

# Editorial

SIMON STODDART & CAROLINE MALONE

‘In the name of God and Profit’ was the inscription on the ledgers of Francesco di Marco Datini, the Merchant of Prato (Origo 1979). To what extent should this epithet be inscribed on the accession ledgers of our Great Museums? A formula for success in the 15th century is now considered a contradiction, if reports from the UK national press are correct. Priestly curators are contrasted with managerial efficiency (*Sunday Times*, 9 September 2001). The debate between public service, commercial enterprise and management ethos pervades the cultural scene, and this issue is especially marked in the Museum sector (particularly National Museums and Galleries). Can commercial practice be applied to organizations whose current political *credo* is the encouragement of free access? Can modern management practices be applied where the motivation is public service, not profit? As expressed in the *Museum Journal* (Morris 2000: 16), and attributed to the Managing Director of FT Finance until 1998, ‘it can be more difficult to know when an institution is doing well when quality is judged on exhibitions rather than profit’. To which we would add that evidence of growing knowledge and active research of the collections is a further key measure of success.

Yet what form should managerial success take? Can or should there be centralized efficiency without duplication, and richness of diversity? Should there be democratic devolution of responsibility to the regions and the specialist curators? In Sweden, steps have been taken to centralize the museums system (Anderson 2001: 12–13). In Britain, there is a dynamic tension between pre-eminent London with its Tates, V&As and British Museums, and the smaller population centres, with their important regional museums, and, increasingly, national thematic museums created by lottery money. What should the relationship be between a capital visited by the vast majority of tourists, and consequently open to the profits generated by numbers, and local museums, where other survival strategies must be developed?

As has been aired in a number of quarters, there is an urgent need for the professional cultural manager, and this new profession is in short supply (Clare 2001: 19). Yet we profess that it is insufficient to bring in managers from other sectors and expect immediate understanding of the demands of public service, and the intricacies of scholarship and curation. As we have emphasized elsewhere (*ANTIQUITY* 74 (2000): 5), archaeologists need to proclaim their transferable skills, and these include the ability to manage people and resources as well as to practice excellent scholarship. In the search for candidates to fill the senior managerial posts, archaeologists should receive the prominence they deserve.

Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) have been considered one means of enrolling private finance. The Royal Armouries (now relocated to its new museum in Leeds, West Yorkshire) which followed this route is now in severe financial difficulties. Income cannot be generated in the same way as gate receipts to a football match. The location of a successful local football team, albeit with international aspirations, may not be as successful a location for a national museum. As predicted by some, the calculation of visitor numbers has been much too optimistic, and has massively anticipated growth for often already crowded venues: ‘Maximising audiences is the wrong approach to take — it is far better to plan for a sustainable audience’ (Black 1999). The planned British Museum PFI to redevelop the new arena of access in the British Museum, the Study Centre, was jettisoned, and the laudable project itself all but abandoned, with the realization of declining income and government support. There is no alternative to a substantial core of public investment.

The British Museum is inevitably at the centre of this debate for archaeology in Britain — it is the largest museum and focused on archaeology — but it is ultimately an example of a much wider issue and crisis. As recently as 18 months ago, it was claimed that the British Museum

was 'in very good shape' (Morris 2000). More recently, substantial deficit has become the result of the inescapable fact that 'over the past ten years, our grant in real terms has fallen by 13 per cent which is the equivalent of about £10 million' (Morris 2001: 5). The British Museum case is exacerbated by the lack of compensation provided by Government in lieu of admission charges (agreed this year with National Museums previously charging entry). This income has only accrued to other museums, since the British Museum has never charged an entry fee. Inevitably, the 'free' museums have been hit twice — first by not previously recouping costs through modest charges to visitors, and secondly through reduced grants and no compensation.

It would seem that successive governments in Britain favour the reduction, indeed the removal, of the so-called block grant from government treasury that national institutions (including museums and galleries) have always relied upon. Such a policy is very sinister — and has profound implications for the future of these places. Just when such institutions are hailed as the great centres of excellence that they are, and exploited endlessly for the diplomatic and cultural expediency of Government mandarins and politicians, they are massively threatened by reduced funding. As treasure

houses of world science, art and culture, actively engaged in outreach and fine scholarship, we wonder who or what motivates this course of destruction?

All this needs to be seen in the light of the importance of tourism to much of the world economy, and the British economy in particular. The 'Hidden Giant' is a classic example of invisible trade. It is estimated that tourism contributes £64 billion to the British economy (as much as the computer industry, according the estimates of the UK Parliament's Select Committee fourth report (<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200001/cmselect/cmcumeds/430/43001.htm>)). In spite of tourism's importance and success, this sector of the economy is very sensitive both to local (foot and mouth disease) and world crises (11 September 2001). If any economic justification is required for the public support of culture it is to be found here. An economic resource such as this needs to be nurtured, and does not mean a publicity campaign of image projection such as might be produced by employees of Saatchi. It means support of the curators of culture in developing a high-quality product, based on genuine and unique material, resistant to the frailty of image, and 'looking to' the long term. The government must invest in human resources not simply political spin and publicity. Archae-



*'Oh, just sling it anywhere!'*

ologists, the paramount curators of the long-term resource, are again appropriate managers of that resource.

**T** An example of the successful investment in human resources is the Portable Antiquities Scheme (covered in *ANTIQUITY* 75 (2001): 5). The recent Treasure Act in England and Wales (also covered) enlarged the legal definition of treasure to include associated material and thus the valuable information contained in an assemblage and its context. In parallel with the recent Treasure Act, its officers have been appointed for trial areas to liaise with local societies to record a sample of the estimated 400,000 archaeological objects found each year by an estimated 15,000 metal-detector users. Metal detectorists and professional archaeologists used to form distinct and confronting camps. As a result of these laudable government initiatives, Treasure is now being granted context, by amicable alliances with local communities.

A recent seminar (27 September 2001) at the University of Birmingham explored the success of antiquities reporting in the West Midlands, that has been seen on a wider scale throughout the country (Hull 2001). The Birmingham seminar explored the roles of all the key participants in a successful process: the government-funded Finds Liaison officer, the coroner, the government legal officer presiding over procedure, the Sites and Monuments officer, who will ultimately preserve the contextual record for posterity, and, above all, the metal-detector groups themselves. It is the participation of local metal-detector groups which is crucial. The Coventry Heritage Detector Society was formed in January 1978 and has developed a disciplined professional analysis of the finds and context. 7470 objects collected over a period of 7200 hours have been carefully plotted. To this has been added a personal rapport with Angie Bolton, the local Finds Liaison Officer, an office whose skills must combine knowledge of material culture and diplomacy. Let us hope that these key initiatives will be extended and that grants from the Department of Culture, Media & Sport and National Lottery are forthcoming to continue to support it.

