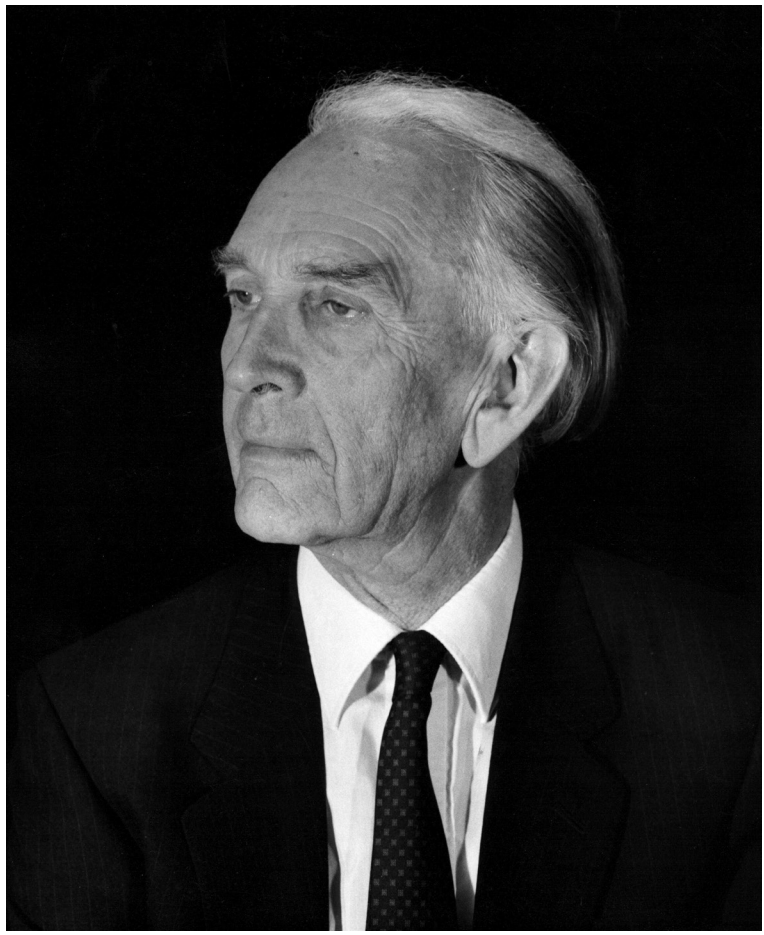

JOHN D. EVANS

John Davies Evans
1925–2011

John D. Evans was one of the leading British prehistorians of the later twentieth century. His early research on Malta transformed Maltese prehistory, culminating in *The Prehistoric Antiquities of the Maltese Islands*, which established the culture sequence of prehistoric Malta and provided a definitive account of the great monuments of Malta, including the 'temples', fully sustained by later work. His excavations in the neolithic levels at the great settlement mound at Knossos in Crete, in five seasons between 1958 and 1970, established this as one of the earliest farming settlements in Europe, and his published papers illuminated a number of aspects of Mediterranean prehistory. Appointed Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology in London at the early age of 31 and succeeding to the position of Director in 1973, he oversaw much of its gradual transformation from a small graduate research institute (and the re-organisation which made it part of University College London), to what by the time of his retirement in 1989 had become the largest department of archaeology in the United Kingdom. A Fellow of the British Academy from 1973, he was President of the Prehistoric Society from 1974 to 1978, President of the Society of Antiquaries of London from 1984 to 1987, and President of the International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences from 1981 to 1986. His kindness and his unassuming manner are fondly remembered by many generations of Institute graduates and by many fellow prehistorians.

Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy, XIV, 141–163.

I. Early years

John Davies Evans was born in Liverpool on 22 January 1925, the only son of Welsh parents, Harry Evans and Edith Haycocks.[1] His grandparents were Welsh-speakers and moved to Liverpool from North Wales: his father worked in the office of Elder Dempster's shipping line. He attended Liverpool Institute High School, studying English literature and also Spanish and French. He was of the first generation of his family to have more than an elementary education. In December 1942 he won an Open Scholarship to Pembroke College, Cambridge at the age of 17. He was due for call-up for National Service at the end of the school year, and opted to go up to Cambridge at once to begin his undergraduate studies, reading English. His tutor at Pembroke sent him for interview for a 'confidential assignment' for which he was accepted, and so at the end of the academic year found himself at Bletchley Park, the secret code-breaking establishment, working in Hut C on the Enigma codes as used by the German Army and Air Force. After the war in Europe ended he worked on Japanese codes. At the end of the war he was disconcerted to find himself conscripted for National Service (on the grounds that at Bletchley Park he had been working in a civilian capacity), and was sent to Singapore for two years, continuing to work on code-breaking. So it was not until 1947 that he returned to Cambridge, where he continued to read English for a year and to take the Part I examination.

It is not entirely clear what motivated him to change his field of study to Archaeology at this point. In his teens he had read Sir Leonard Woolley's *Ur of the Chaldees* and John Pendlebury's *Archaeology of Crete* and these, and perhaps his travels, must have caught his imagination. But it was during this year reading English that he learnt that under the Cambridge Tripos system he could, after completing his Part I, transfer to the Archaeology and Anthropology Tripos for Part II. So he made an appointment to see the Disney Professor of Archaeology, Dorothy Garrod, who interviewed him rather formally and accepted him, sending him then to see Glyn Daniel who, although a Fellow of St John's College, acted as Director of Studies and as supervisor for archaeology students in Pembroke. As he later wrote: 'I had first met Glyn in the summer of 1948.

