series. The innovation project Reclaiming African History was based at the Horniman Museum in South London and supported by UCL Knowledge Exchange and Innovation funding, awarded to Alice Stevenson and Rachel King in partnership with the museum. The initiative supported a group of young people with African and/or Caribbean heritage to

develop projects that responded to the question: What does reclaiming African history mean to you?

LGBTQIA+ archaeologists were celebrated as part of Pride Month in June, while a number of events across UCL, open to all, were organised. As UCL's LGBTQ+ Equality Implementation Group (LEIG) Manager, Gerard Jones said: 'Recognising and celebrating our differences is vital to ensure that the most vulnerable members of our community feel safe and able to thrive as their authentic selves.' Earlier in the year, the LGBT+ History Month 2023 Public Lecture was given by IoA Alumnus John J. Johnson, entitled 'A Boy and his Empire: Antinous – Last God of the Ancient World'.

Manuel Arroyo-Kalin's work with Brazilian researchers and Indigenous peoples, to better understand and share their cultural heritage, pursuing research designed to help tackle the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, was highlighted in June this year.

Rodney Harrison was involved in a workshop held at UCL for teachers and academics to discuss the work of decolonising secondary and sixth form education across subject communities in schools. The two-day event was hosted by the Black Atlantic Innovation Network at UCL's Sarah Parker Remond Centre for the Study of Racism and Racialisation, of which Rodney is a member and Working Group Lead for Heritage.

IoA events

As part of our commitment to provide an outstanding research environment for staff, students and visitors, the IoA hosts and organises numerous events on many different aspects of archaeology and is linked to other heritage institutions, archaeological societies and organisations.

University Archaeology Day (UAD) is now in its sixth year and UAD 2022 took place online and in person at the British Museum in November. This free annual event has been designed for prospective students, teachers and parents to learn about the many degree programmes on offer across the UK, to discover the wide range of career opportunities that an archaeology degree can lead to and to hear about some of the latest archaeological research. UAD 2023 is taking place at the time of writing.

The IoA was also co-organiser of the Current Archaeology Live! 2023 event in February. The keynote speaker at the event was Shahina

Farid (Honorary Senior Research Fellow), who is the former Field Director and Project Coordinator at the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük in Turkey and currently Scientific Dating Coordinator for Historic England. Research presentations were also given by current staff, including Stuart Brookes and Corisande Fenwick.

The IoA hosted a number of inaugural lectures this year. These are an opportunity for our new professors to showcase their achievements and innovative research to a broad audience of members of UCL as well as the general public. Our 2023 Inaugural Lectures, organised by Andrew Reynolds, were given on the following topics:

- Just Another Brick in the Wall? Constructing Cuzco, Capital of the Inka Empire (Bill Sillar)
- On Empire's Edge: Frontiers and Borderlands in Roman Archaeology – and Beyond (Andrew Gardner)
- Archaeology, Data Science, and Heritage in the Middle East: Challenges in a Multi-crisis World (Mark Altaweel)
- Museums in Family Life (Theano Moussouri)

Our Gordon Childe Lecture and Seminar 2023, which took place in May, was given by Professor Rosemary Joyce, UC Berkeley, and was entitled On Not Seeing like a State: Rethinking Ancient Honduras. The annual Gordon Childe Lecture features speakers able to take a broad view of their topic and make it interesting and relevant to both the general public as well as subject specialists. The accompanying seminar offered an opportunity for extended discussion on the themes raised in the lecture. Rosemary's lecture is published in this volume of *Archaeology International*.

The ArchaeoTech event, hosted by Butser Ancient Farm and run by colleagues from the IoA and ASE at the beginning of the academic session (September 2022), marked the 40th anniversary of our Experimental Archaeology course for new undergraduates. Our students were able to participate in a wide range of activities, including flint knapping, building construction (wattle and daub), pottery making and kiln firing, metal working, crop processing, landscape walks and a review of the archaeological reconstructions at Butser. The course takes a huge amount of organisation and I am immensely grateful to all my colleagues for this and our partnership with Butser, which is celebrating

its 50th anniversary. Lifelong friendships have been made at Archaeo-Tech and we have former staff and students from its entire history coming back to contribute today.

