

# Editorial

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE

The day after our December Editorial went to press, the in-coming Portuguese government came to a decision about the Foz Côa dam, and the future of the engraved rock-art in the valley it would flood (ANTQUITY 69: 231–7, 867–9, 877–901). The Prime Minister, ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, submitting his new administration's programme to Parliament, said:

- work on the Foz Côa dam would be suspended;
- studies for building a dam on the Sabor, another tributary of the Douro, would begin;
- archaeologists would be given all the time necessary to study the valley exhaustively and to establish its real status;

- if, as he hoped, study confirmed the world-wide importance of the heritage in the valley, the dam would be definitively abandoned.

A pronouncement on the heritage value of the valley would have to come, said the Prime Minister, from organizations 'above suspicion'. Who is above suspicion depends on what is considered cause for suspicion!

Showing a larger vision than partisan advantage or narrow economics, Prime Minister GUTERRES said it was time to stop picturing the preservation of cultural heritage as an obstacle to progress or economic development, and instead to view it as a major factor in promoting regional economies and public education,



Cartoon of the Côa controversy at its height, from the weekly magazine *Visão*, 13 July 1995.

The then Prime Minister, A. CAVACO SILVA, dressed in a Superman T-shirt shouting 'I love electricity', declares, 'The Portuguese Prime Minister is very happy that the Côa engravings are not Palaeolithic but miserable doodles only 3000 years old.'

To the right a countryman, engraving an image of his beloved horse with a steel knife (as some contend the figures were made), says, 'This is a portrait of my Matilda!'

without which no true progress exists. And, he made it clear, 'I would not want to face the judgement of History as the man who destroyed such valuable engravings.'

It could have been very different. Supported by the developer's science reports that the figures were no more than some 3000 years old, with the vocal among the dating scientists sure that the younger among these estimates were 'no doubt more valid' than the older (ANTIQUITY 69: 880), a national leader of different spirit could have found these the grounds to give the project a go-ahead.

The decision was confirmed with a definitive abandonment of the C $\hat{o}$ a dam project on 17 January 1996.

We thank colleagues for mobilizing public interest inside and outside Portugal, and acknowledge the new Portuguese Government's generous view of a common good over an immediate interest. May study of the engravings now go forward in a proper spirit of open collaboration between colleagues, and with a modesty fitting how little we reliably know about the open-air rock-engravings of Atlantic Europe!

JO $\hat{A}$ O ZILH $\hat{A}$ O, who wrote for the December ANTIQUITY on the figures, is co-ordinator creating a new C $\hat{o}$ a Archaeological Park.<sup>1</sup> His policy is that study of its art and archaeology should be open to all researchers, nationally and internationally, with some degree of coordination with his own recording and analysis team.



*Emblem of a bovid, from the C $\hat{o}$ a engravings.*

<sup>1</sup> Projecto Parque Arqueol $\hat{o}$ gico do Vale do C $\hat{o}$ a, Comiss $\hat{a}$ o Instaladora do Instituto Portugu $\hat{e}$ s de Arqueologia, Pal $\hat{a}$ cio da Ajuda, P-1300 Lisboa, Portugal.

✎ I reported in the December issue the great advance in knowledge of Stonehenge — despite C $\hat{o}$ a in this Englishman's view still the premier prehistoric place of Europe — contained in the fat new book on the site. (Our reviewer, lumbered also with being a research assessor, see below, is still digesting the beast.) Now there is news, rather mixed, about the corresponding need to make the setting of Stonehenge worthy of the place. GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT reports below (pages 9–12) present plans for a Stonehenge Millennium Park, with the main highways diverted that ruin the peace of Stonehenge.