[1] This account draws extensively on the interview with John and Evelyn Evans by Pamela Jane Smith (and referred to throughout these notes as Evans (2009)), and on notes kindly provided by Judith Conway. All other footnote references to Evans's publications relate to the Bibliography at the end of this memoir.

I had decided after taking Part I of the English Tripos that archaeology was what I really wanted to do and that it was now or never if I really wanted to do something about it.'[2] Glyn Daniel was suitably encouraging and he made the change. The most influential lecturer on the course in terms of ideas was Grahame Clark, then a Lecturer in the Department and later Disney Professor, who advocated environmental and economic approaches to prehistory.[3] He also had his first experience of archaeological excavation with Clark at a Roman site at Cottenham near Cambridge. The informality of Glyn Daniel's supervisions, which sometimes took place in the nearest pub, was much appreciated, and he completed Part II of the Tripos in Archaeology with a starred First.[4]

Following his acceptance as a research student (supported by a State Studentship) he spent another year in Cambridge in order to fill in on the things which he had had to skimp in his single year as archaeology undergraduate. Then in 1950 he departed for Spain, to Madrid University, to follow, at Glyn Daniel's suggestion, the somewhat diffusionist idea of Gordon Childe that the bronze age El Argar culture of south-east Spain might have come there from Asia Minor. Since he knew Spanish from school, and had belonged to the Spanish Society at Cambridge (also learning some Catalan), this was a welcome prospect. But the main body of El Argar material, the Siret collection, was still not available in the aftermath of the war, so he was not able to see it, an unpromising beginning to his research. He did however attend the fourth Annual Summer School Course at Ampurias and participate in the excavation of the Argaric site of La Bastida de Totana in south-east Spain,[5] which he co-directed with Francisco Jordá Cerdá, the Director of the Cartagena Archaeological Museum, and participated in Grahame Clark's excavations at Star Carr on his return from Spain.

The following year (1951–2) he was awarded the Fellowship of the British Institute at Ankara, travelling widely in Turkey, participating at Sultantepe in the excavations of Seton Lloyd, the Director of the Ankara Institute. During the winter months he was also able to join Kathleen Kenyon's excavations at Jericho. So, after a late start—he had graduated in Archaeology without doing much fieldwork—he was building up some useful excavation experience. But the chosen project for his research was

[2] Evans (1981*b*), 233.
[3] Evans (2009), 137.
[4] Pers. comm. from Judith Conway, 23 Aug. 2014.
[5] T. Whitelaw 2012, Digging in the archives: re-discovering the excavations of John D. Evans, <http://www.dayofarchaeology.com/author/toddwhitelaw/>—accessed 10 August 2014.

not going well. He had not been long in Turkey before he realised that the link between Spain and Asia Minor, proposed by Childe, and supposedly to be the central theme of his thesis, 'was just not on at all':[6]

> In a way I was in a pretty desperate situation at this stage. I realised what I had been working on for two years was getting nowhere, and it was very fortunate that I was sent to Malta after that. I came back from Turkey with no thesis, as it were, and with my research grant running out, and Glyn Daniel said 'Well, there is some money that has been given to do a survey of prehistoric monuments and Stuart Piggott is one of the commissioners and they want to appoint an assistant to do the work. So why don't you try. Ring Stuart Piggott [then Abercomby Professor of Archaeology in Edinburgh] whom I had never met. So I did and he agreed to take me on, and I went out to Malta. That was in 1952.

II. Malta, 1952–4

The unexpected appointment in Malta was a pivotal moment in John Evans's professional career. It offered him a major body of material to work with. For the stone-built 'temples' of Malta were among the greatest monuments of the prehistoric Mediterranean. They were as yet little understood, despite the systematic excavations of Sir Themistocles Zammit in the first half of the century. Zammit had realised that they were indeed prehistoric, and had seen that they could be classed as neolithic, with a later, bronze age, series of monuments to follow. But little else was known. This was at a time before the radiocarbon revolution, initiated by the American chemist Willard Libby in 1949 and not applied to the West Mediterranean until much later. At this time the prevailing approach was what Glyn Daniel had called the 'modified diffusionism' of Gordon Childe, where most innovations in European prehistory were presumed to be the product of 'the irradiation of European barbarism by Oriental civilisation'.[7] So the stimulus for the Maltese temples was widely presumed to come from the east, perhaps from the bronze age civilisation of Minoan Crete, brought to light by Sir Arthur Evans in the early years of the century. But John had already faced the pitfalls of Childean diffusionism in Spain and worked with a more critical approach.

He was employed by the University of Malta, but actually based in the National Museum in Valletta, which not only held the collections but was also in effect the antiquities service for the islands, charged with the

[6] Evans (2009), 137.
[7] V. G. Childe, 'Retrospect', *Antiquity*, 32 (1957), 70.

custody of all monuments. The job was to compile a complete record of all the monuments and material available for the study of the prehistory of the Maltese islands. It involved preparing new plans of all the monuments, with the assistance of architecture students of the University, and compiling the first catalogue of the Museum collections.[8] That was the bread-and-butter of the job, but at the same time the unsolved problem of the origin and development of the mysterious 'temple'-builders was naturally very much on his mind.