The Treasure Act strengthens relatively weak legislation on the licensing of archaeological investigation in the United Kingdom which still largely relies on agreement with landowners

rather than formal licence with local or national agencies. In Mediterranean countries, the strict licensing of archaeological work is now producing growing discontent, not just among the tomb robbers who have always ignored it, but among professional archaeologists. The weakness of these laws is precisely that they have been ignored by the most destructive forces, the tomb robbers and the developers, for many years. Now, NICOLA TERRENATO reports that some archaeologists who work in the Italian university system are protesting about the practice of Soprintendenza permits. These are criticized as a monopoly of archaeological resources that exclude the majority of professional academic archaeologists, and fail to allow feedback to and from the public. Prof. Riccardo Francovich of Siena University is particularly vocal on all this and has even organized an on-line forum on the subject (<http://192.167.112.135/NewPages/LIB/LIBERTA.html>).

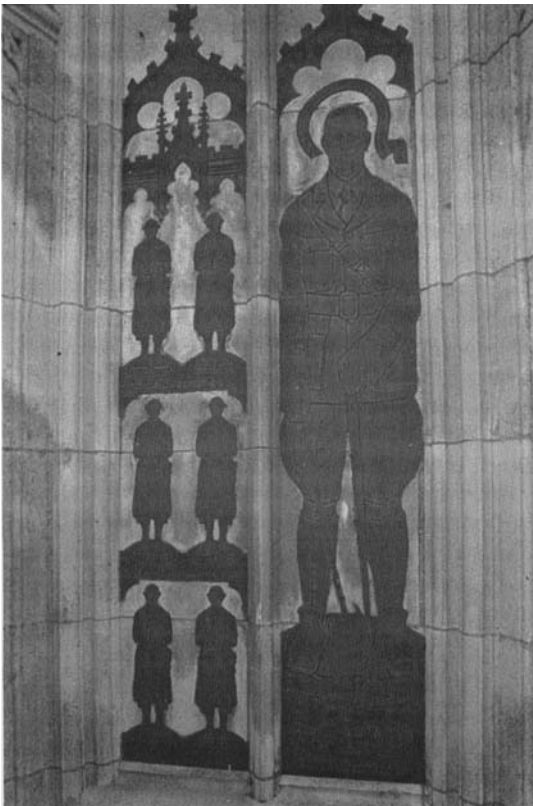
Nicola Terrenato reports that the situation is even more controlled in Greece where *ephoroi*, the state officials, have complete control over which projects are authorized, and he questions the restrictions placed on well funded, high-quality archaeological research. He wonders if these restrictions are the prerogative of countries that were traditionally 'looted' by early archaeologists, such as Egypt, Greece, Italy, Turkey, etc and further questions whether, even if this is the case, it is an acceptable explanation, since there is no real risk of genuine scholars engaging in unethical practices. No one wants to lose their faculty positions because of unprofessional archaeological conduct. Instead, it is urged that professional archaeological research should be seen as a means of rescuing sites and artefacts from the illegal looting that continues unabated in all these 'looted' countries. He suggests that this trend is particularly ironic when these very countries demand the outlawing of the illegal trade in antiquities. Should not archaeologists request suitably liberal regulations, when legal fieldwork is undertaken to assist with studying and saving the sites and heritage in question?

**T** In this issue we publish a Special section on Africa where good fieldwork co-exists with often difficult political and economic conditions. We also publish a magnificent study of the treatment of Babenburg and Hapsburg

corpses which has implications for the study of any bones — historic or prehistoric — of ancestral significance. On the borders of Wales, in the diocese of Worcester, a study of significant Tudor human remains may produce similar revelations. In May 2002, it is the 500th anniversary of the death of Prince Arthur. Who was Prince Arthur? He was the eldest son of Henry VII, whose premature death allowed the unexpected projection of Henry VIII into prominence as one of the most famous (or infamous) Kings of England. The celebration of the anniversary has its archaeological dimensions. An archaeological investigation of Arthur's Chantry is in progress to establish the context of his mortal remains. Examination has revealed numerous anomalies in its construction, in particular the way in which the pinnacles at each end are broken where they intrude into the aisle arcades (which are also damaged). Documentary evidence shows that Bishop Giffard built his own monument in this position before his death in 1302 and his tomb — together with that of his sister — is enclosed in the lower

part of the Chantry. By using a variety of geophysical and other non-invasive survey methods, it is hoped to answer such questions as: Has Arthur's Chantry been adapted from Giffard's monument? Where have the stones come from? Why is it so badly constructed? Where exactly is Arthur's coffin? Further details can be obtained from the Cathedral Archaeologist, Christopher Guy. (worcestercathedral@compuserve.com)

As we consider the prospect of a new form of terrorist war following the terrible events of 11 September, when monuments to capitalism were brought crashing to the ground with great and tragic loss of life, we draw attention to poignant memories of ancestors. The Friends of War Memorials in the United Kingdom have recently written to us to advertise the charity that cares for this important category of commemorative material culture that is prominent in British cities and countryside, and indeed across Europe. For us, the monument of Sledmere on the Yorkshire Wolds has a particular impact,



because it provides a very clear expression of the social structure of the time, explored in distinctive material culture: one Gothic monument for the officers; one 'Byzantine' monument for the ranks. Readers who wish to know more about the Friends of War Memorials should write to Amy Flint, a Bradford graduate in Archaeology: fowm@eidosnet.co.uk

☞ A more pacific linkage to ancestors has been provided by COLIN BURGESS who has written to us from a location southwest of Limoges in France, of which Glyn Daniel would have approved. He writes: 'Back in the sixties, I used to get irrationally annoyed with one of your distinguished predecessors, Glyn Daniel, every time one of his editorials for *Antiquity* began with him sitting on a terrace somewhere in France, sipping his St.-Raphael, and musing on the world of Archaeology. It seemed to me to represent a dilettante age that had gone, and to a young man more serious attitudes were required. But with age comes experience, and now I find myself sitting on my terrace in France and similarly reflecting on matters archaeological, except that G&T substitutes for St.-Raphael.' He writes further, 'not much penetrates these innermost parts of "France Profonde" except *ANTIQUITY*'. A respected author of many material culture studies (e.g. Burgess & Coombs 1979; Schmidt & Burgess 1981) as well as broad synthesis, he echoes our words in *ANTIQUITY* 75 (2001): 4 on the demise of artefact studies: 'whole periods as well as specialisms will effectively disappear from our university teaching, especially those non-monumental periods where artefacts loom large. Of course I am thinking particularly of the British Bronze Age. At the best of times the Bronze Age was not well-represented amongst our university teachers — the membership of the Bronze Age Studies Group over the last 25 years has always provided an interesting contrast between Britain and the rest, most of the British membership coming from outside the universities, while our Continental friends have always had a university majority. I think I am right in saying that with David Coombs' departure from Manchester this summer, not one out-and-out, one hundred per-cent, British Bronze Age specialist (with any extensive knowledge of the material culture of the period, and with any track-record, that is) is left in a British University; never mind

that he was also the last university metalwork specialist. No doubt there will be some, especially younger colleagues who have not yet impinged on my consciousness, who will be offended by this claim, but the time to apologise will come later when they have given the period the kiss of life. As it is, the Bronze Age, even more than in the past, will be taught in second- and third-hand versions by people who don't know their palstaves from their pygmy cups, but who will talk theory all day while knowing little or nothing about the material culture which should be at the heart of their theories.' If curators of material culture in our museums are considered redundant, as is rumoured in some circles of crazy government thinking, then the specialist knowledge of material culture will be completely lost.

