# The Prehistoric Society - Trustee Directors’ Report

*For the Year Ended 31 December 2021*

The Trustees (who are also the Directors for the purpose of Company Law) have pleasure in presenting their annual report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021. The provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” (SORP FRS 102- implemented 1 January 2015) have been adopted in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

## Directors and Trustees

The Directors of the charitable company are also its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Directors and Trustees who served during the year covered by the accounts and up to the date of this report were:

President Prof C Gamble

Vice-Presidents Dr M Giles (demitted at AGM October 2021)

Professor J Brück

Professor J Mulville

Professor L Hurcombe

Professor Eileen Wilkes (elected at AGM October 2021)

Secretary Dr R Crellin

Treasurer Dr C Randall

Editor Dr J Gardiner

Editor – Newsletter Dr D Hofmann (demitted at AGM October 2021)

Editor - Research papers Dr M Allen (demitted at AGM October 2021)

Meetings Secretary Dr M Knight

Council Members

Dr S Adams (demitted at AGM October 2021)

Dr R Brunning

Dr H Chittock

Dr P Clark (deceased)

Dr J Lewis (demitted at AGM October 2021)

Dr A Teather

Dr A Zander (demitted at AGM October 2021)

Dr S Harris

Dr J Cole

Dr B Roberts

Dr F McDowall (elected at AGM October 2021)

Dr S Greaney (elected at AGM October 2021)

Rob Hedge (elected at AGM October 2021)

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Governing Document

The Prehistoric Society is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 2 August 1990. The company incorporated the assets and liabilities of The Prehistoric Society on 5 February 1991. The Prehistoric Society was registered as a charity on 12 October 1990. Anyone throughout the world can become a member of the Society. Members are required to pay an annual subscription to the Society. Council reviews the annual subscription every five years. Members guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £5 to the assets of the company in the event of winding-up.

### Appointment of directors and trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the Articles of the company are known as the Council. The Council comprises the President, four Vice-Presidents, the Officers and the Council Members.

The President retires from office at the fourth Annual General Meeting after being appointed. At each Annual General Meeting, the longest-serving Vice-President retires from office and is not eligible for re-appointment for four years, the Officers of the company retire from office but are eligible for re-appointment, and the three longest-serving Council Members retire from office and are not eligible for re-appointment for one year.

The objectives and activities of the Society cover all prehistoric periods throughout the world. The Council seeks to ensure that this wide range of interests is reflected as much as possible in the diversity of members of Council.

After due consideration Council nominate to the members of the Society suitable persons to be President (when applicable) and Vice-President on the basis of their specialist expertise and suitable experience. The Officers usually continue in office from year to year. When an Officer retires from office, the new Officer is either co-opted from Council or, where specialist professional knowledge is required, all members of the Society are notified of the vacancy in the Society’s newsletter. The nominated President, Vice-President and Officers are elected by the members at the following Annual

### General Meeting.

All members of the Society are invited to nominate potential Council Members. A notice requesting nominations is published in the Society’s newsletter and on the Society’s website. Each nomination is requested to include a short statement about the suitable expertise and experience of the proposed candidate. Based on these criteria, Council produces a shortlist of nominees to be put forward for election by the members at the following Annual General Meeting.

### Trustee induction and training

New trustees are provided with an induction pack explaining the legal status of the charitable company, the obligations of trustees under company and charity law, the composition of Council, and the activities of the Society.

### Risk Management

The Council has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. The significant external risk is a reduction in the total amount of member’s subscriptions, which are the main incoming resource. However, this risk is minimised because about two-thirds of each year’s subscriptions are received during the first month of the year. Internal risks are minimised by control procedures for the authorisation of external payments. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

### Organisation

The Council, which meets three times each year, makes the strategic decisions about the current and future direction of the charity. Sub-committees, comprising several members of Council, are created, when appropriate, to consider specific matters affecting the Society. These sub-committees report their conclusions to the following Council meeting. The Executive Committee, which comprises the President, Vice-Presidents and Officers, meets twice each year and formulates strategic and tactical policies for consideration by Council. The Officers manage the day-to-day operations of the charity.

Council members are kept informed by electronic communications of all-important actions made by Officers on behalf of Council.

## Objectives and activities

The objectives of the charity are the advancement of education and interest in prehistory and all its branches and allied subjects, and the promotion of the conservation of the prehistoric archaeological heritage for the benefit of the public.

The Society’s membership at 31 October 2021 stood at 1157. There were 170 new members compared to 112 in 2020.

The principal activities of the charity are:

• the presentation of lectures held throughout the country, addressed by eminent prehistorians, and run either directly by the Society or in association with other archaeological organisations. Non-members may attend these lectures with no charge.

