



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY FOUNDATION
2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Foundation's Objectives

The objectives of the Foundation are stated clearly in the "Rules" for the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation, adopted by the Senate and effective 1 June 2007.

- On 3 June 1985, the Senate approved the establishment of the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation.
- On 1 June 2007, the Senate approved the revised rules and regulations for the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation.
- On 1 April 2011, the Senate approved the revised rules and regulations for the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation.
- On 1 June 2016, the Senate approved the new "Foundations Procedures 2016" to give effect to the "Foundations Policy 2016" also effective on 1 June 2016.

The Objects of The Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation

(1) The objects of the foundation are to:

- . (a) increase the resources of the University, by fundraising or otherwise securing gifts, grants, the provision of services or other non-financial contributions; and
- . (b) assist the Senate and Vice-Chancellor in promoting the object of the University in relation to research, education and scholarship in the field of archaeology through the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University.

(2) The foundation is authorised, for the purposes of and consistently with its objects, to:

- . (a) seek to acquire resources by gift, bequest or devise to the University, subject to prior written approval of each acquisition, in accordance with the [Administrative Delegations](#), and relevant University policies and procedures;
- . (b) encourage philanthropy and other charitable activity in support of its objects;
- . (c) recommend to the University Officer (Foundations) purposes for which it may seek to acquire resources;
- . (d) arrange sponsorships and or partnerships with external organisations provided that that approval is given in accordance with the [Administrative Delegations](#);
- . (e) provide advice to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences about the application of any resources;
- . (f) provide opportunities for admitting members to the foundation and members' participation in its activities, in accordance with these rules; and
- . (g) arrange or conduct activities, such as lectures, seminars, conferences, publications or other activities, consistent with the object of the University and subject to the approval of the University Officer (Foundations).

Foundation Governance Statement

The Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation recognises the importance and benefit of reviewing its adoption and alignment with governance principles and provides the following report:

Principle 1 – Lay solid foundations for management and oversight

Nature of the entity

The Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation is a part of the University of Sydney ABN 15211513464 and not separately incorporated under a State or Commonwealth Act. The Foundation is required to gain prior approval for its fundraising activities from the appropriate University delegate. The Foundation's activities are not-for-profit and covered by the DGR status of the University of Sydney. The University is exempted from the requirement to hold an Authority to Fundraise and obligations upon holders of such an authority but is still required to comply with the balance of provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act

Roles of Board/Council and management

The Foundation operates under the authority of the Senate of the University of Sydney, as approved on 3 June 1985 and has no powers of delegation. The Foundation conducts its affairs pursuant to the Foundation Rules and the relevant policies of the University. The Foundation had its annual fundraising plan approved and was **able** to meet its objectives.

Principle 2 – Structure of the Council

The Council of the Foundation in 2020 consisted of the following 17 members including 8 new Councillors joining on 1st April 2020.:

The Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and Group Secretary are non-voting officials of the Foundation.

Ex officio members of the University were:

- Professor Annamarie Jagose –Dean (University Officer – Foundations).
- Ms Melissa Bonevska (Development Manager, University Foundations). The Development Manager represents Mr Tim Dolan – Vice-Principal (Advancement).

Ex-officio Council Members as Office Bearers

- Professor Alison Betts (Director – January 2020 to date

Council members elected by the Members – All Council Members Appointment Dates were reset at 1/4/2011 under the approved amendments to the Foundations Rules effective 1/4/2011.

Dr Peta Seaton AM – President (July 2019 to 1/4/2021)

Dr Seaton has maintained a long-standing interest Near Eastern archaeology and research and an alumnus of the University of Sydney. She runs her own strategic policy and business consultancy drawing on her background in government, as a former Member of Parliament, and in advertising and media. She is the Chair of Hearing Australia, a Director of the Menzies Research Centre and has been a non-executive director of the Bradman Foundation, BDCU Alliance Bank and CARE Australia.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 1/4/15-1/4/2024
- Specialised responsibilities: President, Acting Treasurer, Fundraising advisor
- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Paul Donnelly – Vice President 2015- 2021