☞ Colin Burgess also has views on the internet. 'Most people who laud the internet have servers in Britain or the USA, but it isn't so easy everywhere . . . I asked the Yahoo to look up palstave for me, and eventually to my great surprise discovered there were 85 web sites on the subject. But the first 20 of these seemed to want to sell me palstaves, either actual or reproductions, and at that point I decided that I had better beat a sharp exit, not wanting to beat my system or my pocket. The difference between Transitional and Late palstaves, I reasoned, was probably best explained by an expert, using actual examples, — but finding one may be difficult these days. Failing that the literature is still the best bet, and the Net a doubtful third. And to theoreticians who sneeringly ask why anyone would want to know the difference, I say it is exactly this disregard for the finer points of material culture that makes so much theoretical stuff all smoke and no fire.'

☞ A laudable attempt to use the internet for access to the archaeological literature is the Archway scheme (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/ARCHway.html>) based at the University of York. This feasibility scheme has set out to facilitate access to archaeological periodicals held in the 18 major university libraries in the England and Scotland. From one gateway, two products will be accessible by the time the project is completed in March 2002: listings of the holdings in these 18 libraries and an online index to the contents of 12 periodicals which

do not yet offer this facility. Unfortunately, although the scheme makes steps towards serving the needs of the archaeological (rather than librarianship) community, three-year projects can only ultimately be compromises. Firstly, the 12 periodicals selected for indexing, apart from a deliberate geographical spread in the United Kingdom, do appear to be focused on the later phases of cultural development (coinciding with the research interests of York university) — although we do admit that these periods — continuing our earlier theme — contain the larger proportion of material culture. Secondly, a number of key libraries in the universities which have multiple library support are simply not included. Oxford is so pre-occupied with building work that it is not yet included at all. Thirdly, such a scheme needs maintenance. York University has agreed to update the scheme for a limited period, but some consortium needs to be found to give long-life to the excellent idea.

A number of other interesting statistics arise out of this exercise. A questionnaire was held at the beginning of the project to establish the format in which archaeologists would like their periodicals delivered. Over 70% of respondents preferred paper copy. Some 2500 titles were identified. From these it is clear that the cost of these periodicals is substantially under half the average annual cost of not only Science journals (£392), as might be expected, but also of humanities journals (£192). We can only speculate Sagely (*sic*) that few archaeological journals have been snapped up by the big commercial publishers. Archaeologists publish to serve the community rather than a third-party shareholder. ANTIQUITY is currently offering its available back-numbers at greatly reduced prices, and we have examined the holdings of all the libraries in the scheme for potential customers. We are pleased to note that all the 18 libraries hold a full run of ANTIQUITY back over the full 75 years of its production. Nevertheless the back-number offer is still open to any libraries or individuals who wish to complete their run or add multiple copies.

There is significant good news for archaeological research in the award of substantial grants by the Leverhulme Trust in excess of £1 million to two projects under the theme of 'Long-term settlement in the ancient world'. The first grant demonstrates the importance of museum

research, since it is substantially based in two museums, the Natural History Museum (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/science/news/ahob.html>) and the British Museum. The project entitled 'Ancient Human Occupation of Britain' will answer key questions of the early settlement of Britain. When did people first arrive in Britain? Why were people apparently absent between 170,000 and 70,000 years ago? What factors led to their survival or local extinction? 'Old and new material and the latest scientific methods will be used to examine what circumstances allowed early human survival, and what factors interrupted it. Actual fossils of humans are very rare in Britain, but evidence of human occupation is scattered over the landscape, preserved in ancient river deposits, and stored in caves, in the form of stone tools and animal bones. Fossil remains can tell us what the people looked like, stone tools can reveal details of their behaviour and adaptations, while associated sediments and animal remains can be analysed to unlock the secrets of ancient climates and environments.'

The second project — 'Landscapes circum-Landnám: Viking settlement in the North Atlantic and its human and ecological consequences' is based in the Department of Geography and Environment of the University of Aberdeen (<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/geography/kedwards.hti#Research%20interests>). It will enable a high resolution and comprehensive investigation of what happens environmentally and socially when a group of people — in this case the Vikings — colonize 'pristine' landscapes. It will use the fossil evidence preserved in natural and archaeological occupation deposits, together with historical documents. Sites in the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland will be studied by an interdisciplinary and multi-national team.

One person's theory is another person's jargon. Another person's jargon is someone's theory. To demonstrate the balance of ANTIQUITY, we juxtapose Colin Burgess' comments on theory with John Robb's presentation of a modern sample of that theory, where he enlists material culture as 'Material symbols' (Robb 1999).

COLIN BURGESS writes: 'The associated problem, is communication. When I was a student in the late fifties there were comparatively few archaeological teachers, but most of them could

communicate, some of them brilliantly, and at the very least they spoke plain English. I suppose this is when archaeology was a profession, and professional archaeologists were first emerging. These were a new and fecund breed, and it was inevitable that in the sixties they would soon feel the need for new philosophies and methods with which to carry their discipline forward. My irritation with Glyn Daniel probably had something to do with this. No doubt about it, there was desperate want for new ways in the new professional age. Unfortunately the Young Turks who came to the top in the seventies, even more so in the eighties and nineties, forgot that the old approaches had been found not so much wrong, as insufficient on their own: and arguably even more important, it had not been stressed to them, or they promptly forgot, or didn't appreciate, or didn't want to know, that teaching is all about clarity and "getting it across". Is there another law, that Theory and simple explanation are mutually exclusive? Alas, there were far too few senior people at that time to restrain them in their excesses, indeed there was a resounding silence from most of the "greats" at the time. One of the few to express worries about the way things were going was that quintessential amateur (in the best sense) Jacquetta Hawkes, who wrote on the *Proper Study of Mankind* [ANTIQUITY 42 (1968): 255–62]. But she was more anxious about the intrusion of science and statistics into history than in the New Archaeology, which had scarcely been invented at the time; and also about the effect that too much science would have on writing and communication. But it is characteristic that the immediate replies came not from the West, from Clarke and Binford, but from Seoul and Bombay. Ever since, one of the most notable facts about the New Archaeology and all that followed it is that so few have dared to stand up and suggest that perhaps the emperor's new clothes, as Paul Bahn would have it, were not quite what they claimed to be. Only brave Paul Courbin dared to criticise it all in his "What is Archaeology?" (1988), a thorough hatchet job which was (characteristically) largely ignored or vilified by those who should have answered just criticism.' Another was Braidwood who compared the changes to a religious movement, personalized by Taylor as John the Baptist and Binford as Christ. A similar reaction was voiced by Colin Renfrew at

the Sheffield TAG of 1979 when Ian Hodder introduced his post processual movement.'


