

EDITORIAL

☞ A sea-girt island with a giant reputation, a once all-conquering cricket team and a bard beloved the world over – I'm talking, of course, about Jamaica, where the World Archaeological Congress 2007 was convened in May by a local committee chaired by Ainsley Henriques. It was supposed to be a full congress (WAC 6), but this appeared to the WAC committee to have been financially unviable – a paradox since WAC was largely set up to bring archaeology to the developing countries of the world. Since WAC 5 was held in Washington DC and WAC 6 is now to be in Dublin (2008), neither of which qualifies as 'developing', this goal seems to be in temporary abeyance. The Kingston conference was therefore an 'inter-congress' and none the worse for that. Never has a group of delegates been made so welcome and given so many reasons to be glad they belong to such a profession as ours. A practical course in surfing was about the only omission in a week that included visits to Port Royal, the tombs of the heroes and the shrines of Bob Marley, as well as a drumming festival, the enchanting dancing of local colleges and an open air concert to celebrate National Labour Day with the likes of *Bushman*, *Prophet* and the *One Thirds* on stage, attended by 2000 rapturous teenagers – and John Prescott, then deputy prime minister of another sea-girt island.

Global congresses now sometimes resemble world fairs with dozens of presentations in parallel, and the audience has to seek what it knows how to seek, as on the internet. How much better to be obliged to attend a single session, where the surprising and the unknown are continual rewards from papers one had ignorantly intended to avoid. Too much choice, it seems, narrows the mind. In a small, focused and friendly gathering on the University of the West Indies campus at Kingston, archaeologists from 14 countries exchanged experiences and learnt a great deal about the archaeology of the Caribbean. There were too many good things in this conference to itemise all, and it is to be hoped that much will soon appear in print – some of it in this journal.

The archaeology of Jamaica occupies one of the world's great maritime spaces. The first people to arrive in this paradise came from South America or Mayan Mesoamerica about AD 650 (radiocarbon) and settled as the Taínos, making red pottery and living on the beach. A second group (the Meillacans), making white pottery, became evident after AD 900, settled more widely inland and had a ball game. It was their descendants who met Columbus in 1494, were promptly conscripted as forced labour and very soon wiped out by Spanish settlers or their diseases. The importation of African slave labour by Europeans began in the early sixteenth century, at first for the gold and silver mines of Central America, and continued over the next two centuries by the English to serve the new industries of imported agriculture. In this age of enterprise and coercion, plants were secret weapons, crossing all over the high seas crouched in their timber forecastles: sugar cane from Southeast Asia and the Canary islands, mango from India and coffee, first enjoyed in the droppings of an Ethiopian goat, found its way to Jamaica's Blue Mountains. Breadfruit was introduced from Tahiti by Captain Bligh, after a little local difficulty on the *Bounty*, while the Africans themselves brought the ackee tree, still providing Jamaica's traditional breakfast of ackee and saltfish. As the campus of UWI illustrates, early African settlement can be tracked not only by the ruined aqueducts that drove the sugar mills, but by the sites of the old ackee trees that

still flourish. Modern Jamaica has a wondrous popular mix, slaves who broke away to established Maroon communities, Hispanics, a sturdy Jewish community, later English ex-pats (such as Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond and step-father to Chris Blackwell, Bob Marley's record producer) and of course the inheritors of the government yards in Trenchtown.

It was a privilege to witness so many examples of a country, beset by other economic and social necessities, vigorously rediscovering and cherishing its past. A key figure who died last year was the Canadian James William Lee, who lived in Jamaica between 1951-1986 and dedicated much of his life to the exploration and study of its archaeology. He founded the Archaeological Society of Jamaica and was its president for 17 years, at the same time locating and mapping 265 archaeological sites. His collection of meticulously documented Arawak (Taíno) artefacts, donated to the UWI in 2000, is considered one of the most important collections of pre-Columbian material in the world. James Lee was remembered as a dedicatee in Lesley-Gail Atkinson's edited book (launched at the congress) which has put prehistoric Jamaica definitively on the world map¹.