The Institute's Term 2 Seminar Series (January–March) was run in person and online, and focused on UK Archaeology in 2023. The series brought together ASE and IoA colleagues exploring topics on medieval pastoralism, geophysics research and perceptions of landscape as well as specific fieldwork and community projects, including the Richborough Connection Project and the Enclosed Later Bronze Age site of Madgwick Lane, Chichester. Video recordings of the seminars are available on both the ASE and IoA websites: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology-south-east/uk-archaeology-seminar-series-spring-2023>

The Islamic Archaeology Research Network, led by Corisande Fenwick, co-organised the seventh annual Islamic Archaeology Day, with colleagues in SOAS, in March. This has become the main event for Islamic archaeologists in the UK and beyond.

The Sir David Wilson Lecture, the first event in the 2022–23 IoA/British Museum Medieval Seminar Series, was given by Judith Jesch (University of Nottingham). Other seminars included presentations on Sutton Hoo & Syria: The Anglo-Saxons Who Served in the Byzantine Army? and Thor's Hammer Pendants from England in the Light of Recent Finds.

Elizabeth Baquedano (Honorary Associate Professor) was one of the organisers of a KHI–UCL Symposium on Material Transformations in the Indigenous Americas which took place during February. It looked at the interplay between materialities and sensory experience; working with stone; between liquid and solid: metals and their transformation; the materiality of colour: pigments, painted skins and feathers.

Andrew Gardner was co-organiser of an inaugural event on Reconnecting Roman Britain aimed at showcasing the latest research and findings on Britain in the Roman world and enhancing cross-sector and community connections. The event, held in November and organised on behalf of the *Britannia* Editorial Board of the Roman Society, with the generous support of the Roman Society's Archaeology Committee, included a wide range of contributions on recent discoveries and investigations into the archaeology of Roman Britain. The aim is for this to be the first in an annual series of events, with future day-conferences taking place at rotating locations across the UK.

In the spring term, I was invited to deliver a speech to mark the launch of the IoA/Xi'an training programme, a joint initiative between our Institute of Archaeology, the Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum and the China Cultural Heritage Information and Consulting Centre. We then received an official visit from Li Gang, the Director of the Xi'an museum, and members of his staff in June 2023.

IoA and ASE technical expertise was celebrated at the UCL Technical Showcase, also in the spring. UCL is a signatory to the Technician Commitment, supporting greater visibility, recognition, sustainability and career development for our technicians, and all technical staff in higher education and research.

The IAMS Beno Rothenberg Memorial Lecture 2023 was given by Jane Humphris (IoA alumnus and Director of British Institute in Eastern Africa) in March entitled A Millennium of Iron Production at Meroe, Sudan.

The Digital Museum Innovation conference, an outcome of an ESRC-funded network, led by Theano Moussouri, was held at the Institute in July.

On 15–17 September, the British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology conference (BABA0 2023) was held at UCL under the organisation of Carolyn Rando, Katie Hemer, Rebecca Watts and Kate Gafner.

A two-day online conference, *Researching a Rigged Game: Open Source Data & the Trade of Cultural Objects*, co-organised by IoA PhD researcher Summer Austin, was also held in September and explored the use of open-source data to research the trade and transfer of cultural objects. A peer-reviewed handbook, following on from the conference, is in development, scheduled for publication in 2024–25.

Student and alumni news

Joseph Coelho (IoA alumnus: BA Archaeology, 2002) has been appointed Waterstone's Children's Laureate for 2022–24. Joseph joined the IoA in 1999 and was the Society of Archaeology Students (SAS) President during his time with us. He recorded a podcast with Charlotte Frearson in the autumn term discussing how his interest in both archaeology and drama led to his career as an author and poet.