The best scheme sends the road underground through a 'Super-tunnel' diving under the whole Stonehenge environs. It is costed at £200 million. In dreaming of this aptly-named 'Green Route', English Heritage and the National Trust, *responsables* for Stonehenge, find themselves against the British government, whose ministry for roads persists in promoting a cheap and nasty option of a rebuilt and wider highway on the present damaging alignment. They could learn from the generous Portuguese model, and notice that Stonehenge — the frontispiece to British history — deserves a certain grandeur and ambition in its care. Heritage and Trust, obliged to work in that real world, have split the Stonehenge scheme, as WAINWRIGHT reports, into two stages, so the whole does not have to wait for the new highways to proceed. Public money has been forthcoming to purchase the collected papers of Winston Churchill — stuff the government contended in court it already owned — so Stonehenge deserves matching support. It really *is* national heritage, as a great old place in which the people of a nation find collective definition and identity.

Against long-established habits of placing visitor centres too conveniently close to the attraction, and even after Edward Cullinan won an architectural competition for a building sited at Larkhill, not far north of Stonehenge, the promoters of the Millennium Park have wisely turned to the right option for the very long term. The visitor is to be welcomed further away from the stones at Countess Farm, where there is space for large and good displays, support facilities and — please — some kind of a full-size replica. I would choose myself not a facsimile of Stonehenge as it is, but an imaginative evocation in a contemporary material (metal?) of what the full design might have been.

☪ The end of this month, 31 March 1996, is D-Day for British university departments of archaeology, where the D may come to stand for delight or despair. The periodic research assessment exercise is an established rite now in Britain; the output over the last several years of the active researchers in each university department at that date is assessed by a specialist panel for each subject,<sup>1</sup> and the department graded for research accordingly. The seven grades run from 1 ‘Research quality that equates to attainable levels of national excellence in none, or virtually none, of the sub-areas of activity’ up through 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5, to the top 5\* ‘Research quality that equates to attainable levels of international excellence in a majority of sub-areas of activity and attainable levels of national excellence in all others’.

The gradings decide how much central funding each university will receive from the British government in respect of research activity over the span until the next review. So much depends on them that an elaborate game of ploys and counter-ploys is being bluffed out: the funding councils try to state in precise terms what ‘good’ means, and the departments then try to look good according to what those terms say, letter by lawyerly letter. The last research review (in 1992) had departments nominate *all* their research publications: but perhaps that rewarded quantity not quality. This time, each active researcher nominates four publications only: what about researchers who produce in quantity *and* quality? One can anticipate the next assessment will tinker with *that* rule (part of this game is in the changing of rules): meanwhile, pity the researcher and department who has guessed that ‘good’ as codified this time means book-length publications of workmanlike weight — not intending to be novel — when the assessors instead chance to fancy original, short, timely (transient?) papers. (Neither *Guidance on submissions* nor *Criteria for Assessment* plainly tell you which will look better.)

1 The archaeology panel is: chairman Barry Cunliffe (Oxford); Sheridan Bowman (British Museum); Wendy Davies (UCL); Mike Fulford (Reading); Martin Jones (Cambridge); Peter Warren (Bristol); Trevor Watkins (Edinburgh); Alasdair Whittle (Cardiff).

Unsurprisingly, there are ANTIQUITY connections in the group: Cunliffe is chairman of our controlling Antiquity Trust, Bowman and Fulford among the editors’ advisory team.

This is a big game. There is a standing list of British universities known to be in financial trouble; low research scores may push some over the edge. And much of the elaborate codifying of procedures is to protect the assessment from judicial challenge to the outcome: if stated protocols are followed, grounds to contest damnations are weaker.

One ploy is to hire a researcher on a short-term transfer, so you can scoop their output on to your credit account on 31 March 1996. It has been noticed that Sir Martin Gilbert, great historian of 20th-century Britain, will on that date not be among the Oxford historians, his normal allegiance, but doing a limited term in the Department of Hebrew Studies at University College London, which will be ballooned up by his vast productivity (or at least by four works chosen from his vast productivity). But already the counter-ploy is in place: the assessors will examine the research promise of a department’s intended future personnel. The counter-counter-ploy is obvious enough: declare your passing star(s) as a permanence in the department until the assessment is over, and then silently allow them to evaporate. Or, if that costs too much, pretend to your pricier new recruits they will be permanences; once you have your good grades, be unpleasant to these expensive adornments, and let them be head-hunted away (now head-hunting is a routine British way of making senior academic appointments).

