

NEWS

Director's Report 2013–14

Stephen Shennan*

The Director of the UCL Institute of Archaeology reports on events since the publication of the last issue of *Archaeology International* (No. 16), for 2012–13, and comments on current developments.

The major event of this year has been the announcement that Professor Sue Hamilton will be my successor as Director of the Institute (**Fig. 1**). She takes over in September. Sue is very much a daughter of the Institute. She did both her BA and her PhD here and first became a member of staff in 1991, as a College Teacher. Her research has covered ceramics, landscape archaeology and archaeological practice, initially focussed on later prehistoric Britain and Europe. She has played a leading role in major innovative landscape projects, including the Bodmin Moor Project in Cornwall and the Tavoliere-Gargano project in Italy. In recent years she has extended her studies of early landscapes and their sensory perception to Oceania, as joint Director of the Rapa Nui (Easter Island) Landscapes of Construction project, a large-scale interdisciplinary field project that is revolutionising understandings of one of the most extraordinary cultural landscapes on Earth. Sue's long-standing commitment to students and teaching was recognised by UCL in 2010 with a Provost's Teaching Award. In addition to contributing through her own teaching she set up many of the systems for student

support that form one of the foundations of the consistently strong student evaluations received by the Institute. She is currently a member of UCL's Quality Management and Enhancement Committee as Chair of its Internal Quality Review panel, and a member of UCL's powerful Finance Committee

Sadly though, I have to report the death of a previous Director, David Harris. David was Director of the Institute of Archaeology from 1989 to 1996. A geographer, anthropologist and archaeologist, he consistently developed and applied novel ecological approaches to studies of the origins of agriculture and the domestication of plants and animals. One of his most enduring legacies to the Institute was the establishment of the Wolfson Archaeological Science Laboratories at the Institute in 1991, following an extensive fundraising campaign. These have been central to the Institute's subsequent success and reputation in the field of archaeological science. The Institute hosted a memorial symposium and reception in June 2014 which brought together his family and many of those who knew David, to celebrate his life, career and contribution to the discipline. It was striking to hear how prescient many of his ideas had been and how influential they continue to be in the work of leading younger scholars today. In this context it should also be recorded that David was the founder of *Archaeological*

* UCL Institute of Archaeology, London WC1H
OPY, United Kingdom
s.shennan@ucl.ac.uk



Fig. 1: Sue Hamilton.

International. (A detailed obituary for David Harris follows this report.)

Something that has not changed since David's time is the Institute's continuing record of success. There were three promotions to Professor in 2013. James Steele became Professor of Archaeology, Jeremy Tanner Professor of Classical and Comparative Art, and Marcos Martín-Torres at the age of 36 became Professor of Archaeological Science, certainly one of the youngest ever Professors in the history of the Institute. Rodney Harrison, who joined the Institute only the previous year, was promoted to Reader in Archaeology, Heritage and Museum Studies. Finally, Simon Parfitt was promoted to Principal Research Associate, on the basis of his major contribution to the success of the Natural History Museum's Ancient Human Occupation of Britain project, to which he has been seconded since it first began. We have also just heard about more successes in the 2014

promotions round. Paul Basu was promoted to Professor of Anthropology and Cultural Heritage and Andrew Bevan to Professor of Spatial and Comparative Archaeology, while Louise Martin and Andrew Garrard were promoted to Readerships in Zooarchaeology and Early Prehistory respectively, and Rachael Sparks and Richard Bussmann became Senior Lecturers.

There have been many other notable successes. Cyprian Broodbank was joint winner of the 2014 Wolfson History Prize for his book *The Making of the Middle Sea: A History of the Mediterranean from the Beginnings to the Emergence of the Classical World*. One of its many enthusiastic reviewers described it as, 'More comprehensive, more finely grained, more vivid, more subtle and more compelling than anything previously written on the period up to classical antiquity ... [Broodbank's] hawk's-eye perspective combines vast vistas with sharply sighted details; he selects evidence with an unerring discretion and words with daring élan. The vitality of his work carries the reader through 600 big, closely printed pages packed with data and bristling with intellectual challenges' (Fernández-Armesto, *The Literary Review*). Cyprian will be leaving the Institute in October to become Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge and we wish him well in his new role.

Another prize-winning success was the hugely successful film *New Secrets of the Terracotta Army*, (**Fig. 2**) which won the prize for Best Public Presentation of Archaeology at the British Archaeological Awards 2014. The film presents the remarkable scientific results produced by the Institute's Xuizhen Janice Li, Andrew Bevan and Marcos Martín-Torres and their Xi'an colleagues on the *Imperial Logistics of the Terracotta Army* project. The prize was presented at an awards ceremony at the British Museum. At the same ceremony the Institute's Honorary Visiting Professor Beatrice de Cardi received the award for Outstanding Achievement in Archaeology, and earlier in the year I was



Fig 2: The terracotta army (photo: Xia Juxian).

present at the Society of Antiquaries to see Beatrice awarded the Society's Gold Medal on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Finally, it has also just been announced that Richard Reece, a former Institute member of staff, has been awarded the 2014 Derek Allen prize for Numismatics, by the British Academy.