Colin Burgess continues, 'What is needed now is another soul brave enough to wade through the mind-numbing opacity that is so much of the New and Newer archaeology, to take up Courbin's banner and sift the wheat from the chaff'. Colin Burgess declines this task, but we are happy to recommend Matthew Johnson's (1999) sympathetic account or, of slightly older vintage, Bernbeck (1997), combining a continental European perspective with north American experience. In his own words, Colin Burgess says 'That person is certainly not me, because I haven't the patience, having long ago resolved that life is too short to read things that are not written in terms any reasonably intelligent person can understand. In this I agree with George Orwell, that if something is worth saying, then it can be said in plain English. I have had a life-time in extra-mural teaching, where it is all about getting it across in simple understandable terms; and clarity has not been what the last three decades have been about. The problem for me, I suppose, is that I remember one of the things that the late, great, George Jobey said to me when I arrived in Newcastle: that he was above all a historian, who just happened to use archaeological methods. Many New Men and Women have made it clear that history is not what our business is about any more, but history will judge us all in fifty or a hundred years time. Too many archaeologists think they are scientists, but as R.J.C. Atkinson decided in *Archaeology, History and Science* (1960: 21), archaeologists are no more scientists than they are art historians, and like them happen to use scientific techniques, all in the service of History. As archaeologists we should remember that the history of science is a history of absolute howlers; it is already clear that a lot of archaeological science carried out in the twentieth century has proved to be plain wrong! Watch out for further revelations!

'The result after nearly thirty years without criticism and restraint is that many archaeologists, and particularly university teachers, seem to believe that it is no longer important to communicate. On the contrary, they strive to outdo each other in witch doctor mumbo-jumbo, the whole point of which seems to be to conceal and not to communicate what they are thinking — or to cover up the fact that they are not

really thinking very much at all. And whatever happened to reading? Young researchers today clearly haven't been taught to read even the most basic sources of the last few decades (but then some of their professors give the impression they haven't deigned to read much either), otherwise they wouldn't trumpet so loudly their brilliant new discoveries — so often ideas which were in print and commonplace as recently as the sixties and seventies.

'Pity the young, brought up on a diet of *Time Team* and *Meet the Ancestors*, who head off to our universities bright-eyed and expecting some real archaeology, but are immediately told to forget artefacts and monuments, and digging and fieldwork and practicals, because it is all about philosophy and theory. I have heard them complaining bitterly in pubs (To hear real complaints about theoretical excesses, do a quick circuit of pubs closest to any TAG conference, and spot all the refugees who clearly prefer beer to Binfordism).'

Colin Burgess would like to acknowledge David Coombs, Ian Shepherd, Frances Lynch, Stephen Briggs and Peter Topping for inspiring his thoughts.

 JOHN ROBB, newly arrived in Cambridge, has kindly offered us this conference review of Agency Theory in the — until recently — unusual surroundings of the Society of American Archaeology. He has entitled his review of two symposia from the New Orleans meetings of 18–22 April 2001 'Duelling Agencies'. We welcome the comments of other readers on this or other significant conferences they have attended. We have ourselves attended a record number of international conferences this year in support of ANTIQUITY; we plan a review of the culture of archaeological conferences after the Denver SAA in March of 2002.

The annual bedlam that is the SAA conference is a cross between a contract archaeology marketplace, an overpowering Walmart of ideas and data, and a drunken high-school reunion. Every year the meetings seem richer in slice-of-place sessions on "The Early Prehistory of Cactus Canyon: An Interdisciplinary View"; every year the serious theory seems thinner on the ground.

It was all the more surprising, thus, to find listed in the programme not one but two sessions on the concept of agency at the 2001 SAA

meetings in New Orleans. The first, organized by Victoria Vargas, was "Beyond a Prestige Goods Economy: Social Valuables, Agency, and Power". The second, organized by Randy McGuire and Julian Thomas, was "Agency Beyond the Individual". At first glance, these two sessions seemed diametrically opposed. The former was clearly staking out issues central to New World processual political theory. It promised a late 1990s North American take on agency, with the emphasis on individual power brokers in tribes and chiefdoms. Thomas & McGuire's line-up was mostly "Binghamton and Brits"; the polemical session title and abstract promised to deploy a melange of feminism, historical archaeology, phenomenology and Marxism upon thoughtless agency theorists. It looked as if, with the emergence of agency theory as the latest broad church, we were about to witness the first bloody sectarian battles, or possibly the showdown at the Agency Corral.

In the event, it was the showdown that never was. What was remarkable was the level of theoretical convergence between the two sessions, at least on the level of critique.

As the "Social Valuables, Agency and Power" session went on, paper after paper hammered home criticisms of a view of agency based simply on the individual's ability to act intentionally. The basic message was: to understand how people act as agents, we need to consider their collective class formations (Saitta), their cosmology (Helms) and cultural frameworks (Cobb and Stovell), the contextual use of artefacts (Bayman), and the role of practical competence, tradition and routine (De Marrais, Robb) in constituting agency. In the most general critique, Pauketat argued that "material goods are not the reflections of identities, politics and ideologies that exist to be manipulated by individuals", and pointed out that labelling behaviours such as "corporate" and "network" behavioural strategies merely reifies rather than explains the social processes creating observed patterns. While the session as a whole was not coherent, with papers striking out towards very divergent theoretical horizons, it made the point that many American archaeologists thinking seriously about agency think it is time to problematize the concept of the intentionally acting individual actor.