None of the recent appointments I know of in archaeology look like this particular kind of manoeuvre — but what use is a manoeuvre if it looks like a manoeuvre? In economics — perhaps a more factual subject than archaeology — the department at Manchester, of high reputation in Marxist approaches, has been busily hiring ‘mainstream’ economists, in the belief it suffers from its known strength in a politically incorrect attitude; men in suits who like to measure money score higher than questioners of social values. How politically (or academically) correct is theoretically minded? post-processual? environmentally determinist archaeology? — advertently or inadvertently?

In separate comments on the issue, in our Reports section below, ANDREW FLEMING questions central premisses of the review about the relations between good teaching and good research and about what makes a good department, and ANDREW SHERRATT sees where atti-

tudes embodied in the exercise lead when applied to an archaeologist of real scholarly merit. Here I address just a few of the many odd-shaped cogs in the mechanism which is grading the brains in the archaeology departments.

A first puzzle is the discrepancy between the reference for judgement and the positions of the judges. The key criterion for assessing research is to be whether a department contributes *internationally*, or only at a level of *national* importance. There is a starting difficulty here for any field, like literature or any historical study, whose subject is in part defined by nations and by languages: a study structured by region — the Panel's chair holds a Professorship of *European* Archaeology — is inclined to be less international than one, say chemical engineering, whose field of study is defined without regard to region. And if one is to judge against the international scale, does one not need international judges? Yet the eight archaeology assessors are every one British, and a 'no one from abroad' rule is visible in nearly every panel. Three of the eight assessors for archaeology come from the 'golden triangle' of Cambridge–London–Oxford universities, but in many subjects that is not true; established powers do not rule. Driven by brandy or fear, one can look at the panels and guess what other golden triangles may rule which kingdoms, or hazard in which subject Oxford, say, has the business stitched up, and in which subjects it has itself been stitched up — and who by?

Since so much rides on the result, each department has cause to scrutinize the assessment panel. Can it really deal fairly with the departments from which its own members come? Will it grasp the value of *my* research interests? Regional and period specialist interests in archaeology are as well represented as one could hope for in a small group, but eight individuals cannot know the research state of *all* archaeology. There is no Palaeolith amongst them. There *is* a medievalist. But — the nervous medievalist will note — the medievalist on the panel is regarded as more a historian than an archaeologist; and if you dig in her published writings, you find archaeology judged inaccessible to parts of medieval studies that most archaeologists consider that it reaches.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the

medievalists would feel safer if there had been a Palaeolith instead of one of their own.

What is happening is that inexact measures of hard-to-measure traits like 'research quality' have become the *targets*, and devices are then ingeniously contrived to reach high scores and be rewarded. The measures, never good, are thereby corrupted, and the process moves on to prefer another measure as target. Between 1992 and 1996 assessments, it has moved from *quantity* towards *quality*: anticipate the next assessment to move on to *impact*, and use other poor measures, starting with citation indices, as its new targets. Then the scores so arrived at each assessment round become the single measure by which departments flourish or fail.

The special-interest grumble in this office would be to ask: 'What about editing?' It is clearly to the common good of the subject that some of us spend time on editing the journals and books in which research is published. Good editing makes for good publishing makes for good knowledge, good circulation and good influence of good research. But editing is neither teaching nor research; if all of us in the universities are to be scored and ranked and graded by teaching and research alone, is editing to get pushed out? Someone has had a grumble about this already, because the July 1995 circular about the assessment mentions editing. It says (Annex A, para. 18):

It would be reasonable for a panel to conclude that editorship (especially where defined as bringing to press work done by others, as distinct from textual scholarship) is not necessarily research activity. The panel should nonetheless keep an open mind to the possibility that in certain cases there may be a research element in this — though it would equally be reasonable to make it clear that responsibility for identifying any such case rests with the submitting HEI [university]. On the other hand, the fact that an active researcher holds a particular editorship may be regarded as a significant indication of peer esteem and taken into account accordingly.