• the organisation of conferences and day schools addressed by leading prehistorians. The annual Europa conference is organised by the Society to honour a prestigious European prehistorian who is presented with the Europa Prize, a significant financial award funded by the Europa Fund, a restricted fund donated to the Society by Professor Grahame Clark

• the organisation of one-day field trips and, occasionally, longer study tours to prehistoric sites. Through its contacts with other archaeological institutions, the Society is able to arrange for leading prehistorians familiar with the sites being visited to be available to explain each site to the tour members.

• the payment of small grants to individuals to assist their research into prehistoric subjects throughout the world. Grants cover fieldwork, travel bursaries, radiocarbon dating and the study of collections in museums.

• the annual publication of the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, an internationally prestigious journal that covers all aspects of prehistory worldwide. Copyright in the Proceedings rest with the Society. Back numbers of previous Proceedings are sold each year to academic institutions throughout the world.

• the publication three times a year of the Society’s newsletter, *PAST*, which includes articles about recent prehistory projects and research, and information about the Society.

• the publication of research monographs in a *Research Papers* series.

• the publication of book reviews on-line

• presenting and debating prehistory through social media

• disseminating our knowledge and expertise through an online education blog

• making representations to appropriate government organisations, through the wide-ranging contacts of Council members with other archaeological institutions, about the conservation and protection of prehistoric sites.

## The purpose of the Prehistoric Society

The Prehistoric Society, founded in 1935, is dedicated to researching, protecting and promoting the global archaeology of deep human history. The purpose of the Society is to investigate the fundamental questions of humanity; who we are, where we came from and how we evolved. Since its founding the objects of the Society have been to advance education and promote interest in prehistory in all its branches and allied subjects and to promote the conservation of the archaeological heritage for the benefit of the public Through its grants, publications, conferences and meetings, the Society supports those interested in human prehistory to discover new evidence both from the field and in curated museum archives. Through its advocacy for prehistoric heritage, the Society provides a voice to help protect landscapes, monuments and artefacts that may be under threat. Through its promotion of the value of prehistoric archaeology, the Society benefits primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as everyone with a passion for, and interest in, the deep human past.

## What is Prehistory?

Prehistory describes the study of the deep history of humanity through material, rather than written, evidence. This distinctive approach to the study of the past gained traction among the northern antiquaries of Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. Today researchers employ rigorous field methods and cutting-edge scientific techniques, often in conjunction with methods from the arts and humanities, to answer a wide range of questions about communities in prehistory. These relate to their identities, economies, beliefs and are often concerned with matters such as long-term cultural stability, social change and innovation. Understanding chronology and the environments of the past are central to the work of prehistorians and it is common for research to consider millennial timescales. The theories and techniques of prehistory can be applied to all people whose history depends on the evidence of objects rather than texts and oral traditions. Deep human history starts with the first stone tools over 3 million years ago. Its legacy continues today.

The aims of the Prehistoric Society are to:

• Encourage and support research of the highest quality

• Foster the skills and expertise needed to investigate prehistory

• Disseminate widely the knowledge about our prehistoric past

• Raise awareness of the benefits and value of human prehistory

• Speak out for prehistoric heritage

## Report on the year 2021

### Research

The benefits of the research work of the Prehistoric Society are enshrined in our annual conference, publications and the support of research through grants. In 2021, and due to Covid uncertainty, the annual Europa was held on-line from June 18th to 19th. The Europa recipient was Professor Colin Haselgrove of Leicester University. Speakers from Britain and Europe addressed the theme of *People and Society in late Prehistoric Europe*. The on-line format drew a large, international audience and many positive comments.

From its research funds the Society supported six projects; this year had a particular emphasis on early career researchers. The total research grants awarded were £9798 and involved fieldwork and/or archival research on a range of prehistoric sites and collections in England, Wales, and Malta. Research at the Ashmolean Museum into John Evans’s Hallstatt collection was also funded. Those grants for fieldwork which could not be carried out because of coronavirus restrictions have been held over for 2022.

The Undergraduate Dissertation prize was awarded to Philippa Kent (Oxford) *Unearthing Pompeii: a study of the stratigraphic sequence beneath the Roman town using tephra analysis*.

Most members opt to receive a paper copy of our annual academic journal the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society (PPS) as well as three issues of our newsletter PAST. These are available also on-line through our publisher Cambridge University Press. They are also available more widely to non-members through library purchases. Volume 87 contained 13 papers ranging from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Late Iron Age. Contributions included; Hand stencils in El Castillo Cave, Spain; Climate and diversity in Neolithic Mortuary practices on the isle of Man; The Pre-Pottery Neolithic water-well at Tell Seker al-Aheimar, Upper Mesopotamia; Bronze Age woollen textile production in England: a consideration of evidence and potentials; A new study of the decorated cists in Kilmartin Glen, Scotland; Copper mining in the Bronze Age at Mynydd Parys, Anglesey, Wales.