The most promising clues were provided by the work which Luigi Bernabò Brea had been undertaking in Sicily,[9] where early neolithic pottery of the Stentinello Culture decorated with impressed patterns was found which resembled that found in the Maltese cave site of Ghar Dalam. This gave a starting point. Then John noted that some of the 'temples', notably those at Mġarr, which appeared to be more roughly built than the major monuments, had yielded pottery with less refined shapes and decoration than those which predominated at the larger and more elaborate sites. There was at that time no stratigraphic evidence, and Zammit had thought that such developments were later and represented degeneration, but Evans felt that they might represent an earlier phase. Following this line of thought he went on to construct a hypothetical five-phase development for the Maltese Neolithic,[10] from the Ghar Dalam impressed ware to the elaborate style which characterised the largest and most complex 'temples'.

The background of the post-'temple' phases was also a puzzle. The recent excavations of Bernabò Brea in Lipari suggested that the first bronze age phase, known as the Tarxien Cemetery culture, had links with the recently discovered Capo Graziano culture of the Lipari Islands. Parallels were also found in the prehistoric cultures of Sicily for the succeeding two phases in Malta. He presented his findings and his eight-stage ceramic sequence to the Prehistoric Society in a paper which constituted his first publication.[11]

The other main problem was the origin of the 'temples' themselves. The presence of a few Ghar Dalam sherds on some 'temple' sites and the overall quantities of sherds, indicated a long period of use for some of the smaller, less elaborate 'temples' and a gradual elaboration and expansion

[8] Evans (2008), 13.
[9] L. Bernarbò Brea, *The Prehistoric Culture Sequence in Sicily. Sixth Annual Report of the University of London Institute of Archaeology* (London, 1950).
[10] Evans (2008), 14.
[11] Evans (1953).

of the plans of the monuments themselves. In 1955 he excavated a series of early rock-cut chamber tombs on the Xemxija heights on the north coast of Malta. Noting the similarity of the 'lobed' plan of one of these to that of the smaller temple at Mġarr, he constructed a developmental sequence for the 'temples' and rock-cut tombs, arguing for a very close link between them, with the form of the earliest 'temples' imitating that of the rock-tombs. In at least one instance the gradual agglomeration of such tombs led to the development of an elaborate 'catacomb', the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, complete with rock-cut imitations of the 'temple' architecture. 'There was thus no need to seek an external origin for these developments: they were entirely a local process. Although the initial premise remains almost entirely hypothetical, and the chronological priority of the simplest temple-plans remains unproven, I still believe that my conjecture provides the most likely explanation of the evidence.'[12]

Although his doctoral dissertation makes other contributions to Mediterranean prehistory, it naturally centred upon Malta.[13] It was followed by the publication of his book *Malta* in the Ancient People and Places series,[14] edited for Thames & Hudson by Glyn Daniel. This was a readable synopsis and commentary, anticipating his *magnum opus*, then still in preparation—*The Prehistoric Antiquities of the Maltese Islands*, published in 1971.[15] The heart of the corpus is a gazetteer of the prehistoric sites of Malta, with good plans (mainly at a scale of about 1:200) and with excellent drawings and photographs of a representative selection of the pottery and other finds. Although still accepting the view of such earlier scholars as Albert Mayr and Sir Arthur Evans that the temple builders had, in their later *floruit*, been influenced by ideas from Minoan Crete (exemplified by pillar altars and by spiral decoration[16]) he was firmly of the view that the temples themselves were essentially the product of a Maltese neolithic tradition. As he wrote:[17]

> It is, I hope, abundantly clear from the foregoing sketch of their development that the Maltese temples and tombs were something indigenous, rooted in the beliefs and customs of the people whose religion they express, and they evolved

[12] Evans (2008), 15.
[13] Evans (1956d).
[14] Evans (1959). A volume on the West Mediterranean, contracted for the same series, was never completed. (Pers. comm. from Todd Whitelaw, 14 Aug. 2014, based on correspondence in the Evans archive at the Institute of Archaeology at UCL).
[15] Evans (1971).
[16] Evans (1959), 30; Evans (1971), 223–4.
[17] Evans (1959), 153.

> step by step with these. There seems no question of their having been introduced as a result of influence from other cultures.

This statement constitutes a major re-evaluation of all preceding work on the prehistory of Malta, and anticipates by more than a decade the critique of the diffusionism of Childe which followed the development of a radiocarbon chronology for the Mediterranean.

The more extensive excavations of John's successor David Trump at the neolithic 'temple' at Skorba in 1960 introduced two new phases to Evans's scheme (with some further modifications).[18] Yet they confirmed in its essentials the sequence which Evans had developed. Trump's work also produced a good series of radiocarbon determinations which, as elsewhere in Europe, lengthened chronologies considerably, setting the date for the early neolithic up to two millennia earlier than had previously been thought. Trump's important work in general confirmed much that Evans had written in 1959, so that the main points remained valid for the corpus of 1971. Evans did even now retain the view that the late 'temple' cultures overlapped with the Middle Minoan palace cultures.[19] The point was, however, resolved in 1972 in favour of Trump's completely non-diffusionist position by the application of the tree-ring calibration of radiocarbon to the Maltese data .[20] In general, however, Evans's clear view that the 'temples' of Malta had an essentially autochthonous origin has proved an enduring one.[21] As he put it, already in 1959:[22]

> In their remote islands, and in the service of their strange religion, these people produced architecture, sculpture, modelling and pottery whose aesthetic qualities we can still appreciate today.