So, editing doesn't count (except for the editing that does count) — rightly if this is to be a *research* assessment, since editing is not research. But then look at the glosses:

- 'It would be reasonable . . . to conclude'
- 'especially where defined as'
- 'as distinct from'
- 'is not necessarily'
- 'nonetheless keep an open mind'

1 This opinion may be unfair to this assessor's range of research expertise and attitudes; it is a stereotype in the public print and can be controverted in public.



- ‘to the possibility’
- ‘in certain cases’
- ‘there may be a research element in this’ [in what?]
- ‘though it would equally be reasonable’
- ‘to make it clear that responsibility rests with’
- ‘On the other hand’
- ‘may be regarded as’
- ‘a significant indication of peer esteem’
- ‘taken into account accordingly’

Within a span of 106 words I count these 14 nuances and counter-nuances, in the general instructions before the archaeology panel puts on its own tweaks. To call it byzantine is unfair to the Byzantines, whose obscure disputations about monophysite doctrines were less clouded than this. Tacking to and fro through the fog of equivocation, the official barque reaches port in an error: by a better view than this, academic editors would be regarded by how good they are *as editors*, not by ‘peer esteem’ as researchers, since no simple equation between competence at editing and competence at research is demonstrated. As ANDREW SHERRATT notes below, the archaeology assessors want ‘rigorous editorial and refereeing standards’ in the books and journals, and where is *that* to come from if editing is not given credit, except by a deceiving back-door?

The story goes that the first-ever assessment of the archaeology departments was done without any of these elaborating procedures and multiplying anomalies, none of the elaborating capers of the present performance, with its complexing circles of consultations, its ploys and counter-ploys, its regional meetings to brief the assessed, its special considerations and statements of criteria. They just asked a fair-minded and knowledgeable archaeologist — the late Richard Atkinson — to produce a list of good and of not-so-good departments, and so he did: speedily and simply. In honour of his memory, a colleague and I sat down each with his own piece of paper and ranked the 23 British archaeology departments that came to collective mind. We gave 15 the same score on the basis of our personal knowledge (and ignorance). I was a more generous marker; in each of the 8 where we scored differently, it was because I had placed it one grade higher. With reconciling the discrepancies into an agreed mark, it took the two of us under 30 minutes. Our Atkinson/ANTIQUITY method is rapid and rough;

we have lodged the results in a sealed envelope, and will see whether the byzantine method produces an answer in January 1997 so different as to be worth that cost in time, cash, aggravation and mental anguish which is not easily calculated.

An excessively elaborated peer review, like multiple repeated marking of examination scripts, pretends to a precision which is illusory. It is not possible to judge on any kind of fine scale what research is the best now, or will be seen as the best in years to come. *The ANTIQUITY* method admits that, where the elaborations of the official method pretend to a refined and considered finesse which is absurd. I have had dealings with another of these central reviews; my institution — like the others who felt its life depended on it— drafted and re-drafted and worried over every factor that could push up or down the sum, to the exact pound, we should ask for. Those assessors, busy human beings, didn’t chew at their pencils as long as we had done: they briskly ditched a couple of outfits they thought were failing, pulled in a couple of new ones as deserving, and rewarded all the survivors with money in exactly the same proportions as they had before. So much for precise judgements from fullest information!

(Andrew Porter, historian at London and on the history assessment panel this year, remarked on BBC radio that ‘people who wish to sit on such a panel are the least appropriate’. Work that one out!)