Dr Paul Donnelly Deputy Director, Chau Chak Wing Museum, University Museums at the University of Sydney. Until mid 2016 Paul was a senior Curator at the Powerhouse Museum. Paul graduated with a BA (Hons) in archaeology from the University of Sydney, an MA in Public History from the University of Technology of Sydney, and a PhD from Sydney University, which focused on Chocolate-on-White ware pottery from the Middle to Late Bronze-Age southern Levant. Since 1988 Paul has been a member of the Sydney University Expedition to Pella in Jordan and in 2012, he involved the Powerhouse in the revived and on-going Zagora excavations on Andros. Paul is an Honorary Research Associate of the Department of Archaeology and sits on the AAIA Council.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 16/3/2012- 1/4/2021 (retiring this date).
- Specialised responsibilities: Grant's Committee Member, Special Event's Co-ordinator
- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Ross Burns

Dr Burns was a career officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs for 37 years. In that time, he had a range of overseas postings and served as Ambassador to several Middle Eastern countries. Since his retirement in 2003, Ross retains a keen interest in all aspects of the Middle East, not least its history and archaeology. He recently completed a doctorate at Macquarie University and has published two books on the history and monuments of Syria.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 27/3/2013-1/4/2022
- Specialised responsibilities: Occasional Lecturer for NEAF

- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr James Fraser

Dr Fraser is a graduate of the University of Sydney and held a previous position as Senior Curator at the Nicholson Museum. Dr Fraser is now a senior Curator at the British Museum in London. Dr Fraser has extensive knowledge regarding archaeological excavation and museum curatorship and is an immense asset to the Council of NEAF.

Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 1/4/18 – 1/4/2027

Special responsibilities: Event and Fundraising advisor.

- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Mrs Sandra Parker,

Mrs Parker has a long and extensive career as a Financial Accountant – working in many different areas of finance and undertaking financial matters in her own successful business. She has been a long-term member of NEAF and has been an active participant at many of our functions as well as a participating in many NEAF Tours.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 16/3/2012-1/4/2021 (retiring this date)
- Specialised responsibilities: Event Co-ordinator
- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Mr Nicholas Turvey

Mr Nicholas Turvey was President of the Archaeological Society (ArchSoc) at the University of Sydney for 2020/2021

. As an undergraduate honours' student Mr Turvey was our student representative on the NEAF Council.

Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 1/4/20 – 1/4/2022

- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Catriona Bonfiglioli

Dr. Catriona Bonfiglioli is a Senior Lecturer in Media Studies at UTS Sydney. She holds a BA (East Anglia), a Journalism Diploma (Cardiff) and a PhD (Sydney). She has worked as a Journalist for various organisations in the UK and Australia for more than 17 years, with nine years at AAP Sydney, three as National Medical Correspondent. After her PhD at Sydney (awarded 2005), she has worked in academe for the past 15 years. She has travelled extensively through the Middle East over the last 40 years and has had travel features published in various news media. She currently serves on the Committee of the Public Health Association of NSW (2000-) and has done so for 20 years. As well, Dr Bonfiglioli served in various Board capacities with the Australian Medical Writer's Association for seven years (1993-2000), including President for three.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Educational, media and publication advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Dr Iona Kat McRae

Dr (Iona) Kat McRae is a practicing archaeological consultant and heritage advisor based in Sydney. She has over 10 years of experience working as a professional archaeologist and has worked extensively on sites throughout Australia and the Middle East (including Cyprus, Jordan, Syria, Iran, the U.A.E and Armenia). Kat has a BA (Hons) and PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology from the University of Sydney. Previously she has worked as a lecturer and tutor for the University of Sydney, Canberra University and the Centre for Continuing Education, teaching Near Eastern archaeology and practical archaeological skills.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Archaeological and Social Media advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Dr Amanda Dusting