Publishing in the Proceedings is open to all contributors subject to our rigorous editorial and peer review process. In addition, Two Prehistoric Society Research Series monographs were published in 2021, (Volume 12) The Neolithic stone extraction in Britain and Europe: an ethnoarchaeological perspective; (Volume 13) Fragments of the Bronze Age: The destruction and deposition of metalwork in South-West Britain and its wider context.

### Skills and expertise

The Society recognises the importance of training and passing on skills and knowledge about prehistory. The Conference Fund for early career researchers and the Coles for student travel to support their research were not awarded in 2021 because of Covid restrictions. We also support the teaching of prehistory as part of the school curriculum and 2021 continued our initiative, now facilitated by our new website, to provide schools with the resources about prehistory.

The appointment of new Council members is now overseen by a committee of Council that reviews skill sets and expertise, as well as equality, diversity and inclusion before recommending names to Council for nomination. During 2021 we completed the review of all our policies. Our aim has been to bring our governance further into line with Charity Commission best practice. New policies have been written and approved by Council, and remain under active review.

### Dissemination

In addition to our publications and conferences we held 15 meetings and a day-school during 2021 either on-line or in a blended format. Many of these were in partnership with local and national archaeological societies and formed a wide geographical spread. This year we partnered meetings with the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society, Welwyn Archaeological Society, Cambridge Antiquarian Society, and the Norwich and Norfolk Archaeological Society. We also continued our support for Iron Age Research Student Symposium held in Liverpool, the Annual Pitt Rivers Lecture held in Bournemouth University and a hotspot at the Experimental Archaeology Conference EAC12, Exeter, held in March.. The meetings were all well attended and are an example of how the Society takes prehistory into the community.

A new initiative in 2021 has been the Global Pasts online lectures. We used the appetite for attending on-line meetings to host a worldwide series of lectures on prehistory drawing an international audience. Speakers have presented on a range of topics covering the prehistory of New Zealand, Peru and Zimbabwe.

Our day school on the theme ‘Barrows of the Yorkshire Wolds: Prehistory, Inspiration and Legacy’ took place on-line in March 2021 and was extremely well attended. Equally well attended by an international audience was the session we co-organised in the Being Human Festival, Queen Mary University London on November 17th; ‘Are genes deep history?’ was an on-line panel discussion.

2021 saw significant growth in our on-line and social media presence. The Society's social media output continues to flourish with nearly 7,000 twitter followers and 18,000 people, from over 90 countries, in our Facebook group. The group welcomes professional and amateur members and topics range from the latest research in prehistory, through to descriptions of museum and site visits, requests for information and favourite prehistoric finds. The group has a strong, and enforced, Code of Conduct which ensures a safe and inclusive environment in which to discuss all aspects of world prehistory. Both channels host lively discussions of current issues affecting prehistory and archaeology more generally, and regularly provides a route to membership.

During 2021 we redesigned our website, <https://www.prehistoricsociety.org/> and re-branded our familiar triple spiral logo.

### Raising awareness and Advocacy

The Society made representations to the Universities of Sheffield, Chester and Worcester concerning the closure of their archaeology departments. We offered support for staff affected, and added our voice to a national campaign. We also took issue with Swindon Council over a proposal to close Swindon Museum with consequences for its important prehistoric collections.

### Response to the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect our activities in 2021. We followed Government guidelines throughout and were sensitive to the hesitancy to return to in-person meetings. As in 2020 the on-line AGM was held later in the year on October 20th and this was followed by the annual Sara Champion lecture, given by Dr Tom Booth of the Crick Institute on ‘Genetic change and relatedness in Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Britain’. We are planning to hold the 2022 AGM at its usual time in June during the Europa Conference in Bournemouth

The effect of cancelling our in-person events programme, has been cost neutral as we only ever aim to break even on our conferences. Partner organisations which we would ordinarily support with modest financial contributions to lecture costs have also cancelled meetings which has reduced our expenditure. We kept the circumstances of our Research and Conference awards under review and will release those funds should the projects happen, whilst aiming to consider new applications as normal in 2022.

We have been heartened by the loyalty of our membership; no members have cancelled their membership giving the pandemic as a reason. On the contrary, we recruited new members, 170 in 2021 as compared with 112 in 2020 and 97 in 2019. Our agreed subscription increase, the first since 2007, will now take place in January 2022, a year later than originally planned. We continue to discuss with our publishers Cambridge University Press any impact on journal sales to universities and the implications of Open Access, the move to which has been strengthened by the pandemic experience.

2021 continued to be challenging for archaeology. Students had their courses disrupted, fieldwork was uncertain, and museums shut for some of the year. However, our social media continued to provide an international meeting place for all prehistorians during the crisis and an opportunity to share experiences. The community of prehistorians remains strong.

Looking forward to 2022, we now have a stronger membership, social media presence and considerable expertise in running very successful conferences, meetings and day schools on-line. We look forward to welcoming members in person at our Europa Conference. The Prehistoric Society has both adapted to and prospered during these extraordinary and unanticipated times.