The historic archaeology of Port Royal, Captain Morgan and the Spanish Main has long attracted archaeological divers from the USA and UK; now the island turns its attention also to its more recent indigenous past. Professor Verene Sheppard is Chair of the National Bicentenary Committee promoting the *archaeology of black memory*, and more specifically aiming to erect monuments to heroes such as George Gordon, Paul Bogle, Marcus Garvey and numbers of other freedom fighters whose names are being rediscovered in the archives, many of them hanged on shore or on a brigantine in Morant Bay.

The concept of inclusive heritage was naturally a subject that featured in many papers, usually exhibiting a nervous reverence for 'the public': heritage managers must now move from consultation, through participation to collaboration. So should we have heritage managers or only heritage facilitators? Heritage management must be one of the few subjects that has been professionalised and deprofessionalised in one generation. Is local always better than global in heritage matters? Is archaeology a human science or a national asset? All these questions matter, as they always have, and the answer lies where it has always lain, in design, the method by which conflicting human views agree a fruitful way forward on equal terms.

But are the terms equal? Andrea Richards comments (in Atkinson 2006: 85) *'The Government of Jamaica, like the governments of many developing countries, is more concerned about managing unemployment, crime and other challenges of a growing population than about understanding the Taínos and their role in our history. Culture at times is perceived as expendable in the context of development'*. And Evelyn Thompson, President of the Archaeology Society of Jamaica, also emphasised that developing countries must give priorities to essentials and only address 'basic needs'. Amongst which archaeology was not necessarily to be numbered. For some decades, anyone had been allowed to dig, provided they paid. But now every new project and every new threat is monitored by the Jamaican Archaeological Heritage Trust (www.jnht.com/archaeology), whose *'guidelines become more stringent as our independence increases'*. Now the mechanism is in place for Jamaica's excellent archaeology to be conserved and researched – and the next need is to build capacity and core skills. Here is an opportunity for healing – for the western descendants to help the Caribbean descendants in a practical

¹ Atkinson, Lesley-Gail. 2006. The Earliest Inhabitants. The dynamics of the Jamaican Taíno. *Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago: University of the West Indies Press.*



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and financial way – with student bursaries for example. Some think that slavery is no fault of the modern west, so the modern west owes nothing for the past. But the past is a good area to make amends if amends are due; and if not, what is there to lose? Everyone wins from the historical enlightenment that results.

📖 The journal *Chinese Archaeology* continues to bring news of recent excavations and discoveries in China, its liberal spirit evident in the strap-line inside the front cover: *The articles published in this journal represent the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the editors.* In the latest edition (Vol 6 for 2006) is the usual rich harvest of rich tombs and the intriguing ‘Excavation on the Water Valve Site at the Northern Gate of the Great Song City in Yangzhou, Jiangsu’, the subject of which is indeed a water valve, 20m long. Dating to the Yuan period (AD 1279-1368), the valve controls the flow of water into and out of Song City, the sort of thing that might have come in handy in Yorkshire in 2007 – the wettest June on record. *Chinese Archaeology* is edited at the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 27 Wangfujing Dajie, Beijing 100710, P.R. China (caonan@cass.org.cn).

We also heard welcome news from China at Kingston from Tracy Lu (Hong Kong) and Zhang Lei (State Administration of Cultural Heritage, SACH). The scale of archaeological challenges is formidable: the Three Gorges, the South to North Water Diversion Project, the Xiaolangdi Reservoir on the Yellow River, the West-East Natural Gas Transmission, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. Mitigation procedures are familiar: the areas affected are surveyed and then become the subject of planned archaeological intervention. However, although all work is sponsored by the state, there are only 58 institutions and 12 universities deemed qualified to undertake archaeological excavations. They are guided by the ‘Measures of SACH for the Rewards of Field Archaeology’. SACH also manages underwater archaeology, and recently excavated a timber ship 20m long of the Sung dynasty (tenth-eleventh century AD) less than 2m down in clear water in the Paracel islands south of Hong Kong. It was full of ceramic bowls in piles, thought to be on their way to Arabia.