D Dusting holds a PhD from the Near Eastern Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney. Her thesis focussed on the architecture of an Achaemenid ‘way station’ in Fars province Iran titled *The Architecture of Achaemenid Qal’eh Kali*. Dr Dusting has many distinguished awards including an Endeavour Australia Award, conferred by the Australian Federal Government as a six-month fellowship at the British Institute Archaeology Ankara (BIAA), Turkey. Further honors include the Max le Petit Award for Academic Achievement in Classical Archaeology, University of Sydney. Previously Dr Dusting was awarded a Graduate Diploma in Communications (Film Production) from the University of Technology, Sydney and a Diploma of Visual Arts (Painting & Film Media) from Newcastle College of Advanced Education, NSW. She brings to NEAF a vast experience in film media and archaeology.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Digital and communications for NEAF
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Mr Jack McBride

Mr McBride is a retired high school principal with previous educational experience in English and History in NSW public high schools. Mr McBride finished his career with the NSW Department of Education and Training as a project officer overseeing the raising of the school leaving age.

His interest in history led him to archaeology and his participation as a volunteer at the University sites of Pella and Paphos. In 2018 Mr McBride undertook the volunteer librarian position to aid in the cataloguing of the NEAF library at CCANESA, accessioning new acquisitions and incorporating the NEAF catalogue onto the overall CCANESA database. Mr McBride brings extensive educational knowledge to the Board and is liaison officer with the History Teachers Association of NSW.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Library and History Teachers liaison Officer- NEAF
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Dr Ruth Ward

Dr Ward has a BA Hons in the Archaeology of Western Asia (BA Hons) from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, and a PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology from The University of Sydney.

Dr Ward has extensive experience as a field archaeologist, working on multi-period sites across Britain and the Middle East. Alongside archaeology, Dr Ward is currently a Senior Program Manager, Executive Health Leadership within the NSW Health Education and Training Institute and has a strong background in human resources, organisational change and promoting the development of positive and effective leadership cultures and practice. Dr Ward can apply her multiskilled background to NEAF.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Policy and Procedures Advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Mr Stephen Coutts

Mr Coutts completed an honours degree in history, then worked on the personal staff of the Hon. Nick Greiner, Premier and Treasurer of NSW from 1988 to 1992. From 1992 to 1995, Mr Coutts was Chief of Staff to the NSW Minister for Community Services, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister on Ageing and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. From 1995 Mr Coutts has worked as a government relations adviser in the private sector. He is a former Director of the Motor Accidents Insurance Board of Tasmania, a former Councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society, a former Secretary of the Australia Asia Young Leaders Program, a former Trustee of the Rose Bay War Memorial Crown Reserve Trust and a former Chair of Hear for You, a charity which provides mentoring services to deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers. He is a member of the Council of the Australian National Maritime Museum. With his extensive political and corporate background Mr Coutts will add much needed value to the board for fundraising purposes.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029

- Specialised responsibilities: Corporate Liaison and Sponsorship
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Mr Gregory Beattie

Mr Greg Beattie is a senior partner in the law firm Wilshire Webb Staunton Beattie Lawyers and has a Bachelor of Economics, Bachelor of Law, Bachelor of Arts all from the University of Sydney and a Master of Law from Cambridge University. He has extensive experience in numerous areas of law in property and development and special events management. He also has had considerable exposure to archaeology through his association to the Pella Project. He brings valuable knowledge to NEAF from his legal background.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: General legal and events advice.
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Ms Holly Winter

Ms Holly Winter is a PhD candidate at the University of Sydney, who specialises in Near Eastern Archaeology. After completing her undergraduate degree and Honours at Flinders University, Holly moved to Sydney to pursue her PhD, where she is completing her thesis on palace function in the Middle and Late Bronze Age in the Southern Levant. She has convened the Near Eastern Seminar Series (NESS) for the past four years, which is a weekly series of talks by students, staff and academics on Near Eastern archaeology at the University of Sydney. Holly is a trench supervisor and team member of the University of Sydney Pella Excavation Project and the British Museum excavation project Khirbet Umm al-Ghozlan in Jordan. In addition to working on several overseas projects, Holly is a senior archaeologist for Casey and Lowe, a historical archaeological and heritage consulting company in Sydney. Holly will add great value to NEAF as a contact with other Usyd students.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Student liaison and event co-ordinator.
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Councillors Retired on the 31st of March 2020.

Mrs M. Browne; Dr Kate da Costa; Dr. Michael Rodriguez; Dr John Tidmarsh and Dr Wendy Reade retired.