III. Return to Cambridge, 1954–6

John Evans was awarded a Research Fellowship by Pembroke College in 1953, which supported him after his return from Malta while he wrote his

[18] D. H. Trump ,'Skorba, Malta and the Mediterranean', *Antiquity*, 35 (1961), 300–3; D. H. Trump, *Skorba* (Society of Antiquaries, Reports of the Research Committee 22: London, 1966).
[19] Evans (1971), 223–4.
[20] C. Renfrew, 'Malta and the calibrated radiocarbon chronology', *Antiquity*, 46 (1972), 141–4.
[21] See, for instance D. Cilia (ed.), 2004. *Malta before History, the World's Oldest Free-Standing Stone Architecture* (Sliema, Malta, 2004).
[22] Evans (1959), 30.

doctoral dissertation.[23] He was, as he later put it:[24] 'able to bring in Spain and Turkey in what I suppose would be looked on now as a rather diffusionist interpretation of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages . . . my attitude to this was that you could not link the ends of the Mediterranean and think of people over enormous areas, but if you started thinking in terms of 'culture creep', smaller movements, then there was a continuous link across the Mediterranean, and this was what I argued in my thesis and subsequently in my inaugural lecture in London'.

It was during this period in Cambridge in 1954 and 1955, after his sojourn in Malta, that he undertook some teaching in the Department, giving at the invitation of Grahame Clark (by now Disney Professor) a course of lectures in Mediterranean prehistory. It was here that he met his future wife Evelyn, who attended his course. Evelyn Sladdin had taken her examinations in Librarianship and had become a Librarian in Shrewsbury. She had obtained a scholarship as a mature student to Newnham. She had experience of Roman archaeology before coming up, having worked with Kathleen Kenyon near Shrewsbury, and wanted to continue. One of her Newnham friends with whom she shared accommodation later wrote:[25] 'Evelyn's budding romance with her supervisor awed us all: he was so brilliant, circumspect and exceedingly shy. We were enchanted.' John was a tall, slim, diffident man, initially a little shy, but soon lively in conversation. Unfailingly courteous, he never showed impatience, although he had a nervous blink which seemed to enhance his diffidence. With a pleasant, informal manner, he was well liked by his students and his colleagues. John and Evelyn were married in 1957, after she completed her degree.

John and Evelyn, when working in the field and studying the pottery from his excavations, did so as a team. They together made an intensive study of the pottery from his excavations at neolithic Knossos, and then later on the Saliagos excavations. They had no children. Their particular pleasure was to go on long walks together, which they would do after they acquired a country cottage at Great Bottom near Warminster in Wiltshire, and later, after John's retirement, at their home near Shaftesbury. His parents were practising Methodists, and soon after John and Evelyn married and moved to London the local Methodist preacher was asked to visit them with a view to enrolling them in the local congregation.[26] But they

[23] Evans (1956d).
[24] Evans (2009), 138.
[25] Pers. comm. from Judith Conway, 15 July 2011.
[26] Ibid.

were not going to be persuaded to join any religious organisation. Evelyn was a firm support in all his activities.

Before their wedding, the problem of employment prospects loomed:[27] 'the more mundane and practical matter of keeping afloat financially long enough to complete my research and get established in the profession'. John's efforts had so far been well rewarded with the Open Scholarship at Pembroke and the State Studentship following his First Class degree, and his two year's employment in Malta. The Research Fellowship at Pembroke had allowed him to complete his doctoral dissertation. But there was at that point no prospect of anything further, although he did excavate three bronze age barrows at Elms Farm Down, Wiltshire, for the Department of the Environment.[28] He began seriously to question if it was worth carrying on, and by his own account nearly gave up. He had entered the competition for the Foreign Service and was accepted. But Grahame Clark persuaded him otherwise, inviting him to dinner in Peterhouse, and then explaining that he himself had had difficulties at a comparable stage in his career.

It was Glyn Daniel who suggested to Evans that he might apply for the position of Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology in London, just vacated by the great prehistorian Gordon Childe. His initial reaction was 'I can't do that. This is ridiculous', for he had not yet held a position of university lecturer, simply a research fellowship. Glyn Daniel advised him to consult Grahame Clark, who encouraged his application.[29] Several other established archaeologists were also interviewed, including Richard Atkinson, Humphrey Case and Terence Powell, but all lacked overseas experience and John was elected to the Chair. He was 31.

IV. Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology, 1956–1973

During his seventeen years as Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology at the Institute, John was able to accomplish many things. Not least was the completion and publication in 1971 of his greatest work, the Malta corpus.[30] This and his book *Malta*, in the Ancient People and

[27] Evans (1981*b*), 234.
[28] Pers. comm. from Todd Whitelaw, 14 Aug. 2014.
[29] Evans (2009), 140.
[30] Evans (1971a).

Places series,[31] published in 1959, were his two principal hardback publications. They were soon followed by the reports on the excavations undertaken in his time as Professor at the Institute.