ANTIQUITY has invited one of the archaeology assessors to report the good sense there must be in what they are doing. I hope the simple questions will be answered: ‘By whom and by what criteria are the assessors chosen?’ ‘Who assesses the assessors, and by reference to what justified scale of performance?’ ‘Who assesses those administrators running the show who do not — in ANTIQUITY’s experience — answer reasonable requests for documents that are in the public domain?’ And may we please be told how much the performance costs, in direct and indirect bills. We have also invited two department heads to give their views. I hope those reports, anticipated for the June issue, will change the clear impression I have, that neither department leaders nor assessors actually have confidence in the archaeology exercise as fair, useful and for the general good of archaeological research in British universities.

🏞️ Britain, not a large island, is tall and narrow. So it was a surprise to find in early January I could drive as many as 270 miles due west from Cambridge, where I live in eastern England, to the cliffs at Cardigan, on the Irish Sea coast. It's a grand drive through geology and landscape history, first across the flat muds of drained eastern wetlands, then the broken pasture-land of the Midlands clay. At last into the red earth of the Marches — real hills to cheer the soul — where you scan their slopes for the line of hillfort defences, 2000-year-old military flourishes now softer in the bracken. Across the line of Offa's Dyke, and into Wales, name-place of the Cambrian rock-formations, with its Roman forts like Cae Gaer and Esgairperfedd. This is a layered landscape, planted settlements called 'Newtown' along and over places with the old Welsh names, beneath them the Neolithic megalithic monuments, beneath again the unseen flints of the Mesolithic. The landscape (and weather — it was a very Welsh wet winter day) directs human settlement, and the human presence shapes the landscape. By an old biological joke, human beings are the means by which DNA reproduces itself; by a should-be-old archaeological joke, human beings are the means by which artefacts and whole landscapes reproduce themselves.

Darwinian evolution and prehistory grew up together in the last century. Charles Darwin himself was never reconciled to the lack of purpose or planned direction in evolution; prehistory, then and now, has a progressive and Whiggish bias. It studies not just change, but an improving development from ape-ish creatures then to our good human selves now. This is cause to wish the purer, tougher view of Darwinian evolution, associated with the work of Richard Dawkins, to have special impact and importance in archaeological thinking, though it has been slow to arrive. I am looking forward to the papers of *Darwinian archaeologies*, edited by Herb Maschner, now in press.

One essay in *Darwinian archaeologies* is by Ben Cullen, a young Australian with a special vision of culture and evolution, as well as the characteristic Australian mixture of forcefulness and hesitancy. These issues were on my mind as I drove to Cardigan, to celebrate his life as well as to mourn it at his funeral; Ben died suddenly, without evident cause, on 29 December 1995. We think of improving culture as a progress in which even the 'useless' must bring benefits: that is why it continues and elabo-

rates. Cullen didn't: artefacts and patterns of human behaviour are become replicators in their own right, with their own genealogy and independence. Like viruses parasitizing bodies, they are life-forms which depend on and parasitize our minds — careless of our welfare. I would like to see just where this alarming view of artefacts and culture would take us.

I turned down one of Ben's papers for ANTIQUITY late last year, knowing that his work was advancing: there would be better opportunities in years to come. Now there will be none. Why do good people die young? Seton Lloyd, senior among British archaeologists of the Middle East, died at nearly the same time; he had as his interval on this earth a better span of more than 90 years and — bless him — ended it with the duty honoured of having all his excavations safely written up. Nearly all of us seek order in the world, of a kind single-minded Darwinian thinking denies; I find the chance death of a young Darwinian singularly chilling.

## Noticeboard

### Prizes

🏞️ The ANTIQUITY PRIZE, this year again of £1000, given to the author of a contribution in the 1995 volume thought of special merit<sup>1</sup> is awarded to Nicholas Postgate, Tao Wang & Toby Wilkinson for **The evidence for early writing: utilitarian or ceremonial?**.

ANTIQUITY thinks prizes are a good and generous idea in a world too much controlled by a pretended rationality. In Britain they are tax-free! We are pleased Mike Morris (Grosvenor Museum, Chester) won the (British) Association for Industrial Archaeology's 'Initiative' award for his study of navy huts and settlements in ANTIQUITY.