Dr Michelle Cotton passed away on 13th January 2020 a few months before her retirement from NEAF.

Dr Stephen Bourke and Mr Ben Churcher were Official Observers approved by the University Officer until 1/4/2021 when they will retire.

Council members were elected or re-elected at the Foundation's AGM on the **25th of March 2020 via Teleconference**. Office Bearer's were elected at the Council meeting 11th May 2020. There is a separate nomination committee of Council. The full Council resolves on nominations for co-opting of members to fill vacancies outside of the process of election at the AGM. There **was not** a performance evaluation of the Council undertaken in the reporting period.

Principle 3 – Promote ethical and responsible decision-making.

Council members have been provided with the University of Sydney Foundation Rules, Code of Conduct, Work Health & Safety policy and the External Interests policy. All these policies are available on the University's Policy Register, as are other relevant University policies regarding harassment, grievance procedures and the Delegations of Authority.

Principle 4 – Safeguard integrity in financial reporting

The annual accounts of the Foundation are prepared by the financial staff of the University, signed off by The Dean, Professor Annamaria Jagose and included in this Annual Report to the Senate. The Foundation is part of the University and therefore does not have its own audit sub-committee. While the Annual Financial Report of the University is audited by the Audit Office of NSW, the Annual Report of the Foundation has not itself been audited.

The Foundation undertook its usual fundraising activities through donations, seminars, lectures and tours during 2019. And in conducting those activities, the Foundation took all reasonable steps to ensure that commissions paid or payable to any person as part of a fundraising appeal did not exceed one-third of the gross money obtained by that person in the appeal¹ and appropriate particulars of all items of gross income received or receivable, all items of expenditure incurred, including the application or disposition of any income obtained from the appeal and particulars of those transactions to which they related were recorded in the minutes of the Foundation.²

¹ Reg 9(6) Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2008

² See s22(2)(b) Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW)

Principle 5 – Make timely and balanced disclosure.

The Foundation complied with the reporting and disclosure requirements of the Senate. These include an annual budget and this Annual Report.

Members and Council have been made aware of the processes for disclosure pursuant to the Code of Conduct, External Interests policy, which include protected disclosure to the ICAC, the Ombudsman or the Auditor General.

Principle 6 - Respect the rights of shareholders, members, staff, volunteers, clients, & other stakeholders.

The Foundation Council and/or membership consists of members of the community, industry bodies and the University whose input is invited via the Annual General Meeting and Council meetings of the Foundation.

The following forums/mechanisms have been held during the year to involve stakeholders in election of the Council, activities of the Foundation or other stakeholder participation. These include our AGM on 25th March 2020 in which Council nominations were called for and accepted.

At various times throughout the year our members are invited to participate in NEAF functions/activities (see below for details). At these functions Members are encouraged to discuss future activities and directions with Council members.

Under the Charitable Fundraising Act, the University may be questioned about any appeal on details of the purpose of the appeal such as the appeal target, objectives, distribution of proceeds, etc and the process to provide answers. During the year, the Foundation published information on its website and publications and outlines those activities in this Annual Report. Other enquiries may have been made to other parts of the University.

Principle 7 - Recognise and manage risk.

The Foundation recognises its activities within University premises or other premises require risks such as health and safety, environmental protection, privacy, trade practices, and compliance with the Charitable Fundraising Act to be considered and managed. The Foundation has managed these risks during the year by complying with WH&S practices during its activities and including in its publication's information about privacy assurance etc. Information about privacy and compliance with the Charitable Fundraising Act are also found on our website.

Principle 8 – Remunerate fairly and responsibly.

No member of a Council is entitled to receive any remuneration for acting in that capacity except reasonable remuneration on a basis, which has first been approved in writing by the University Officer (Foundations)

Members of the Foundation Council may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses after written approval of the University Officer (Foundations). Any such instances are recorded in the minutes of the Council.