He began his tenure with his Inaugural Lecture,[32] which developed themes about the prehistory of the West Mediterranean, also set out in his doctoral dissertation, submitted in the same year.[33] It was delivered just two weeks after the Inaugural Lecture of W. F. ('Peter') Grimes, Gordon Childe's successor as Director at the Institute. Childe himself had by that time left the Institute on his final visit to Australia where, seeing no further goals in life to achieve after his retirement, he committed suicide. Evans worked with Grimes to establish an undergraduate degree course which was initiated in 1968: until that time the Institute had offered only diploma teaching as well as postgraduate study. Some further papers were published arising from his research in Malta.[34]

Taking on Childe's extensive lecture programme as Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology at a few months' notice kept him fully occupied. The following year saw the move of the Institute from its original base at St John's Lodge, Regent's Park to the new purpose-built accommodation in Gordon Square which is still its home. Shortly after the move had been completed, Sinclair Hood, who was then Director of the British School at Athens, invited him to take charge of the new excavation soundings into the neolithic levels at the great site of Knossos in Crete. Sir Arthur Evans with Duncan Mackenzie first encountered neolithic levels in deep soundings in their excavations there in 1900, but the Cretan neolithic was subsequently overshadowed by research in northern Greece, as well as the splendours of the bronze age Minoan culture of Crete. So John accepted – 'although perhaps I ought not to have done so, if I had considered the work still to be done on writing up the results of the Malta Survey'.[35]

Soundings below the Central Court at Knossos had been started by Hood during the 1957 season before Evans took charge. The first, small-scale excavation in 1958 produced building remains which merited preservation, so the next two seasons' work was confined to two squares which yielded stratigraphic deposits to a considerable depth. It proved very rewarding. Beneath levels containing pottery of a style which had long

[31] Evans (1959).
[32] Evans (1956*a*).
[33] Evans (1965*d*).
[34] Evans (1965*b*; 1965*c*; 1965*d*).
[35] Evans (2008), 16.

been known as 'Early Neolithic I' were deposits with walls of mud brick, completely devoid of potsherds. This aceramic layer, Level X, yielded a radiocarbon date of 6100±140 BC. This date, considerably older than expected, and backed up by subsequent radiocarbon analyses, established Knossos as one of the earliest neolithic settlements of Europe.

John Evans's two campaigns at Knossos set new standards in stratigraphical and contextual excavation, in the application of radiocarbon dating and in the recovery of bioarchaeological as well as artefactual remains.[36] The results were promptly published in a major article which remains a primary source for all later work on the Cretan neolithic.[37] Learning from his experience of Kathleen Kenyon's deep excavations at Jericho,[38] Evans published excellent stratigraphic sections as well as good plans. The greatest strength of the report was the detailed treatment of the pottery, undertaken with the collaboration of his wife Evelyn. The potsherds from each stratum were counted and weighed,[39] so that a detailed and standardised quantitative basis was available for the observations made, which were able to record specific traits (e.g. handle forms, or specific incised decoration) in terms of frequencies per 100 kilograms of pottery. The pottery of neolithic Knossos is without painted decoration and at first sight seems lacking in variety. Evans's study was able to go beyond that impression, establishing a new level of excellence, laying the basis for all later work on the neolithic of Crete. Part II of the report, published four years later,[40] offered specialist studies on the animal remains and other materials. Substantial samples of various materials were preserved for later study, and indeed were made available for study by Evans in recent years to interested specialists.

While preparing the reports on the 1957–60 excavations at Knossos he was invited to join Colin Renfrew, then a research student preparing a thesis on the Early Cycladic period, in excavating an apparently neolithic site on a tiny islet just off the coast of Antiparos. They worked together at Saliagos for two seasons, 1964 and 1965, and were able to demonstrate that it was indeed earlier than any other excavated site in the Cyclades and

[36] V. Isaakidou and P. D. Tomkins, 'Introduction: escaping the labyrinth', in V. Isaakidou and P. D. Tomkins (eds.) *Escaping the Labyrinth: the Cretan Neolithic in Context*, (Oxford, 2008), p. 1.
[37] Evans (1964).
[38] Pers. comm. from Judith Conway, 14 Aug. 2014.
[39] The methodology is discussed in Evans (1973*c*).
[40] P. M. Warren, M. N. Jarman, H. N. Jarman, N. Shackleton and J. D. Evans, 'Knossos Neolithic, Part II, summary and conclusions', *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 63 (1968), 267–76.

of great interest from many points of view.[41] As well as its striking pottery and the rich lithic industry, the site was of great interest because of its peculiar position. Underwater survey suggested that it must once have been well over twice its present size. Not surprisingly, fishing loomed large in the economy, and included an unexpectedly large amount of tunny. However no fish-hooks were found, but objects which may have been net-sinkers were present, and the numerous finely worked tanged-points may have been used to shoot or spear fish, since it seemed unlikely that so many would be needed for hunting, and there was no evidence of warfare.[42] The excavation at Saliagos was the first step in the recognition and documentation of the neolithic cultures of the Cycladic Islands.

Evans, again with Evelyn's collaboration, was responsible for the study of the pottery in the final publication.[43] As at Knossos, all the pottery was counted and weighed, so that a full picture could be presented in quantitative terms. The frequency of occurrence of significant traits was measured, both in relation to the total weight of pottery found in each stratum, and also, when possible, as a percentage of a group of related traits (e.g. percentage of everted bowl rims among all the bowl rims). These practical yet simple measures gave a secure quantitative basis to his ceramic studies. Such quantitative procedures have since been followed in many excavations of prehistoric sites in the Aegean.