Archaeological procedures in China are governed by regularly updated heritage protection laws which were originally borrowed from Russia, where new relationships between academic and contract archaeology are being currently forged, as reported by our correspondent Professor Timothy Darvill of Bournemouth University. At the heart of the new order is the Archaeological Heritage Foundation (Археологическое Наследие) created in 2002 with the participation of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Archaeology in Moscow. Amongst the trustees are eminent professional archaeologists,



Peter Ucko died on 14 June 2007. As head of the world's largest university archaeology department (at University College London) and founder of the World Archaeological Congress he was one of the most widely known archaeologists of his generation. Tributes will be found on www.antiquity.ac.uk/in_memoriam and on www.worldarchaeologicalcongress.org/guestbook.

academics, and political leaders. The Chairman of the Foundation is Alexander Torshen, vice-speaker of the upper chamber of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation; the President is Peter Boroden. Already a register of archaeological sites is under construction, observance of heritage legislation is being monitored, training programmes are being developed, and agreements drawn up for the evaluation of large-scale gas pipeline projects and the execution of resulting mitigation works. The Foundation has recently launched a highly illustrated popular scientific journal *Достояние Поколений* (which roughly translates as 'Generations' Heritage') that can be found online at www.archaeology-russia.org/journal/journal0601.pdf. As well as reports on excavations there are studies of important finds, technical and methodological updates, debates on archaeological/heritage issues, and reviews of internet sites. Professor Darvill is one of the contributors to the first issue, and along with all the other contributors received a specially struck medal to mark the occasion.

The Society of Antiquaries of London, a venerable and illustrious college of scholarship in archaeology and allied disciplines is celebrating its 300th anniversary this year. As part of the celebrations there is to be an exhibition in the rooms of the Royal Academy on the work of the society in the field, in the library and the laboratory and seven public lectures will take place in different cities of the kingdom, one each month beginning on 26 September 2007 at St James' church, Piccadilly, London. The series ends with a round table discussion at the British Museum in London entitled *The Future of the Past*. *Antiquity* salutes the society on its anniversary and hopes that our institutions will be exchanging greetings again on *Antiquity's* 300th anniversary in 2227.

Martin Carver
York, 1 September 2007



These two photographs come from Damekot, a multiperiod site occupied from the Mesolithic up to the fourteenth century AD, located in the village of Wange in the loess region of central Belgium, c. 50km east of Brussels. Top: quadrant of a wooden cellar, Roman period (late first century AD) with students Jef Van Doninck and Stijn Huiwels sitting back from the section (photograph by Lieve Opsteyn, July 1999, using a Canon camera and Kodak Gold 200 film). Bottom: four quadrants through the basement of a medieval building (twelfth to late fourteenth century AD), re-using and extending a cellar from a second-century AD Roman villa. The 'walls' at top right are what is left of its foundations. In the background, left, are pits from the early Neolithic (photograph by Marc Lodewijckx, October 1990, taken from a ladder on the spoilheap, using same equipment as above). Contributed by Marc Lodewijckx (Email: Marc.Lodewijckx@arts.kuleuven.be).



Handle (length = 165mm) of a Roman (first century AD) fine jug of high-tin bronze from East Park, Sedgfield, County Durham, UK, currently under excavation by the Sedgfield Community Archaeology Research Project (Archaeological Services Durham University and Durham County Council). The object (height = 190mm) was apparently deliberately pierced before being laid in the upper fill of a ditch separating two enclosures, in what may have been a formal rite of closure. The context for this fine artefact is as follows: air photographic and geophysical survey have revealed a hitherto unknown Roman small town on Cade's road at Sedgfield, south of Durham. A series of large rectilinear ditched enclosures have been sampled along either side of the road that links

Brough-on-Humber with Chester-le-Street and Newcastle. These enclosures contained small lightly-built wooden structures, and some were used for pottery production and metal-working (information provided by Linda Bosveld, email: Archaeological.Services@durham.ac.uk). Photographs taken on 22 February 2006 by Jeff Veitch, Department of Archaeology, Durham University, who used a Nikon D100 digital camera, with a 28-105mm Nikkor zoom lens, set at approx. 60mm; exposure was 1/20sec at f/8 in manual mode; camera was set on Manfrotto 055Pro tripod, with shutter cable release.