Report on the Activities of the Foundation

MEMBERSHIP, DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

NEAF had a membership @ the end of 2020 of 177 financial members (plus 13 Free list, 41 Free Students (18 paid), 13 Life Members; 4 ex-officio and 60 (2019) tour participants) and we received \$4,500 in donations to the Pella Volunteer Scheme, \$925 for the Judith McKenzie Fund and \$1,095 to General Donations during 2020. The Development Office has appropriately acknowledged all donations as well the President of NEAF has sent individual Thank you letters. NEAF received a bequest from the Estate of Lady W Stephen for \$10,000. Our total Philanthropy for 2020 was \$16,520.

NEAF GRANTS

There were no grants awarded in 2020 although they were offered to graduate students and Early Career Research Postgraduates. We suspect this was partially due to the restrictions on International Travel.

GRANT REPORTS

Several Grant-in-aid recipients offered grant reports (as part of their acceptance of the grants) and these are posted on our Website <http://sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi/neaf/grants/reports> for review.

NEAF AGM

In 2020 our AGM was held via telephone conference on 25th March in response to the closure of the University due to COVID-19. Approximately 35 people attended including current councillors, newly co-opted councillors and members.

Our normal AGM public lecture was postponed until the 15th of April 2020 and given over zoom by Dr Joseph Lehner to 120 participants on *The Legacy of the Cape Gelidonya Wreck and Bronze Age Maritime Trade in the Mediterranean*.

PUBLIC LECTURES

In 2020 our public lecture program and seminar series were converted to zoom delivery and we ran a successful five-part lecture series titled "Egyptian Connections".

The first lecture in our series was *Cleopatra's Island: Evidence of Hellenistic Cyprus from Neo Paphos and Beyond* by Dr Craig Barker of the University of Sydney (185 people attended).

Our second lecture was by Dr Karin Sowada of Macquarie University, on *Cosmic to Microscopic: Hidden Spaces & New Evidence from the Pyramid Field at Giza*. (170 participants attended).

Following this was Dr Stephen Bourke, University of Sydney on *Egypt and the East Mediterranean World in the International Age: warfare, Trade and Foreign Relations*. (256 participants attended)

The fourth lecture was by Dr Kate da Costa from the University of Sydney, on *The Roman Gaze in Egypt: Mummy Portraits and the Egypto-Roman World*. (111 participants)

Dr Melissa Kennedy from University of Western Australia delivered the last lecture "*Collapse, Climate Change and Refugees: The end of the Levantine Early Bronze Age*" (112 participants attended).

SEMINAR SERIES.

NEAF had two successful Seminar Series in 2020. The first was a four-part Saturday morning series titled "*Ancient Syria*" and attracted a total of 407 participants over the four Saturdays.

The second seminar series was a 6-part series titled "From Cordoba to Kashgar: Islamic Cultures and the Wider World" and a total 605 participants linked onto this very popular series.

STUDY TOURS

NEAF has established links with Academy Travel and Alumni Travel to conduct Archaeological Tours. In 2020 due to COVID-19 our tour program was postponed, and all upcoming tours were placed on hold until restrictions are lifted on International travel.

DIRECTOR' REPORT: - Professor Alison Betts

My role is as an *ex-officio* liaison between NEAF and the University, particularly the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Archaeology. In that regard I have some matters of significance to report. NEAF previously was directly responsible to the Faculty of Arts. This has now changed to SOPHI, the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry. Our Head of School, Keith Dobney, who arrived in early 2020, is very fortunately for us, an archaeologist. He and I have worked together in-field as it happens, many years ago at Tel Afar, on Jebel Sinjar, more recently a heartland of the ISIS uprising.

Among much of the excellent work Keith has done for the School since his arrival, he has turned his energies to bringing together the various strands of archaeology and ancient history that have arisen within the University over the years. This process is still very much a work in progress, but his aim is to combine NEAF, including the Pella Project, along with the Australian Institute at Athens and its present umbrella organisation CCANESA, the

Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies, into a broader cluster including the Department of Archaeology and, I believe, the Department of Classics and Ancient History. The exact make-up of this group and the nature of its activities are not yet decided, but the aim is to draw on the wide variety of skills of all parties to build strength in unity, most particularly in the face of the financial difficulties currently faced by the University. NEAF has always had great strength in community outreach, something that is increasingly sought after in academic institutions. NEAF has also always supported students in fieldwork experience, educational programmes and, very importantly, research grants. As the plans for this new clustering develop, we will keep our membership informed.