With the Saliagos excavations concluded and the report completed, Evans could again think about further work at Knossos, and in 1969 he was able to start. The selected area was now in the northeast corner of the West Court, near the western facade of the Palace, and necessitated the removal of a large number of the Minoan paving stones. It was here that he undertook the main deep soundings. He also expanded the trenches beneath the Central Court to gain a better idea of the community plan in the later neolithic phases and undertook soundings also in peripheral areas, which revealed the extent of the aceramic deposits, which in places were up to two metres thick. Noting the elevation and slope of the natural level at the base of the sequence in his own and Arthur Evans' earlier tests around the Palace, his surveyor was able to make a contour plan showing the approximate topography of the site before habitation began and to plot the occurrence of the remains of each phase, yielding a rough idea of the growth of the early farming village through the four millennia of

[41] J. D. Evans and C. Renfrew, *Excavations at Saliagos near Antiparos* (London, 1968).
[42] Evans (2008), 18.
[43] Evans and Renfrew, *Excavations at Saliagos near Antiparos*, pp. 34–46.

neolithic occupation, an innovative study treating the site as a dynamic community, not just as a stratigraphic sequence of deposits. He also undertook more thorough recovery of seed and faunal remains, systematically using techniques of wet-sieving and flotation. The results were published in a preliminary report. John was very pleased in the years before his death that the recent revival of interest in the Cretan neolithic led to the re-examination and re-working of his excavation results and samples.[44]

V. Director of the Institute, 1973–1989

While his researches on the neolithic of Malta and at Knossos were his greatest academic contributions, many would argue that his work to develop the Institute of Archaeology in London was the more important achievement.

In March 1975 John began his inaugural lecture as Director with the following words:[45]

> An Inaugural Lecture is an academic 'rite de passage' which is normally reserved for those who have recently succeeded to a University Chair. The present occasion is anomalous in that I have had to resign from such a Chair at this Institute in order to take up my present post, in which I am firmly classified, for good or ill, as an administrator first and an academic afterwards.

Strangely, perhaps, he made no reference to his first inaugural lecture at the Institute nineteen years earlier, when he succeeded Childe as Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology.[46] Then he had lectured on the prehistory of the Western Mediterranean. This time his theme was 'Archaeology as education and profession' and he set out to 'take stock of the present academic and professional status of the subject', offering a careful examination of the status of archaeology in the educational system in the United Kingdom. He noted the 'curious reluctance to admit archaeology, or the findings of archaeology, to a place in the middle or even in some of the higher levels of our educational system', deploring its total absence in the curriculum for secondary education. It was to his role as Director that he now devoted most of his time and energies, and it can be argued that it was in large measure due to his efforts, following those of Grimes, that the Institute achieved its present status as the largest

[44] Isaakidou and Tomkins, *Escaping the Labyrinth*, pp. 1–10.
[45] Evans (1975), 1.
[46] Evans (1956a).

Department of Archaeology in Britain. But after he became Director he never wrote a major research paper again, other than a stimulating piece on island archaeology,[47] and his well-researched contribution on the history of archaeology to the Festschrift for Glyn Daniel, of which he was co-editor.[48] He did, however, keep closely in touch with developments in research.

As the quotation above from his Inaugural Lecture as Director shows, John knew the scale of the administrative burden which he was undertaking, and must have understood that this was likely to bring about the end for him of any major original and productive research, or new excavation projects. But it is clear that this was a price which he was willing to pay, in view of his commitment to the Institute and to its educational role. In their joint interview with Pamela Jane Smith in 2000, Evelyn observed, of the time before she won her scholarship to Newnham:[49] 'There wasn't at that stage any possibility of going to university.' John added: 'Really there was no way of getting to university. It was really the same for me. I was quite surprised to end up in university. We came from backgrounds where you didn't expect it. I belong to the first generation of my family to have more than an elementary education. Things have changed enormously in the course of this century.' It seems clear that he felt his work for the Institute was the most important thing which he could do.

When he succeeded Gordon Childe in 1956 as Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology, the Institute, as he later put it, was 'all chiefs and no Indians'.[50] There were no undergraduates, four professors and practically no lecturers. Those attending were awarded postgraduate diplomas or undertook research for their doctorates. During the late 1950s, the 1960s and early 1970s and under the leadership of the Director, Peter Grimes, supported by Evans, it was possible for the Institute to expand rapidly. Indeed the policy was to expand as much as possible. As he later recalled:[51]

> I felt this was a theme that ran right through my time at the Institute, because I felt first of all that it was important to establish archaeology as a profession... The appreciation of the immense length of human history that is only known from archaeology is something that you have to get across. So this was, I suppose, what I felt most strongly . . . you had to change the postgraduate

[47] Evans (1977).
[48] Evans (1981*a*).
[49] Evans (2009), 138.
[50] Evans (2009), 141.
[51] Evans (2009), 140.

> diploma at the Institute to a degree course. You had to have a degree course, and this took years.