"Agency Beyond the Individual" began with Julian Thomas' typically eloquent decon-




struction of the autonomous, bounded, rational individual as an intellectual construct of the modern West. The papers followed up this theme from feminist, phenomenological and Marxist perspectives, as well as from an interesting range of empirically inspired perspectives. As Barrett pointed out, to conceptualize agency, we need to imagine agents with culture-specific forms of personhood and action. Several careful contextual studies of Andean ancestors (Hastorf), Mayan scribes (Joyce), historical Indian and black communities (Warner) and early modern English villagers (Johnson) show how this might be done. A particularly interesting theme raised in various forms by Brunfiel, Hastorf, Johnson and O'Keefe concerns cultural narratives which define kinds of persons and how they behave, relate and move through life.

'In fact, both sessions were shouting largely at an absent interlocutor. The spectre stalking agency studies is the view of social evolution as the ability of political protagonists to actualize their ambitions. As Hayden argues, "any human population numbering more than 50–100 will include some ambitious individuals who will aggressively strive to enhance their own self-interest over those of other community members" (1995: 20; *cf.* Earle 1997). Here is a view of agency based upon the relatively straightforward assumption that people are motivated by a universal drive to achieve power and prestige. Perhaps most archaeologists would agree with this assumption, on some level of generality. But founding a social theory upon it requires several further, more controversial assumptions. Firstly, we can define "power" and "prestige" as rational quantities in a way which is both meaningful cross-culturally and concrete enough to be useful in social analysis. Secondly, the evolution of "power" and "prestige" is the principal archaeological themes of interest to us, Thirdly, to explain this evolution, we need to focus primarily on explicitly political actors and their conscious intentions.

'Depending on your theoretical location, each of these assumptions is either obvious common sense only a fool would doubt, or a culturally generated filter preventing us from seeing things which threaten our (masculinist, capitalist, Western-dominated . . . insert the –ism of your choice) world-view. In fact, this schism marks a deep divide in theories of power and agency, perhaps best summarized as a contrast between

views in which the leaders dominate the led and those in which social systems dominate both leaders and led (*cf.* Dobres & Robb 2000). The latter point of view was largely the one promoted in both symposia, whether as explicit polemic or as simple redress of theoretical balance. I suspect this is ultimately correct, but it is up to its advocates to argue it in a way which will convince the deeply entrenched common-sense lobby, and to make it useful, as well as theoretically sound.

'Where do the SAA agency symposia leave us? I can't speak for other participants and listeners, but I left with several very strong impressions. Agency theory is coming of age, with increasing realization of the complexity of questions such as intentionality and social reproduction. As Dobres commented, while political competition is important, we are learning not to reduce agency to politics or all ancient people to aggrandizers. At the same time, there is the usual new-idea bandwagon feel to agency studies, with ritualized onslaughts against often unnamed opponents (one wishes, for instance, that an individual-agency spokesperson had been able to speak at the "Beyond the Individual" session), and some interpretive arguments that exist upon goodwill and the energy of the moment rather than solid argumentation. In the end, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: how many of these 15-minute trial balloons will turn into elaborated methodologies and detailed case studies over the next few years.'

 This volume of *ANTIQUITY* completes 75 years of publication. We are celebrating these 75 years in various ways. Firstly, we are reprinting thematic collections of classic articles. The first, on landscapes, was published in 2000. The second, on the Celts, will appear in the next few months. At the annual TAG, this year in Dublin, we will run a 75th Anniversary Quiz to tax the minds of the conference delegates, set by the winning team of last year headed by Colin Renfrew. At the Denver SAA in March, we will be presenting a symposium to 'Celebrate Antiquity', headed by the President of the Society for American Archaeology, including papers by three editors, a trustee and several advisory editors, and closing with a *perspective* from the Editor of *American Antiquity*, and a long-time reader of *ANTIQUITY*, Brian Fagan. We hope to see you there or at our regular stall

at this conference, or at the party we plan to hold with the legendary support of Colin Renfrew. Finally, we plan to issue invitations to an evening celebration at the Society of Antiquaries of London on 25 April 2002. Readers will note in this issue the advertisement of the editorship of *ANTIQUITY*. After five years of busy enjoyment, we have decided to complete our term of office at the end of 2002, giving time to ensure a seamless transition to the new editorial team. In the last issue of our editorship in December 2002, we plan to publish papers from the celebratory events, reflecting on 75 years of readable investigation into the archaeological past.

☪ We are pleased to announce the appointment of the following new advisory editors: Ludmila Koryakova (Russia, Iron Age)  
Chris Pare (Bronze Age, Iron Age, Central Europe)  
Simon Kaner (Far East)  
Susanne Sievers (Iron Age)  
Dean Snow (North America)  
Coriolan Opreanu (Roman, Medieval, Balkans)  
Dragos Georghiu (Chalcolithic, ceramics, experimental archaeology)  
Natalie Venclová (Central Europe, Iron Age)

☪ Professor ANTHONY SNODGRASS has served *Antiquity* as Chair of the Publication Committee through at least four editors, with calm bril-

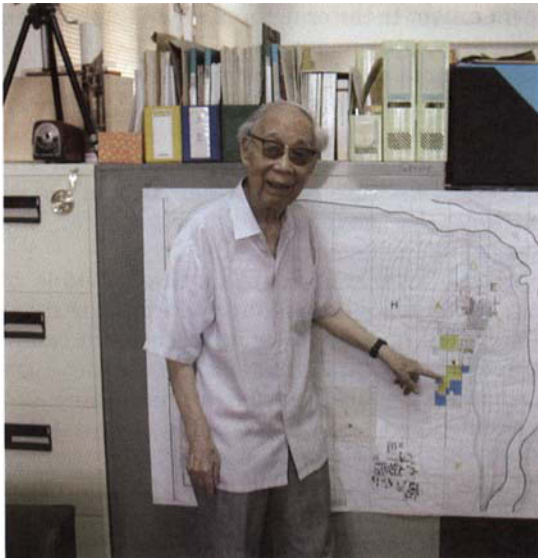
liance. We, therefore, consider it appropriate to publish the best visual tribute kindly supplied by Sara Owen: the scholar surrounded by many of his students. This photograph was taken at a conference organized by two of Anthony's students (Lisa Nevett and Sara Owen) on the occasion of his retirement at the end of the academic year 2000–1. The conference celebrated the wide influence of Anthony's work, and its breadth, through the presentation of papers by his students. It was a great indication of the affection in which he is held that so many travelled from America as well as from within Britain to be present at this celebration.

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To aid future scholars the full roll call comprises: To the left of Anthony: (front from left to right) Ian Morris, Giovanna Ceserani, (back from left to right) James Whitley, Jeremy Tanner, Jonathan Hall, Sue Alcock. To the right of Anthony: (front from left to right) Sara Aguilar, Sara Owen, Lisa Nevett, Gillian Shepherd, Niall O'Connor; (back from left to right) David Small, Hugh Bowden, Tom Gallant, Sturt Manning, Robin Osborne.