This effort also coincides with the opening of the new University Museum, the Chau Chak Wing Museum, which those of you who have been on campus recently will have seen has appeared on the site of the old tennis courts alongside the gates to Victoria Park. The Museum contains an excellent display of West Asian artefacts curated by some of our own community and displaying artefacts from University of Sydney excavations. If you have not already been, I strongly recommend that you visit.

In short, this has been a dynamic year for the relationship between NEAF and the University which promises good things to come.

NEAF PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Dr Peta Seaton AM

When we met at last year's AGM we were all adjusting to a sudden lock-down, and feeling anxious about how we would navigate the months ahead. We all discovered the power of pet-walking, sourdough, drinks with neighbours in our driveways, and finishing those long-delayed home projects. But we had hoped we would all be back in a room in 2021 enjoying a get together, a glass of wine, and a well earned pat on the back for so many people who have made NEAF a success.

However – the logistics of a 'hybrid' AGM with continuing restrictions on occupants of a room, plus zooming others in, made it more sensible this time to do the whole AGM as a zoom. So thank you for your understanding and maybe next year .

2020 was another big year for NEAF. We adjusted amazingly well to a position where in general we saw more members join, more members and friends participate in lectures and study days, and people respond generously to changes we made in pricing and voluntary contributions to lectures.

This is a tribute to the volunteers who help Karen and the Council stage these events. Karen hosted zooms from the north coast, and the detailed program is recorded in the Annual Report. We thank her for all her work in 2020.

Maree Browne, John Tidmarsh, Kate da Costa, Craig Barker, Ross Burns, Seppi Lehner, Ben Churcher, Melissa Kennedy, Stephen Bourke, all deserve our huge gratitude for presenting wonderful evening lectures and Saturday seminars and took us from *Cordoba to Kashgar*, to Cape Gelidonya, and across the Mediterranean and Levant, when we couldn't go there ourselves.

Our 2020 programmes reached (in advertising terms) 2000 sets of eyeballs. We rarely had less than 100 participants, routinely exceeded 120, and reached a high-water mark of 256! A very different experience to the pre-COVID lecture format where we would have between 40 and 80 people in a room (and the social interaction that comes with that). The big difference has been to enable people from UK, Jordan, Switzerland, and all around Australia to join in, including Sydney-siders who can't manage a trip to campus easily.

For me, sitting with a coffee on a Saturday morning enjoying an exquisitely illustrated and expertly researched lecture, or an evening lecture with a glass of something nice was a guilty COVID pleasure.

Revenue

As you will know, in the past our two main sources of current revenue are Tours & Events and seminars. Thank you to all members and friends for responding so positively. It is wonderful to see that you value these NEAF products and activities. At the end of last year, we had almost doubled the income we would normally expect to receive from the in-person lecture and Saturday programmes, although we understand that as our worlds open up again, we need to remain sensitive to how people use their time and discretionary spending.

Thank you for voluntary lecture contributions of around \$2,000 and for subscribing to paid events to the tune of around \$12,000. This has helped replace some of the tour revenue shortfall. During COVID, tours are not possible and this left a revenue gap of around \$25K in calendar 2020. We wondered how to manage this and chose to test if people would respond to the invitation to make a 'voluntary' contribution to otherwise free events, and a new way of packaging the ticketed events (eg. The Saturday series).

Which brings me to members' input on our activities. And a big thanks to Ruth Ward who initiated a survey of members to find out more about your priorities and how we can tailor our program to continue to deliver. And thank you to the many people who provided feedback to Ruth.

Regarding lectures, the very clear feedback is that people want to maintain the 'Room and Zoom' hybrid. Zooming has enabled many NEAF members to join us for the first time ever. We want to keep including them--- so our program this year will aim to offer room-and-zoom where possible. We have welcomed some Jordanian friends to NEAF zoom lectures and our Facebook statistics shows we have followers in Amman.

Members also indicated that they are keen to hear more content from up-and-coming researchers, including those who are doing research with the help of NEAF grants.