A new prize with an archaeological aspect is the Sophie Coe Memorial Prize, like ours of £1000, endowed by the Yale archaeologist Michael Coe in memory of his late wife, whose fine book on pre-Columbian cooking ANTIQUITY noticed in 1994. It is for the best essay or short writing on a food-history subject: details from, entries by 22 July to: *Harlan Walker, 294 Hagley Road, Birmingham B17 8DJ, England*.

<sup>1</sup> Chosen by four judges, two 'inside' the daily running of the journal (its two editors during 1995) and two 'outside' (Barry Cunliffe of the Antiquity Trust and Francis Pryor of Antiquity Publications). There are no criteria of assessment to tell the judges what 'special merit' is supposed to mean: of 'special merit' means of special merit.

The life of Captain James Cook, killed in Hawai'i on 14 February 1779, stands for the whole era of European exploration of the globe.

There are said to be more than 200 monuments to Captain Cook across the world. The one local to the ANTIQUITY office is in the Church of St Andrew the Great, Cambridge, a memorial which uniquely also records the deaths of others of Cook's immediate family.

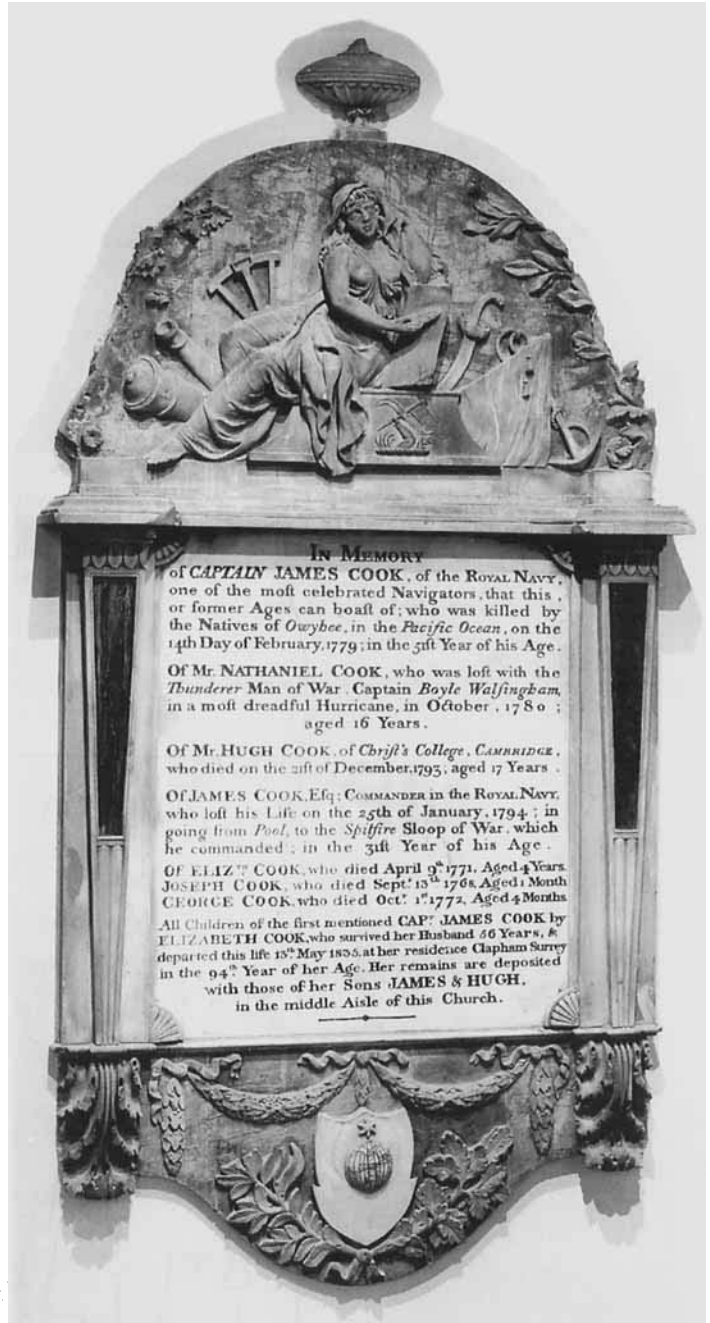
Peter Gathercole, archaeologist — and atheist by conviction (who argued for the place continuing a church when it was threatened to become a shopping mall) — reports of it:

