

EDITORIAL

The School has recently lost two faithful friends: Anna Plowden, a long-time member of the Council, and Diana Kirkbride, who served as Director of the School for a number of years, both died in August. Their services to the School are acknowledged on the preceding pages; they will be much missed. Anna Plowden's election as Vice-President was to have been proposed at the next Annual General Meeting on 4 December 1997.

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At our Annual General Meeting on 4 December 1996 new regulations came into force, the old Council resigned and a smaller Council was elected in line with the recommendations of the British Academy's Review of Schools and Institutes. The School wishes to express its gratitude to the outgoing members of the Council, many of whom had faithfully served the School for years, and particularly to its Chairman, Professor David Oates. The new Council, under the Chairmanship of Professor Nicholas Postgate and with Dr John Curtis as Vice-Chairman, has been divided into three committees (Publications, Fieldwork and Research, Development) which meet regularly together with co-opted members, and report back to Council. The new Council appointed Lamia al-Gailani Werr an Honorary Member of the School in recognition of her services to the School.

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To our great delight it was finally possible for Dr Muayyad Said Damerji, Director-General of Antiquities in Iraq, to visit this country in March. He gave moving talks in Cambridge, Oxford and London on the sad situation of Iraqi antiquities, and was able to have useful discussions with many colleagues and with members of the School. As a result, the School's two vehicles, which had been seized by Iraqi Customs, have now been transferred to the Department of Antiquities where they are sorely needed. It has also been agreed that an Iraqi Sumerian Scholar will come to Oxford to do research for three months, under the auspices of the School and of Wolfson College and with the assistance of Dr Jeremy Black. The School has also agreed to donate copies of its publications to the Department of Antiquities.

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On the expiry of its lease, the School has handed back the house it rented in the Mansour district of Baghdad in compliance with the requirements of the British Academy. Dr Curtis and Miss Helen McDonald attended the Ninth Babylon International Festival in Baghdad at the end of September and were able to check the premises and the storage of some of our furniture in the British Embassy. Our library is now stored in the French Embassy, having been transferred there with the invaluable help of Mr James Baxendale of the British Embassy in Amman and the cooperation of Mr Garancher, the French Chargé d'Affaires, to both of whom the School is extremely grateful. Dr Andrew George, Professors David and Joan Oates, Professor Michael Roaf and Dr Augusta McMahon also attended the Festival in Baghdad.

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Grants for the 1997/98 financial year were made to Ms Katia Davies, who is studying ground-stone utilization in the Oman peninsula between *c.* 2500 and *c.* 600 BC; to Dr Andrew George for his work with Professor Farouk al-Rawi on the publication of texts from Sippar; to Mr Christopher Stevens, who is working on a reconstruction of prehistoric life in the Middle East through an analysis of tooth wear from several Neolithic sites; to Dr John MacGinnis for work on Sippar texts with Aramaic epigraphs; and to Mrs Rachel Maxwell-Hyslop towards a visit to Syria to study the jewellery excavated at Tell Brak, for publication in the second volume of the final report.

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Because of problems of sanctions, insurance and security, fieldwork is still extremely difficult in Iraq. The School is therefore actively investigating possibilities for fieldwork in one of the countries adjoining Iraq and has had encouraging response to an advertisement seeking proposals. Further activities include a conference on the Uruk period, scheduled for 7 November 1998, and a conference on Nimrud for the year 2000.

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In March Dr Donald Matthews' monumental work on *The Early Glyptic of Tell Brak* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archeologica 15) was published in Fribourg (Switzerland) and Göttingen, with the assistance and on behalf of the School. The first volume of the final report on the excavations at Tell Brak, conducted by Professor David Oates and sponsored by the School, is in proof and will be published jointly by the McDonald Institute in Cambridge and by the School. Dr Roger Matthews is working on the publication of his work for the School at Tell Brak between 1994 and 1996. The volume by Mrs Caroline Postgate on the pottery from the Tell el Rimah excavations is about to go to press and several other publications are nearing completion.

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The lecture after our Annual General Meeting on 4 December 1996 was given by Dr Jeremy Black, who spoke on "The Sumerians in their landscape". The Bonham Carter lecture on 12 June 1997 was preceded by a Forum where members of the School were presented with an up-to-date report on the affairs of the School and were able to address questions to officers of the School and members of the various committees. Our Chairman, Professor Nicholas Postgate, lectured on "Updating the Assyrian army".