

EDITORIAL

At the Annual General Meeting Dr Roger Matthews, Dr Frances Reynolds and Dr Eleanor Robson were elected to the Council and Mr Christopher Walker returned to the Council after stepping down for a year. Dr Matthews served as Director of the School from 1988 until 1996; during much of that time he was unable to go to Iraq because of the political situation, but conducted fieldwork for the School at Tell Brak. He is now back in London, lecturing at the Institute of Archaeology, University College, after serving as the Director of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara.

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Although it has, unfortunately, still not been possible to resume fieldwork in Iraq, there have been numerous contacts with our Iraqi colleagues during the past year. In March the School co-sponsored with the British Museum a very successful conference on Nimrud, which took place at the British Museum. We were delighted that visas were granted to seven of our Iraqi colleagues. Although, unfortunately, Dr Jalil Jabr Ibrahim, Chairman of the Department of Antiquities and Heritage, was unable to come for personal reasons, we were able to welcome Dr Muayyad Said Damerji, Mr Manhal Jabr, Dr Rabi'a al-Qaissi, Mr Muzahim Mahmoud, Dr Donny George and Dr Ali Yaseen Ahmad al-Jebouri, and hear first hand accounts of recent work and discoveries at Nimrud, and also at other sites. The first day of the conference was devoted to the excavations and excavators of Nimrud from Layard to the present, the Royal Tombs were the focus of the second day and on the last day the architecture and the minor arts at Nimrud were addressed. A publication of the conference papers is planned, and a summary of the proceedings has been published in our *Newsletter* No. 9 (May 2002), pp. 5–6.

Shortly afterwards, from 20–26 March, Dr John Curtis and Dr Erica Hunter attended a conference in Baghdad on the “Tower of Babylon and the Ziggurat at Borsippa”, followed by a trip to sites in northern Iraq. Professor Nicholas Postgate went to Iraq at the end of August to read some tablets from the 1953–1956 Nimrud excavations. He was able to visit the site of his excavations at Abu Salabikh. He also went to Mosul to work on legal archives from recent excavations at Nimrud with Dr Ali Yaseen Ahmad al-Jebouri and see the site of the planned building of the Ashurbanipal Library Project. His report will appear in *Newsletter* No. 10.

With its Books to Iraq fund, the BSAI has been purchasing, collecting and receiving donations of books which are being sent to Iraq via the UN Development Programme.

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Fieldwork in Syria has continued. At Tell Brak joint Field Directors Miss Helen McDonald, the BSAI's Senior Research Fellow, and Dr Geoff Emberling conducted a further season, and the Director of the excavations, our President Professor David Oates, was able to visit the site while they were in the field. Dr Augusta McMahon spent a study season at Chagar Bazar. A report of the season at H3 — Tell as-Sabiyah in Kuwait, led by Dr Harriet Crawford and Dr Rob Carter, is published in this volume.

The School has also sponsored a number of research projects. Dr Farouk al-Rawi continues his work on the transliteration of Sumerian administrative texts in the British Museum. This is part of the BSAI's Umma Project, led by Dr al-Rawi and Mr Christopher Walker, which aims to complement the current archaeological work at the site by the Iraq Department of Antiquities and Heritage. A report on this project has appeared in *Newsletter* No. 9, pp. 8–9. Dr Georgina Herrmann is working on a further volume of the Nimrud ivories and is focusing on those from the North-West Palace. The School is supporting work by Dr David Thomas on the creation of a Nimrud Database (NDDb), which will include not only the ivories but all the other artefacts excavated by the BSAI at Nimrud, and which may be expanded to include material from other excavations. Eventually, it is hoped that this database will be accessible on the worldwide web. Dr Mike Charles and Dr Keith Dobney were paid the remainder of a grant for an Environmental Archaeology Database for Mesopotamia, co-sponsored by the University of Sheffield. A grant was given to Dr Gordon Stanger for analysis of clays from northern Oman in order to throw

light on the manufacture of pottery in ancient Oman. Travel Grants were awarded to Dr Jon Taylor to study tablets in Aleppo Museum, and to Dr John MacGinnis to travel to the excavations at the Assyrian site of Ziyaret in eastern Turkey.

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Several important decisions have been taken by and on behalf of the Council during the year. The resolutions of the British Academy regarding illicit trade in antiquities were formally adopted. The members of the Nimrud conference passed resolutions concerning the safeguard of Iraq's heritage and, in particular, the site of Ashur, which is due to be submerged when the Makhul dam is built across the Tigris; the text of these resolutions and further details are given in *Newsletter* No. 9, on pp. 9–11 and 6–8 respectively. Our President also wrote to the President of the Republic of Iraq on behalf of the School concerning the dam.

On a more mundane level, it has unfortunately been necessary to raise the subscription for the first time in ten years to £30/\$45; Associate membership will be extended to non-UK residents who will receive the *Newsletter*, but not the journal (£7.50 UK; £10 non-UK). A credit-card payment facility has been established, and details will be found in *Newsletter* No. 9, p. 15 and on the inside front cover of this journal.

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The momentum of publication established last year has continued. The papers of the Uruk Conference held in Manchester in 1998 have been published as *Artefacts of Complexity — Tracking the Uruk in the Near East* (Iraq Archaeological Reports 5), edited by Nicholas Postgate. Roger Matthews had been re-excavating the site of Jemdet Nasr when the Gulf War put an end to his work, but he has been studying material from earlier excavations at the site and his *Secrets of the Dark Mound — Jemdet Nasr 1926–1928* (Iraq Archaeological Reports 6) also appeared in the spring. *Excavations at Tell Brak Volume 2: Nagar in the Third Millennium BC*, by David Oates, Joan Oates and Helen McDonald, is a joint publication of the BSAI with the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in Cambridge. A brief review of these publications will be found in *Newsletter* No. 9, pp. 11–12 and they are listed on the back cover of the present volume. The BSAI has also instructed Oxbow Books to sell earlier publications at a discount and a list will be found on the flyer inserted in this volume.

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This year our President celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday. The event was marked by a party at the Kufa Gallery on 25 February and the presentation of a volume entitled *Of Pots and Plans — Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria Presented to David Oates in Honour of his 75th Birthday* (NABU Publications), London 2002. It consists of papers written by David's many friends and colleagues, edited by Lamia Al-Gailani Werr, John Curtis, Harriet Martin, Augusta McMahon, Joan Oates and Julian Reade. Many members of the School were able to be present on this happy occasion.

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The 68th Annual General Meeting of the School was held at the British Academy on 6 December 2001. There was also a Forum at which members of the School could question officers and members of Council. It was decided that there should be both a June and a December Forum in future. Professor Mark Geller then lectured on "Rational versus Irrational: Did the Greeks use Babylonian Medicine?". After the Council Meeting on 14 March, there was a lecture by Professor Alan Millard on "From Cuneiform to Kufic: Writing in Early Iraq", and after the Meeting on 12 June 2002, Dr Wendy Matthews gave a lecture entitled "Spatial Organisation in Early Mesopotamian Cities: New Contributions from Microstratigraphic Analyses".