'Cook and his wife Elizabeth, 14 years younger, had six children. Two sons, Joseph and George, and Elizabeth, the only daughter, died very young. Another son, Nathaniel, a midshipman, drowned in a Caribbean hurricane. Hugh, a Cambridge student destined for the Anglican ministry, died from a 'fever' and was buried in St Andrew's, across the street from his college. A month later, in January 1794, the eldest son James, a highly competent naval officer, was drowned. His body was interred in the same grave, where Mrs Cook, who mourned her husband and all her children for a further 41 years, was herself buried.

'The memorial incorporates part of Captain Cook's shield-of-arms, including a globe showing the routes of his Pacific voyages. It is a moving record, particularly of the tragedies endured by Elizabeth Cook.'

To me, the monument is striking in its contained European confidence. It echoes the force of those ships of discovery, closed, cramped, self-sufficient places with all-male crews, which burst out — capsules of alien power and culture — on to beaches across the globe to create and to command the modern world.

Photograph by Gwil Owen.



### Conferences

25–29 September 1996

Second European Association of Archaeologists meeting, Riga, Latvia

Follow-up to the good first EAA meeting in Spain, intended not only to strengthen relations between European archaeologists but to make an investment in further developing research in

the archaeology and prehistory of Latvia and neighbouring countries of the Baltic region. Four provisional sections: Archaeology and present-day Europe; Theoretical and methodological aspects; Interpreting the archaeological record; The interface between archaeology and history; plus excursions. Abstracts for themes and sections by 1 April 1996:

*Janis Graudonis, Second EAA meeting, Society of Archaeologists of Latvia, Pila Iaukums 3 (Castle), Riga LV-1047, Latvia. 371-7820113 & 371-2225039 FAX.*

14–17 November 1996

'Eureka!': The Archaeology of Innovation and Science' is the theme of the 29th Annual Chaco conference, Calgary, Canada

Suggested topics include: Communication systems; Numerical systems and calendrics; Public works; Health/healing; Domestication; Hydrology; Transportation; Pyrotechnology; Warfare:

1996 Conference Committee, Department of Archaeology, University of Calgary, Calgary AB, Canada T2N 1N4; 00-1-403-282-9567 FAX.

15–17 December 1996

Association for Industrial Archaeology conference: 'Identification and Protection of Industrial Sites in Urban Areas', Leicester, England

*Mrs V.A. Beauchamp, Adult Continuing Education, 196–198 West Street, Sheffield S1 4ET, England.*

10–13 February 1997

Sixth Australian Archaeometry Conference: 'Aus-

tralian Archaeometry: Retrospectives for the New Millennium', Sydney, Australia

Overview of achievements, advances, applications, with themes of: human colonization; extinction, its causes and timing; natural resources, production, trade and exchange; and subject-areas including: chronology, technology, characterization, environment, biomedicine, climate change, archaeometric analysis in the light of technological change, forgeries, rock-art studies, archaeometric studies of museum objects. Secretariat, Sixth Australian Archaeometry Conference, AINSE, PMB1, Menai NSW 2234, Australia.

#### *Appointments in Britain*

Timothy Potter is Keeper of the Department of Prehistoric and Romano-British Antiquities at the British Museum.

Recent professorships for archaeologists are:

David Austin at the University of Wales, Lampeter.

Geoff Bailey at the University of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Gina Barnes at the University of Durham (in Department of Japanese Studies).

Richard Hodges at the University of East Anglia (in Department of World Art Studies).

John Hunter at the University of Birmingham.

# MP