Maria Cunningham (IoA alumnus: BA Archaeology, 2022) received three prizes – the 2022 British Commission for Maritime History: Prize for Undergraduate Achievement in Maritime History, the 2022 Royal Archaeological Institute’s Tony Baggs Undergraduate Dissertation Prize and the 2022 Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology Undergraduate Prize 2022 – for her undergraduate dissertation, which was entitled “‘More than concrete’: Investigating the preservation of WWII coastal defences on the south-east coast of England’.

Giacomo Fontana (PhD researcher) was the recipient of this year’s Nick Ryan Bursary Award, given by the Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology (CAA) international organisation for the best student paper presented at the annual conference. Giacomo’s winning paper was entitled ‘A quantitative and transferable multi-scale approach for the study of Hillfort communities’.

Jose Julian Garay-Vazquez successfully defended his PhD thesis this year. He is now a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Exeter on the ERC-funded project Last Journey, exploring Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene human adaptations and impacts across the diverse landscapes of north-west South America.

Lara González Carretero (IoA alumnus: PhD, 2020) won the Trail-Crisp Award for 2023 from the Linnean Society of London. The Linnean Society aims to promote the study of all aspects of the biological sciences. Lara is now based at the University of York and her work on charred cereal foods for her 2020 PhD provided a breakthrough for archaeobotany.

The latest volume in the UCL Institute of Archaeology PhD Series, published by BAR, highlights Anna Moles’ (IoA alumnus: PhD, 2019) research on the impact of social, economic and political changes at Knossos. The aim of this series is to offer rapid publication of largely unaltered PhD theses. It covers the full range of subject areas studied at the IoA, including world archaeology, archaeological science, cultural heritage, conservation and museum studies. It makes data, analyses and interpretation available promptly to a wide audience.

Veronica Occari successfully defended her PhD thesis this year. Supervised by Corisande Fenwick and Ian Freestone, Veronica used elemental and isotopic analyses to investigate medieval glass from Venice and its relationship to glass and raw materials from the Levant. She is now a postdoctoral researcher at the IoA, working with Corisande.

Alexandra Slucky (IoA alumnus: MSc, 2019–20) was in contact with us about her podcast recording in the Two Friends Talk History series (with public historian Zofia Guertin) on the archaeology and archaeobotany of ancient beers, wines and spirits, discussing the archaeological process used to identify historic alcoholic vessels and processes.

Several IoA undergraduate and graduate diploma students were awarded departmental prizes for the 2022–23 academic session both in specialist subject areas and for their outstanding contributions to the life and work of the Institute (for more on this, see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/news/2023/jul/prizes-awarded-institute-undergraduate-and-graduate-diploma-students-2023>). Our masters students were awarded departmental and faculty prizes for the 2021–22 academic session (in November 2022). Congratulations to them all!

Looking into the future

September 2023 witnessed one of the largest Institute student intakes at undergraduate and masters levels that we have seen in two decades. This is a sign that archaeology remains a popular course of study and the Institute is one of the primary places students wish to study it. We will be looking to grow in order to accommodate what we hope will become a trend. This also includes looking to revive aspects of extramural and continuing education, notably an Institute summer school focusing on practical training. Mature students have held an important place in the IoA community and it would be great to welcome them back in greater numbers. Needless to say, our colleagues at ASE will be playing a critical role in this trajectory.

We are looking forward to April 2024, when the IoA will organise the 15th Roman Archaeology Conference/32nd Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (RAC/TRAC), led by Andrew Gardner, Chair of the Conference Organising Committee. Likewise, we have our ongoing partnership with Current Archaeology Live! 2024 and the coming year's event is scheduled to take place on Saturday 24 February – details will be announced nearer the time. Finally, follow the IoA website and social media for forthcoming symposia and seminar series – this is going to be a busy year!