It was necessary to create the infrastructure and to develop the Department by appointing more people at the junior level, as lecturers and assistants, with back-up staff and technical assistants and secretaries. The Institute admitted its first undergraduate in 1968 for the full-time BA course, with the inception of the B.Sc. in 1969, and the replacement of the former one-year diplomas by the MA and M.Sc. one-year degrees. The Faculty expanded steadily so that it soon became larger than that at Cambridge.

All of this made demands on John's time, and when he became Director in 1973, on the retirement of Grimes, it was certainly a full-time occupation. The 1970s were a difficult period economically, and when he became Director the Institute was at the beginning of cuts which became very severe after 1980. When he was invited to become Director in 1973, other Professors had declined, but he accepted the position:[52] 'I said yes because the Institute had been my life at that stage, and I had very strong ideas about the way the Institute should go. So I was prepared to do it, although I knew it was going to be difficult, academically.'

He worked hard to put the finances of the Institute on a sounder footing. With its large number of overseas students, particularly from Third World countries, student fees became an acute problem. Evans led the negotiations which brought about the change of status of the Institute from a small, independent entity (under the supervision of the University of London Senate), which it had been since its foundation in 1937,[53] to an institute within University College London (UCL), a much larger and more robust organisation. This transition took place in 1986, and rationalised also the positions of the Departments of Classical and Mediaeval Archaeology and of Egyptology, already within UCL, which now became part of the Institute also. As he put it:[54] 'I think it is very appropriate and a very good thing that the Institute was in a sense forced by circumstances to combine with University College.'

In 1974 he helped establish the Sussex Archaeological Field Unit, at a time when the Ancient Monuments Directorate of the Department of the Environment was setting up rescue archaeology units. Peter Drewett was the first Director, and the unit developed further, becoming the Institute's

[52] Evans (2009), 142.
[53] Evans (1987*b*).
[54] Evans (2009), 142.

Field Archaeology Unit, re-established in 2006 as the Centre for Applied Archaeology.

During the 1980s, and despite financial stringency, the Institute gained new lectureships in archaeobotany, ceramic technology, quantitative techniques and African archaeology, supplementing existing positions in South and Southeast Asian archaeology and Latin American archaeology. Evans also introduced postgraduate training in Museum Studies in 1986. So he oversaw much of the transition during which the Institute became the largest university department of archaeology in Britain with seventy academic staff. John Evans thus presided over the transformation of the Institute into one of the world's leading centres for teaching and research in archaeology.

During his time as Director he received a number of overseas distinctions (Member of the German Archaeological Institute in 1979; of the Institute Italiano di Preistoria in 1993) and received a doctorate *honoris causa* from the University of Lyon 2 in 1983.[55]

VI. Public work

Inevitably, as Director, John took on a number of public roles. London was the first port of call for visiting archaeological dignitaries from overseas. He found that meeting them and welcoming them to the Institute took up a considerable part of his time.

He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1973, following the publication of his major work on Malta. He was a member of Council from 1977 to 1980, and was Chair of its Archaeology Section (Section 10) from 1983 to 1987. He is remembered by Peter Brown,[56] then Secretary of the Academy, during day-long meetings when up to 80 or more applications for archaeological fieldwork were under consideration: 'He showed an admirable Olympian detachment in the face of special pleading. His calmness, when not all was calm around him, and his good sense and wise judgement stood out.'

He served as President of the Prehistoric Society from 1974 to 1978 and of the Council for British Archaeology from 1979 to 1982 and again from 1985 to 1992. He was Director of the Society of Antiquaries of London from 1975 to 1980 and 1983–4, and initiated the system whereby

[55] Entry: J. D. Evans, *Who's Who* (London, 2011).
[56] Pers. comm. from Peter Brown, 18 Aug. 2014.

the Director chaired the Publication Committee and the Research Committee. He played a key role in maintaining the momentum of research in some difficult years in the Society, and this commitment is reflected in a generous benefaction to the Society in his will. He served as President for the years 1984–7, overseeing major research, with large-scale work at Sutton Hoo. His three Anniversary Addresses give a clear account of the life and work of the Society over those years.[57]

He served as a Member of the Permanent Council of the International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (IUPPS) from 1975 to 1986, and was nominated President in 1981 at the tenth quinquennial Congress of the Union in Mexico City, when it was agreed that Britain would be the host for the next (eleventh) international meeting in 1986. The British Executive Committee, which he chaired, appointed Peter Ucko, then Professor of Archaeology at the University of Southampton, as its National Secretary and worked towards holding the 1986 meetings in Southampton with a final session in London. It was agreed that a major initiative would be undertaken to make this a more genuinely international meeting, to counter the bias towards European prehistory of previous IUPPS meetings, so that this would be in effect a World Archaeological Congress. A serious political problem arose, however, when Ucko reported to the National Executive Committee that the Students' Union in Southampton, supported by the local Association of University Teachers, wished to exclude from participation in the Congress all representatives from South Africa and Namibia, in view of South Africa's unacceptable national policy of apartheid. After much heart-searching and some controversy, the National Executive Committee agreed to adopt this anti-apartheid policy of exclusion. The decision was followed by widespread protests and by the resignation, as Vice-Presidents of the Congress, of such senior figures as Grahame Clark, Glyn Daniel and Stuart Piggott, who objected to the 'disinviting' of such respected colleagues as Professor Philip Tobias of the University of Witwatersrand, a widely recognised fighter against apartheid. A special meeting of the IUPPS Executive Committee was called, and took place in Paris. Ucko in his subsequent account of these affairs wrote of 'West European manipulation and Presidential timidity',[58] and was critical of the unsympathetic position taken by the Secretary-General of the IUPPS, Jacques Nanquin. The

[57] Evans (1985; 1986; 1987*a*).

