

### A Year of Growth

Welcome to another volume of PIA – Papers from the Institute of Archaeology. This year has been an important one for the journal, including the commencement of an initiative to make PIA available online, digital production of hardcopies, an increase in the number of institutional subscriptions and a new academic writing workshop programme. It is a fine tribute to both past and present members of the committee that not only is an entirely self-funded, postgraduate-run journal still surviving after seventeen years but is continuing to grow in its primary role as a stepping stone for postgraduate students wishing to gain their first publication(s).

Of particular importance is the PIA Online project, a venture that aims to make the journal available online via university library websites, as a complement to its current hardcopy availability. In an educational environment in which the e-journal is playing an increasingly important role it is vital, to both PIA itself and its contributing authors, that the potential readership of the journal is increased. This foray has been possible because the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and the Society of Antiquaries of London have had the foresight to develop an e-consortium of many of the UK's lower impact archaeological journals that individually could not afford to go online, in an effort to make these publications available to a wider audience. Those readers wishing to find out more about this initiative should visit: <http://www.access2archaeology.info/>. This is not to say that hardcopy production of PIA will cease, though it is certainly true to say that the print run will be on a smaller scale in years to come should the e-journal succeed. Readers will notice that the standard of production in this year's hardcopy volume is markedly improved upon previous years, particularly with respect to image quality. This has been possible due to a switch from lithographic to digital production methods.

This year's volume, though rather thin on research papers (a subject that I will return to), like its predecessors reflects the breadth of research at the UCL Institute of Archaeology (IoA). Inside this issue you will find articles covering topics as varied as the purpose of an archaeological degree, museum practice, human ecology and evolution, public archaeology, archival research and geoarchaeology. A new section, that I hope will be present in future volumes, is the Featured Initiative. This year's feature is on the Danish PhD School in Archaeology and its outreach programme forging links with institutions in London. Part of this initiative included a conference that involved much input by postgraduate research students from both Denmark and the UK. The conference was one of many that UCL postgraduates have had strong input into in this year. For example, in November the UCL IoA hosted the *Archaeology in Conflict* conference, a three-day gathering examining the highly topical issues of cultural heritage, site management and sustainable development in conflict and post-conflict states in the Middle East. Other cases in point were June's *Southeast Asian Archaeology Workshop*, a one-day conference primarily focusing on Thailand, and November's *Experimental Archaeology Conference*, with a varied programme that included research in the areas of archaeobotany, textiles and archaeometallurgy.

There is an increasing trend towards ongoing, postgraduate student-led initiatives at the institute and examples include the *Forum for Island Research and Experience* (<http://www.fireonline.org>), the *Pub Theory Discussion Group* and the *Graduate Student Conference* (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/events/special/student-conference.htm>). The last of these three examples is an annual conference that reflects the breadth of research at the IoA. This year's *Graduate Student Conference* was split into five sessions based on the department's five research groups: Complex and Literate Societies, Environment and Culture, Heritage Studies, Material Culture and Data Science, and Social and Cultural Dynamics. I sincerely hope that next year's edition of PIA will include a Featured Initiative article on one of the UCL IoA programmes. In parallel to this is the now traditional, annual undergraduate conference organised by institute BA/BSc students, reflecting the commitment to research at all levels in the department. This undergraduate-led initiative does link very nicely with this year's Forum topic, the purpose, balance and structure of a good archaeological degree course, for which we have been fortunate to obtain the views of established researchers and educationalists from very different niches within the archaeological community.

I briefly mentioned a shortfall in research papers in this year's volume. In part, this was due to only two of the five research papers we received making it to publication, the others not being included for various reasons. Whilst this represents the lowest number of peer-reviewed articles to appear in a single volume of PIA this does reflect a recent trend in the number of research papers this journal receives. To my mind at least it is possible, perhaps probable, that this is an unintentional side-effect of the increased emphasis upon doctoral students needing to submit their theses within four years. Whilst it is absolutely correct that research councils and universities do this in order that doctoral students learn how to manage their own research projects effectively, this mooted side-effect does leave PIA with the challenge of making an extra effort to draw in more full research papers. As an editorial committee we have decided to initiate a programme of writing workshops, starting in January 2007, for both taught and research IoA postgraduate students with a particular view to encouraging students to convert their Master's dissertations into research papers, something which Marilena Alivizatou has successfully done this year of her own accord. Even though the journal does have a distinctive in-house brand and style, nevertheless submissions from students at other institutions are always welcome, with Cath Neal (University of York) and Alexandra-Fani Alexandridou (University of Oxford) contributing to the 2006 edition. It is now journal policy to send out calls for submissions to other universities. Perhaps the next step in terms of outreach is for future PIA committees to start forging links with the IoA's 'sibling' department at UCL, the Department of Anthropology, in order to encourage submissions from postgraduates based in that department. A first step in this direction might be for postgraduates in both departments to jointly host a conference: to do so would also have wider benefits well beyond those that might relate to PIA. Staff members from both departments have already demonstrated that such links can be highly beneficial with the existence of the AHRC-funded Centre for the Evolution of Cultural Diversity (<http://www.cecd.ucl.ac.uk/home/>). I look forward to observing whether there will be any developments in this area over the next few years.

I hope that you will enjoy Volume 17. It is the result of much work on the part of the committee, contributing authors and peer reviewers. As well as the aforementioned, I would like to thank all those who have supported the journal over the years by promoting it, providing technical support and/or purchasing copies. With that, I now sign off after two years on the editorial committee and hand over to Andrew Shapland the Senior Editor for 2007. No doubt next year will see further growth in the stature of PIA.

Edgar Samarasundera, Senior Editor  
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