

EDITORIAL

At our Annual General Meeting on 4 December 1997, our President Professor Donald Wiseman presented Professor David Oates with the third Gertrude Bell medal for outstanding services to Mesopotamian archaeology. Professor Oates was elected Vice-President of the School. The meeting was followed by a lecture from Dr Stuart Campbell on "Complexity before Urbanism: Recent Developments in the Halaf Period".

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A new category of Associate Member has been established for our many friends who wish to support the work of the School through membership but do not wish to receive the journal *Iraq*. Associate Members will pay a reduced membership rate of £5, which will entitle them to receive a newsletter (see below) and invitations to lectures.

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The School has published two volumes this year. The first of three volumes on the 1976–93 excavations at Tell Brak, which were supported by the School, is a joint publication with the McDonald Institute in Cambridge. *Tell Brak Volume I: The Mitanni and Old Babylonian Periods*, by David and Joan Oates and Helen McDonald, is the final report on the second millennium excavations at the site. Carolyn Postgate and David and Joan Oates have produced the first of the final reports on the School's work at the site of Tell al Rimah in northern Iraq entitled *The Excavations at Tell al Rimah: The Pottery*. Details will be found on the back cover of this journal. Work on a range of further excavation reports is nearing completion.

In May 1998, *Newsletter No. 1* appeared. This small six-monthly publication will be sent free to Members and Associate Members of the BSAI in May and November each year; overseas members will receive both issues in November.

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Although it was not, unfortunately, possible for Dr Muayyad Sa'īd Damerji to visit us from Iraq this year, the School was able to invite Dr Nawala al-Mutawalli, Head of the Cuneiform Section in the Baghdad Museum. Dr Jeremy Black arranged for free board and accommodation for her at Wolfson College, Oxford and the Sumerian Agriculture Group also helped with some of her expenses in the UK. From mid-May Dr al-Mutawalli spent three busy months in Britain, pursuing her research, making full use of library facilities and establishing contact with British scholars.

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An international conference entitled "Artefacts of Complexity: Tracking the Uruk in the Near East" is being organised by the School; it is to take place in Manchester on 6–8 November 1998. A Symposium on Nimrud is planned in 2000 or 2001, if possible to coincide with an exhibition on "Agatha Christie and the Orient" at the British Museum. The exhibition, which is being organised by Dr Charlotte Trümpler, will be opening in the Ruhrland Museum in Essen and will then travel to Basel and Vienna before coming to London. It will include much archaeological material from Ur, Nineveh, Arpachiyah, Chagar Bazar, Tell Brak and, especially, Nimrud, and will show how Agatha Christie's novels were influenced by her experiences during her travels and work on excavations in the Near East in the company of her husband Sir Max Mallowan.

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Individual Research Grants for 1998–99 were awarded to Dr Heather Baker for work on tablets of the sixth to early fifth century BC housed in the British Museum; to Ms Soren Blau to enable her to conduct a survey at Muweilah, UAE; to Dr Lisa Cooper for a study of third millennium pottery from Syria; to Ms Katia Davis to enable her to continue her study of groundstone utilization in the Oman peninsula c. 2500–c. 400 BC; to Ms Helen McDonald for travel to a

conference in Baghdad in September with a view to gathering material for an article on “Excavations in Iraq”; to Mr Lloyd Weeks to cover laboratory charges for a lead isotope analysis of metal samples from Saar in Bahrain; and to Ms Michele Ziolkowski for work at Al Bidyah on the east coast of Fujairah (UAE).

Ms McDonald duly attended the conference in Baghdad together with numerous foreign scholars. Other British participants were Professor David Oates, Dr Joan Oates, Dr Andrew George, Dr Alastair Northedge, Dr Frances Reynolds, and our Honorary Member Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr also attended. The theme of the conference was “Towards a Greater Understanding of the Babylonian Culture” with particular emphasis on “The Twin Towers of Babylon and Borsippa”. It was followed by three days of visits to Babylon, Borsippa, Kish, the new excavations at Tell Nemel south of Ashur, Eski Mosul, Nimrud and Nineveh. Ms McDonald was also able to check on the BSAI library, now housed in the French Embassy.

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The BSAI is to be associated with two new fieldwork projects. Dr Harriet Crawford is organising a survey and small excavation in Kuwait in the Autumn of 1998. In the Spring of 1999, subject to the necessary approvals and permits, the school hopes to resume work at Tell Chagar Bazar after a break of over sixty years. Dr Augusta McMahon (Cambridge University) will be representing the BSAI in a joint project with Professor Önhan Tunca (University of Liège in Belgium). Mr Tony Wilkinson, previously Assistant Director of the British Archaeological Expedition in Iraq and now at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, was given a grant for a general landscape study of the Central Khabur Basin in North Syria. This study will provide an environmental and geographical context for Chagar Bazar and for the neighbouring sites of Beydar and Tell Brak.

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The Bonham Carter Lecture was held in the new premises of the British Academy on 17 June and Dr Richard Stevenson lectured on “Eclipses and the Babylonians”. This was preceded by a Forum at which Members were given the opportunity to discuss the School’s past, present and future activities.

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The British School of Archaeology in Iraq now has a website:
<http://britac3.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/index.html>.