Holly Winter and our Events Committee will be collating a mix of new faces with our much-loved familiar lecture presenters in our coming programmes.

Council Renewal – You will remember that this time last year we welcomed 8 new faces to the Council, but were very sad to lose the services of Mrs Maree Browne, Dr John Tidmarsh, Dr Kate da Costa, Dr Michele Cotton, Mr Ben Churcher Immediate Past President Dr Wendy Reade Treasurer Dr Stephen Bourke AM.

This year Council will lose Dr Paul Donnelly and Mrs Sandy Parker who have served for 9 years and have reached the term limit according to university rules. Both have been huge contributors, and I want to thank Paul Donnelly for his support as Vice- President, despite his workload establishing the new Cha Chak Wing Museum through 2020. Paul remains on the NEAF case – and has kindly offered us the chance to tour the Museum exclusively on April 22nd, with the support of Dr Craig Barker and Candice Richards. Sandy has been a tireless force as Chair of on the Events Committee and has worked closely with Maree Brown and John Tidmarsh over many years on staging events and Saturday study days. We will miss her on the Council but hope she stays close and I'm sure will help Holly Winter as she takes the reins of the Events Committee.

Last year we 'lost' Ben Churcher and Dr Stephen Bourke as Councillors, but we were allowed to retain them as Observers to Council. Both continued to work hard for NEAF – Ben with publications and flyers – much of which you see on social media and the information sent to members. Stephen Bourke continued to guide me as Acting Treasurer, and to help convene our speaker programmes, and present many of our lectures.

As Director of the Pella Project, Stephen along with many of us have missed being in Jordan this year but hope that we will be able to return in 2022.

COMMEMORATION

Vale – Lady Stephen

In the last 12 months, we have been sad to lose Lady Win Stephen, one of NEAF's founding forces and a great supporter at many levels. Many of us will remember her enthusiastic hours spent helping Basil Hennessy in the management of the Pella Collection.

In 2020, Lady Stephen left us a donation of \$10,000. On behalf of all of us, I have expressed to Mary Tanner her daughter (also a NEAF member), our appreciation both of Lady Stephen's inspiration to us all, and her generous contribution to NEAF.

APPRECIATION EVENT – CCWM TOUR

At last year's AGM I said I had hoped this year to make special presentations to the then retiring Councillors. Despite several tries, COVID stopped us. A solution in sight: as you know, we have scheduled a special exclusive evening Twilight Tour of the Chau Chak Wing Museum on April 22nd at 6.00pm, which will bring us together in person, in a very special setting.

NEAF / SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY

2020 has been a big year for our colleagues and friends in the Faculty and School, and it has been a pleasure to work with Professor Keith Dobney as he develops his vision for the future. When he took on the Head of School role, I doubt he expected a pandemic, and particular COVID-related financial challenges.

Keith has been very interested to learn about NEAF and the strength of our membership and our commitment to the discipline of Near Eastern Archaeology. I want to thank him for his engagement and to assure him that NEAF is keen to work with him to bring our strengths to his new strategic purpose.

Thank you also to Keith for enabling several NEAF Councillors to become Honorary Associates of the University of Sydney. Karen, Amanda Disting and I have been grateful also for the access to the recording studio at FASS and the technical help and time provided by Peter Adams and Tyler, and Michael Rosas and Julie-Ann Robson on the establishment of a second NEAF website which will enable us to present much more detail, publication, photos and background than our simpler University portal.

Amanda has spent hours recording podcasts and editing them, and Kat McRae has helped establish a social media policy for us to follow. The Council has worked on the governance and policy framework that we need to have in place as we effectively become a publisher of content.

COVID or not, this sort of material will continue to be valuable for us and appealing to our audience and we look forward to having it available as soon as possible.

I would also like to thank Professor Alison Betts for her role as Director of NEAF, in her capacity as Edwin Cuthbert Hall Chair. Thanks also to Melissa Bonevska and the Development Office for their advice during the year.