Shih Chang-ju, pointing to the location of pit YH127.

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**C** CHARLES HIGHAM kindly introduces the brief memoirs of a Chinese scholar who has lived longer than ANTIQUITY:

'In July 2001, I was a guest of the Academia Sinica in Taipei. Before one of my lectures, I was introduced to Mr Shih Chang-ju. I was informed that he was aged 101, and had been a member of the excavation team that uncovered the Shang royal tombs of Anyang, and the remarkable pit YH127, which contained a royal archive of oracle bones. Meeting such a renowned and venerable archaeologist reminded me of an occasion in 1958, when I met Dr Margaret Murray, then aged 99, who had excavated with Sir Flinders Petrie. The following year, she published a paper in *Antiquity* entitled "My first hundred years in archaeology".

'I resolved to meet Shih Chang-ju again, and try and persuade him to write an article for ANTIQUITY. I suggested that it be entitled "My second century in archaeology". Most fortunately, Chao-Hui Jenny Liu agreed to act as our translator, and further, to render his story in English for readers of ANTIQUITY. The following morning, I visited his laboratory. He arrives at the Academia Sinica sharp at 9.00 am each day, and works with his assistants until 5.00 pm. A steady flow of articles reporting on his research issues from his brush, and he was kind enough to spend several hours of his day describing how he worked in the royal graves and the oracle bone archive at Anyang. The photograph accompanying his article shows him pointing to the location of pit YH127.

'One of the most spectacular discoveries at Anyang came in June 1937, with the opening of pit YH127. This underground chamber was found to contain the carefully stacked archives of two Shang kings. Over three tons of turtle bones were removed, and when laboratory work was complete months later, 17,088 turtle carapace and eight cattle scapulae were available for detailed analysis. The Sino-Japanese war then made it necessary to move this precious archive to the safety of Kunming, in remote Yunnan, where Dong Zuobin pored over the texts with the aim of understanding the Shang calendar, and relating it to the present system. His crowning achievement was to list 12 successive kings who ruled at Anyang for 273 years from 14 January 1384 BC. He then worked out the individual reign dates, and the intensive court round of sacrificial rituals to the ancestors. Following the end of the Second World War, the Academia Sinica moved to Taiwan, where a series of major reports on the excavations of Anyang, under the aegis of Li Ji, were published.

'For those concerned with East Asian archaeology, these excavations rank alongside the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun, or the royal graves of Ur. To meet the archaeologist who opened pit YH127, and stood at the base of the massive Shang tombs, was an unexpected and extraordinary privilege. Again, to hear him talk of meeting Paul Pelliot, one of the greatest of western Sinologists, gave a rare insight into the early days of archaeology in China. I hope that the readership of ANTIQUITY appreciates his account. I remain deeply indebted to Chao-

Hui Jenny Liu, without whom his paper would not be available to an English-speaking audience.'

### My Second Century in Archaeology

by SHIH CHANG-JU

*Yinxu expedition 10, 11, 12: Xibeigang (Hsi-pei-kang), Houjiazhuan (Hou-chia-chuang)*

I participated in the excavation of the Yin royal tombs. There were 10 team members, and roughly one person was assigned to each of the eight tombs: 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1500, 1550, 1217, and 1400. I was assigned the royal tombs 1003 and 1550. At night, the team would discuss the progress in each of the tombs.

How we came to uncover the royal tombs is interesting. In the nine previous expeditions we had concentrated on Xiaotun (Hsiao-t'un) and Hougang (Hou-kang). However, one day a poor farmer called Hou Xinwen sought us out and gave Mr Dong Zuobin (Tung Tso-pin) some oracle bones from his land. Because of this information, we began to excavate on his land, which consisted of two small plots, one at Xibeigang and another to the south of Houjiazhuang.

During this excavation, we lived in the village called Houjiazhuan, but actually we excavated at Xibeigang, which was under the province of Wuguan. Now everyone calls the whole expedition Houjiazhuan, but it did not take place there, it was only the name of the village where we lived.

Later, we found out that Hou came to us because he was angry at local bullies who took and sold three bronze vessels from his land but had not given him a cut. Digging at the spot where the bronzes were unearthed, we found the eastern ramp of Yin royal tomb 1001. Then we started to dig around this area, and found the eight royal tombs. There were two kinds of royal tomb, the two-ramp and the four-ramp kind. The three most interesting, tombs 1001, 1004, 1400, were all four-ramp tombs. We would not have found these tombs without Hou's report and permission to dig on his land. The three bronze vessels, which started the whole affair, later ended up in a Japanese museum. They were an unusual type of *he* (a rounded wine vessel with closed spout, handle, cover and three or four legs) which the locals called 'high-shooting cannons'.

Many of the large tombs we excavated had already been robbed, so the team did not ex-

pect much. In the end, there was a tomb, 1004, which was very interesting indeed. Two big *ding*, many *ge* and *mao* heads were found there. While we were digging, Li Ji (Li Chi) came. Before we had finished, Fu Sinian (Fu Ssu-nien) asked Bai Xihe (Paul Pelliot) to come and see our discoveries. Because of this international recognition, the government funding for the excavation came more easily.

Tomb 1400 was found on the east side of the cemetery, which is rare. Most of the royal tombs are in the west. On the eastern ramp, there were some bronze vessels about 50 cm tall with the inscription, 'sleeping chamber vessel'. So we know that it was on the east that they set up a sleeping room. Tomb robbers emptied the central chamber but left the ramps relatively undisturbed. Aside from the eastern ramp finds, there were also bronze vessels found on the west side, but they were without inscriptions. From this we can know that there were so many things that were already taken.

Because of the findings at 1400, we know that the three bronze vessels taken out and sold from tomb 1001 were *he*, instead of *ding* as was previously believed.

*Oracle bone pit, Yinxu expedition 13: Anyang, Honan*


The finding of oracle bone pit YH127 is one of the most important discoveries for oracle bone studies, but please allow me a simple rendering of the events. At 4 pm on June 12, 1936, bone fragments were uncovered in the north-eastern wall of the pit. We found more and more as the day went on. However, it became dark, and we had to stop. We found 760 pieces on the first day. We partially re-filled the pit, and asked our worker to guard it well. On the second day, Mr Wang Xiang and I worked in the pit ourselves due to the importance of the discovery. The 2-metre long and metre wide pit could only hold two men working shoulder to shoulder. The tortoise plastron pieces soon filled the surface of the excavated area in the pit, and we could not move our feet for fear of stepping on the shells. We were soon working by backing up in the pit, and when the pit could not hold us both, I backed out, and when even Mr Wang could not set his feet down, he had to open a space in the wall so that he could get out. We brought up each piece after photographing them, but there were still many pieces be-

low. We did not know how deep the find was. Thus on 14 June, we decided to make the oracle pit into an oracle bone pillar. Before we were emptying out the centre, but now we were carefully mining for the core, which we planned to ship to the Institute in Nanjing for detailed examination. The city carpenters had to work through the night, finding trees large enough to saw planks for such an enormous box. The planks arrived to be assembled at the site. The final box produced was 2 metres in length, and 1 metre high. The box was so heavy that it could not be rotated. It took us two days to lift it from the 5-metre pit.