Once again Institute colleagues did well in grant competitions. Julia Shaw obtained one of the extremely competitive British Academy Mid-Career Fellowships for her project on *Archaeologies of well-being: environmental ethics and Buddhist economics in ancient India*. Andrew Reynolds and Elizabeth Graham obtained large grants from the Leverhulme Trust for projects on soils in Belize, and travel in Anglo-Saxon England respectively, while one interesting pointer to future research funding is the grant that Andrew Bevan and Rachael Sparks, together with members of the British Museum, obtained from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council to explore the possibilities of Crowd and Community-fuelled Archaeological Research. Marcos Martín-Torres continued his remarkable success by bringing three EU Marie Curie Fellows to the Institute to work with him on different projects. I must also mention the Whitehawk Camp Community Archaeology Project, which received nearly £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project is a partnership made up of our Centre for Applied Archaeology, Brighton & Hove City Council's

Royal Pavilion & Museums and Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society, and will fund a series of workshops and events in Brighton. Our local London community archaeology event in June, the World Archaeology Festival, has now become an annual fixture and, as usual, attracted large numbers of people to activities both in the building and out in the square.

We also continue to maintain our outstanding teaching reputation. After last year's dip to 97% satisfaction in the National Student Survey we went back up to 100% and again came top of *The Guardian* league table of Archaeology Departments. Our commitment to teaching is also reflected again this year in the 22 Institute staff nominated for the UCL Union Student Choice Awards, of whom two were successful: Stuart Laidlaw for Outstanding Teaching Support and Judy Medrington (again!) for Outstanding Personal Support of Students. This year the Institute also went through UCL's Internal Quality Review (IQR) process, when a panel examines a department's internal procedures and identifies improvements that need to be made. It takes place every 6-7 years and is based on a self-evaluation document produced by the department, followed by a day-long visit when the panel members talk to staff and students. Our self-evaluation document, produced by Sue Hamilton with the assistance of Andy Gardner and Judy Medrington, was enthusiastically praised and we came through the whole process with flying colours.

Changes in the Institute's permanent staff were relatively few this year. I have already mentioned that Cyprian Broodbank is leaving for Cambridge. David Jeffreys retired at the end of December. He joined the Department of Egyptology at UCL in 1986, and in 1992 this Department merged with the Institute. Over the past 28 years David has been a mentor and inspiration to generations of Egyptian Archaeology students. Kevin Reeves, whose technical support was fundamental to generations of students doing research for their

dissertations in the Wolfson Laboratories, also retired. On the incoming side we were very pleased to appoint Manuel Arroyo-Kalin to the Lectureship in Geoarchaeology which was left vacant a couple of years ago with the departure of Arlene Rosen. Manuel is a specialist in the archaeology of Amazonia and has already been with us for three years as the holder of a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

Our preparations for the Research Excellence Framework evaluation came to fruition this year with the submission of an excellent document produced by James Steele, Chair of the Institute's Research Committee. We now await the verdict of the evaluation panel, which will be announced in December and will be very important for both our finances and our reputation. We have already started preparing for the next evaluation, probably in 2020, with two days of meetings to begin mapping out our future research themes.

Equally important for our future is student recruitment at all levels. We have already responded at undergraduate level to the new situation created by high student fees

by introducing a new curriculum emphasizing employability and transferable skills. This has run for the first time this year with great success. However, it is clear that at a national level the high fees have had a major impact on applications for Archaeology and the future is uncertain. At Masters' level numbers seem to be holding their own and it is clear that with our enormous range of expertise we need to continue to develop and consolidate our position as the world's leading centre of advanced education and training in archaeology and heritage studies.

I will step down as Director in September and take a year's sabbatical before returning as a normal professorial member of staff. I want to thank all my academic, administrative and technician colleagues for the enormous support they have given me over the last nine years, without which the job would have been impossible. It has been a great honour and privilege to be the leader of such an outstanding group of people. I'm sure Sue Hamilton will have the same support as I have had and wish her every success in leading the Institute through what are likely to continue to be difficult times.

How to cite this article: Shennan, S 2014 Director's Report 2013-14. *Archaeology International*, No. 17: pp. 3-6, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/ai.1714>

Published: 23 October 2014

Copyright: © 2014 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License (CC-BY 3.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>.

ju *Archaeology International* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press

OPEN ACCESS 