FUNDRAISING

The Strategic Direction under contemplation by Keith Dobney gives the NEAF Council an opportunity to re-shape our approach to fundraising, and where we focus our grant and support efforts. This remains a work in progress but the focus is sharpening. As you will see from our financial report, we have respectable assets. But our budget outlays each year are relatively modest, and largely drawn from revenues raised in each current year (from tours, events, etc) and some admin support from a bequest. The Council is considering how we might take a more strategic approach to shape appealing and visibly impactful fundraising opportunities for future donors, in addition to our other fundraising activities. I want to particularly acknowledge Australian and Overseas donors who helped 'keep the lights on at Pella' this year – with fixed costs and no Pella season in 2021, your contributions helped in a tough time.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

Despite COVID, we initiated several new projects and directions in 2019-20, including:

- establishing that Student membership of NEAF, and attendance at events, is FREE for 2 years - Increased our financial membership by around 34, to around 175 (and remained engaged with our unfinancial members, who we would love to see on our books again!)
- Increased our student membership from 12 two years ago to around 42 today
- All up, 55 new members this year
- Doubled our 'Friends' list
- Increased the take-up of 3-year memberships.
- conferring of Life Membership on the 2020, and 2021 retiring councillors to recognise their service.
- Establishing stronger engagement with ancient history teachers (through Councillor Jack McBride)
- getting our Facebook platform established, and using it to connect to other archaeological audiences
- publication activity and preparations for more, especially through ADAPA of Mel Kennedy's Monograph *A Land In-Between* - the Orontes valley in the early urban age'; and the forthcoming '*Gazelle's Dream*' by Alison Betts surveying the regional phenomenon of 'desert kites'
- Keeping engaged with our tour partners Alumni and Academy Travel, as we look forward to tour opportunities re-opening we hope later in 2021
- Setting up a framework for stronger corporate engagement

NEAF GRANTS

Many of our grants usually support students who need help to travel to sites, museum, and institutions overseas.

This has been impossible this last year - so the Grants Committee has given some grant-holders some flexibility in the use of their grants, including extensions of time.

NEAF COUNCIL

Our NEAF Council has worked hard to keep the momentum going during 2020, and I want to thank

Mr Stephen Coutts

Dr Catriona Bonfiglioli

Dr Ruth Ward

Dr Kat McRae

Ms Holly Winter

Dr Paul Donnelly

Mr Greg Beattie

Mrs Sandy Parker

Dr Amanda Dusting

Dr Ross Burns,

Mr Jack McBride

A note on our Observers: Dr Stephen Bourke AM and Mr Ben Churcher I want to thank for all their work.

I mentioned we will lose Stephen Bourke and Ben Churcher from Council this year.

In addition to Ben being one of the powerhouse tour leaders and revenue producers for NEAF over many years, he has also been our dedicated 'publications' expert, and if you read the NEAF Bulletin, it is Ben to thank for the beautiful layout and quality. He is a regular NEAF lecturer and we loved his contribution to last years' Saturday Series. He is also a much loved and respected Field Director at Pella. Ben has been a NEAF member since about the year dot, and you could not find a more dedicated NEAF Councillor and friend and colleague.

Stephen Bourke has been a NEAF Councillor since inception and served as Treasurer for 25 years. He is the Director of Pella, which has been a centre of gravity for student engagement, research, publication, mentorship, post-grads, volunteer engagement, at the university for more than half of the Pella Project's 40 years. His contribution to Australian archaeology, our relationship with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the understanding of ancient peoples and culture in the Near East, and his dedication to the University's teaching and research capability is immense, and was recognised with the award last year of an AM.

Our heartfelt thanks to Stephen Bourke and Ben Churcher, and we look forward to your continuing engagement as a NEAF member.

CONCLUSION

NEAF is powered by supporters and volunteers. When we love something like we love Near Eastern archaeology, hours spent organising and volunteering do not seem to count, and it is all worth it when so many NEAF Members and Friends tune in to lectures and study days, and no doubt tours and Pella seasons in the future. We do this because it produces valuable research and knowledge.

As President, thank you to everyone who has been part of the NEAF family in 2020, and we look forward to 2021 with the surprising learnings from Covid in 2020, and the opportunities of a re-opening world.

Consolidated Financial Statements

Consolidated Financial Statements are appended to this report.