Transporting the box also proved to be a challenge. First, we used a 64-man formation to lift the box. Our transporter, Mr Li Shaoyu, was responsible previously for transporting the hearse of the Emperor Yuan Shikai. He used a bronze gong to organize the gang: at the first gong, every one took their places; at the second gong, the poles went up on the shoulders; at the third gong, everyone straightened up and lifted; at the fourth gong, the formation walked. He drilled the gang on the site and we decided to try it. Everything went smoothly until the third gong, when there was a loud crack: the poles had broken. The gang scattered in fright. What to do? We made a second formation for 48 people, with 22 assisting. We also lightened the load by taking out some earth and sawing a bit of the pillar off. We replaced the two major poles with Yu wood, which had the virtue of bending but not breaking. Finally we lifted the box. But we had to walk through wheat fields, the box sitting low on its seat, and thus the gang rested every 30 or 40 steps. The three *li* (about 1500 metres) road to the train station took two entire days. We finally brought the box up to the train platform. The box was squeezed into the compartment and shipped to Nanjing. The train had to stop momentarily to fix wheel axles bent from the weight of the box, and we had to compensate a worker for related injury. However, the box arrived safely at the Institute on 12 July 12. From discovery to arrival, it was exactly one month.

8 August 2001

Translated by Chao-Hui Jenny Liu

 We are pleased to publish the latest radiocarbon dates of the North Ferriby boats, in a

form of commemoration of TED WRIGHT who discovered them. The crucial nature of dating, a project initiated by Wright himself, is highlighted by the recent dating of the Wisley boat in Surrey. This boat had been assumed to be prehistoric. Are not all dug-outs prehistoric? However, recent dating of the Wisley boat has established a date of about 1160 AD (Alexander 2001). The co-authors of the paper on the North Ferriby boats write:

### **Ted Wright MBE, FSA**

*born 21 June 1918, died 18 May 2001*

Ted Wright died in May 2001 just two months after he held forth to a group of reporters on the windy Ferriby foreshore to explain the significance of the new dating programme (see Wright *et al.*, this volume, pp. 728–36). The results confirmed his long-held belief that the boats he had discovered sailed some 4,000 years ago.

Ted was born in 1918 and went to school at Charterhouse, before going on to read Greats at Christ Church, Oxford. Fascinated by boats since he was a boy, his great-grandfather, Sir William Wright, was chairman of the Hull Dock Company, and laid the foundation stone of the Hull Maritime Museum. In 1937 while Ted and his brother were out walking on the foreshore at North Ferriby, they found three large planks sticking out of the mud. Although they recognized the wood as part of a boat, they initially did not know what sort of a boat or how old it was.

The onset of war did little to dampen Ted's interest in archaeology; as a tank commander in the East Riding Yeomanry, he successfully managed to halt tank training at Sutton Hoo because of the damage it was causing to the Anglo-Saxon burial mounds. During leave in 1940 he found a second boat at Ferriby; however, it was not until 1946 that he managed to return to the Ferriby foreshore to excavate the craft. In the meantime he was promoted to captain just before taking part in D-Day, finishing the war as a major.

Ted put up with cold, mud, stench and exhaustion to dig the two Ferriby boats from the banks of the Humber, an experience he described as 'like getting slices of crumbly cheese out of glue'. The boat timbers were taken to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich for conservation and study.




*Ted Wright (on the right) and initial cleaning of the remains of Ferriby 3 in 1963. (© Kingston upon Hull City Museum & Art Galleries.)*

In 1963, after years of dedicated shore watching, it was while out with his son that he realized they had stumbled upon a third boat at Ferriby. Excavation took place that year, with Ted once again leading removal of the timbers (see photograph).

Ted was a true gentleman, and he will be sorely missed by all those who were privileged enough to work with him.

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ALEXANDER, M. 2001. The Wisley Dug-out boat, *Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society* 352: 2–4.

 We also publish this appreciation by CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE of RHYS JONES, until recently an advisory editor of *ANTIQUITY*. It first appeared in a slightly different form, as an obituary in the *London Independent*, on 20 October 2001.

#### Rhys Maengwyn Jones

Welshman and archaeologist  
born Bangor 26 February 1941; Professor of Archaeology, Australian National University 1993–2001; married Betty Meehan; died Canberra, Australia, 19 September 2001

Rhys Jones, among the best and most original archaeologists of his generation, was one of that remarkable group who over the last 40 years

have created modern archaeological knowledge of Aboriginal Australia. Australia, with its singular climate and its unique flora and fauna, is a harsh continent for humans. Its archaeology is also hard, for the stone tools of its early human inhabitants are reticent, and its acid soils can confound even routine procedures like radiocarbon dating. John Mulvaney had pioneered early Australian prehistory, and then a cohort of young colleagues — amongst them Jim Allen, Carmel Schrire and Rhys — addressed the key questions. When did human beings first reach Australia? What was the prehistory of Aboriginal art and ceremony? Was there a direct connection between the arrival of human beings and the sudden extinction of the megafauna? What was the relationship between earliest Aboriginal life-ways and those hunting-and-gathering skills which supported Aboriginal Australians into the 20th century? All these questions await definite answer. For all of them the provisional good answer we now have is in large part due to Rhys.

Rhys Jones was born Welsh-speaking and grew up amongst the slate tips of Blaenau Ffestiniog in north Wales; his parents moved to Cardiff, and from the grammar school he went to Cambridge. On graduating from Emmanuel College, like many a bright young Cambridge

archaeologist of that era, he went to a distant place; as one of the last ‘ten-pound Poms’, he became a migrant who contributed £10 whilst the Australian Government paid the rest of the fare. (The Government then kept his passport for two years to stop him escaping.) He took a Ph.D at Sydney University, moving to the Australian National University in Canberra for his subsequent career.

His first fieldwork was in Tasmania, where he excavated the coastal site of Rocky Cape, a key place in documenting the special course of Aboriginal Australians on that great offshore island. Subsequently his work ranged across Australia, concentrating in Arnhem Land on the tropical north coast. With his long-term partner, Betty Meehan, he spent 14 months on the Blyth River, recording how foraging time was spent and nourishment found by the Gidjingarli people, one of the last Aboriginal communities living traditionally off the land. This work, of which an aspect is fully published in Betty’s splendid *Shellbed to shell midden* (1982) is a pioneering ethno-archaeological study which hunter-gatherer studies will come to depend on in the future.

In the 1980s, Rhys led the research team to explore archaeology in what is now Kakadu National Park, creating a synthesis for this remarkable region of enduring quality. A decade later, it was also in Kakadu that he realized that the new luminescent dating technique could be used to date the old Arnhem Land sites he had excavated, with their deep stratigraphies of accumulating sandy sediments. With Bert Roberts and Mike Smith, he produced luminescent dates for two sites of around 60,000 years ago which stand today as the oldest proof of a human presence in Australia in which colleagues have general confidence.

Rhys called his research style ‘cowboy archaeology’. That actually meant a considered working-out of just which sites and which contexts would hold the key to the big issue; next, a rapid field project would make the critical field observations and take the samples; then — often novel — lab work would develop understanding. In truth, it was cowboy-like only in the bushman’s field clothes Rhys so liked to wear, with crumpled shirt and hat: flat Welsh cap in cool places or, under tropical sun, tired brown hat (Akubra of course) of that caricature profile — porkpie centre with broad flat rim — which cartoonists dress authentic Australians in.



*Rhys Jones as a Cambridge student, 1962 or 1963, in a photograph by Carmel Schrire.*

I first encountered Rhys in person in 1986, when political storms stirred the first ‘World Archaeological Congress’ in Southampton and I was organizing a session about claims to ownership and authority over Stonehenge. As a Welshman, and true descendant of the Britons who built Stonehenge, he laid an indigenous person’s land claim to the place — a sacred British place which the English invaders of Britain took hold of and falsely possess today. Proving his cause with eloquence, authority and humour, he lodged his unanswerable land claim but then chose not to pursue it. It would do no good to repeat at home the divisiveness over land rights between indigene and in-comer which has so split Australian society, and poisons it to this day.

My first trip to Australia was in 1988, when both the CHAGS hunter-gatherer meeting and the inaugural Australian Rock-art Congress were held at Darwin. I pedalled between the two on a hired bike, and they were thrilling separately, astonishing together. At the rock-art meeting, colleagues talked of plans for field excursions afterwards to the great sites — in Kakadu or the Kimberley or on a ‘grand tour’ that would

go to everywhere that began with a K or with any other letter. What was I doing? Well, all I could say was that Rhys was going bush and I was going with him. So we duly drifted out from Darwin in a Toyota 4WD from the university field-base in the Darwin suburbs, and headed east, first stop the Bark Hut Inn on the Arnhem Highway. Always open to new ideas, younger colleagues, and anyone first-rate to work with in the field, Rhys had recruited Bert Roberts — then a youthful geologist doing his Ph.D field and lab work in the Alligator Rivers region. What we did was to take auger samples at Malakunanja II, on the north edge of the high Arnhem Land ‘stone country’, for thermoluminescent dating measurements — the first cautious fieldwork in the remarkable decade of pioneering luminescent dating studies of the Australian Pleistocene which Rhys, Bert and a larger team then developed. Pom that I was, I got to do the augering under the full sun, whilst Bert manipulated the samples, which must never be in daylight, within a black bag, and Rhys in the best shade took the field notes. Samples safely in the Alligator Rivers lab after this rapid cowboy raid, I remember driving back into Darwin, the bush alternately vivid green and vivid black (where burnt) on vivid red soil under the vivid hot blue sky. I had never encountered such archaeology in such a place, and I have been working in Australia ever since. It is only when I write this that I grasp where the magic was, not just the archaeology of Aboriginal Australia, but that archaeology as addressed by Rhys.

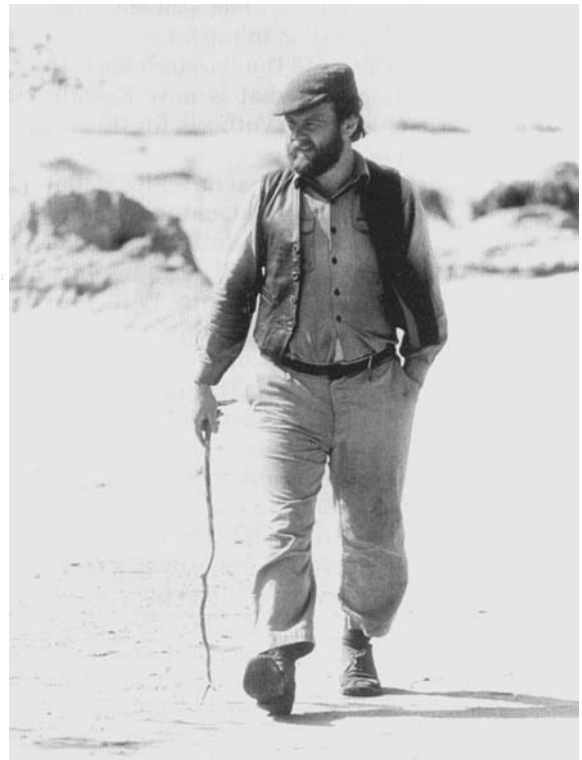
Rhys had difficulties in his last years. The Australian National University, careless that its archaeological team is one of the best in the world, chopped it about more than once; downhearted, Rhys anticipated redundancy and having to give up research. Then he suffered the leukaemia that killed him. But his acute fieldwork went brilliantly on to the end. In 1997, again with Bert Roberts, he achieved the technical feat of dating by the luminescent technique the mud nests which certain Australian wasps make on rock faces; these sometimes cover rock-art, and when they do, a date for the mud-wasp nest gives a minimum age for the art. This test, relating to the elegant ‘Bradshaw’ figures of the Kimberly, placed them as ancient as the cave-paintings of Europe. The Bradshaw paper,

like predecessors, was in *Nature*, the supreme place for science publications. But also amongst his last publications was a paper in and the Welsh abstract to Stephen Aldhouse-Green’s technical report on Paviland Cave — characteristically about new research, with a Welsh connection, and a helping hand to a colleague.

Rhys’s life was shared for 30 years by Betty Meehan on their 40-acre ‘block’ at Hoskinstown in a high valley close to Canberra, where their little house ‘Ty’r Paith’ stands over an open grassy valley with the look of Breconshire to it. By his and Betty’s choice, on Rhys’s death a gathering of friends celebrated life and friendship at the house; then they took him down to Bungendore cemetery for his last excavation and buried him in his field gear, complete with cap; and went back to the block for one of the genial parties that Betty and Rhys are famous for.

#### Reference

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*Rhys Jones on the ‘Walls of China’ at Lake Mungo, 1973, walking briskly in flat cap, the other characteristic headgear.*