[58] P. Ucko, *Academic Freedom and Apartheid: the Story of the World Archaeological Congress* (London, 1987), pp. 99–112.

outcome was that the Executive Committee of the IUPPS rejected the policy which had been adopted by the British Executive Committee, and refused to recognise the Southampton meeting as a meeting of the IUPPS Congress.

The following week, in consequence of that rejection, John Evans resigned from his Presidency of the IUPPS and from its International Executive Committee, noting that the decision in Paris had been taken 'in the absence of members from any country outside Western Europe and the United States'. He also indicated that he would resign from the National Executive Committee, saying: 'My acceptance of the ban on individual participants from South Africa was in order to save the IUPPS Congress, and if it is not to be that, I do not wish to continue.'[59] Much heart-searching followed, and at a meeting of the National Committee in London three weeks later a new organising committee was set up to allow the World Archaeological Congress to continue, now as an independent organisation and with Ucko still as its organising Secretary.

The first World Archaeological Congress (WAC) was indeed successfully held in Southampton in 1986, much as planned, with nearly a thousand participants and with strong Third World participation. The WAC has continued since then to hold successful international meetings on a four-year periodic basis. Meanwhile the IUPPS went on to hold its eleventh Congress the following year in Mainz, and has continued to hold its quinquennial Congresses, most of them in Europe.

John Evans had worked hard to find a middle way. He felt that to set up the anti-apartheid position, which all involved with the WAC shared, to stand in direct conflict with the principle of academic freedom was to create an unfortunate polarity. This he sought consistently to avoid. He clearly felt also that, having been invited by the IUPPS to organise its eleventh Congress, accepting thereby the Presidency of the IUPPS, it would not be appropriate for him to lead a breakaway organisation, even on rational and persuasive moral grounds. He certainly felt no sympathy for apartheid. By nature he was inclined to take a conciliatory role, in search of constructive compromise, and was deeply disappointed that this did not prove possible with the IUPPS. He did not attend the Southampton Congress,[60] nor did he reply to the personal criticisms of him made in Ucko's detailed account of the affair. But it was clear that he and Evelyn

[59] Letter from Evans to Ucko, 20 Jan. 1986, quoted in Ucko, *Academic Freedom and Apartheid*, p. 117.
[60] Ucko, *Academic Freedom and Apartheid*, p. 222.

felt that the episode had been very difficult. They were probably surprised when Peter Ucko was invited to follow John's successor, David Harris on his retirement in 1996, as the new Director of the Institute.[61]

Ucko's own lengthy account of the controversy had a mixed reception. In his review in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Andrew Sherratt reflected the view of many when he wrote:[62] 'The book is not, in fact, about academic freedom and apartheid (the moral arguments are assumed rather than examined): it is rather the story of a sad chapter in the recent history of archaeology which has done little good to the subject as a whole.'

VII. Retirement

John Evans retired from the Directorship of the Institute in 1989, to be succeeded by David R. Harris, and then in 1996 by Peter Ucko. He and Evelyn retired to Shaftesbury in Dorset. Evelyn's later years were clouded by Alzheimer's disease. She was assiduously cared for at home by John. She moved into a nursing home in Shaftesbury, two years before her death in 2009, where John visited her every day.

He continued to be active in the archaeological world in the early years of his retirement, participating, with Evelyn, in the Conference held at the Institute in 1992 to mark the centenary of the birth of Gordon Childe.[63] He remained until 1991 a Commissioner of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, to which he had been appointed in 1985. In 1988 he became Chair of the Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee (the predecessor of the Treasure Valuation Committee set up following the Treasure Act of 1996).[64] Its role was to provide independent valuations for ministers of items of Treasure Trove which individual museums wished to acquire. These valuations provided the basis for the compensation paid to finders of treasure when the traditional right of the Crown to acquire such treasure was exercised. He continued in this role until the Treasure

[61] Personal comment from Evelyn Evans to Colin Renfrew in 1996. Judith Conway has kindly added (pers. comm. 23 Aug. 2014): 'I did recall that Evelyn was upset at the time . . . John always seemed to see the best in people and be able to move on from things that upset him so he may have put that aspect of the whole business behind him, but I am inclined to agree with you that he must have been disapproving at the time.'

[62] A. Sherratt, 'Entrenched positions', *Times Literary Supplement*, Dec. 4–10, 1987, 155.

[63] D. R. Harris (ed.), *The Archaeology of V. Gordon Childe* (Chicago, IL, 1994), pp. vii and 141.

[64] Entry: J.D. Evans, *Who's Who* (London: 2011).

Valuation Committee was set up, under the chairmanship of Lord Stewartby following the passage of the 1996 Act. He was awarded an OBE on his retirement from the Committee. He also continued to act as an expert accompanying archaeological tours overseas,[65] making, for instance, several visits to Çatalhöyük in the later 1990s, keeping up with the progress of recent work in this way.

John's papers, donated to the Institute of Archaeology by Evelyn's family,[66] make clear that he was, until the time of his death, undertaking further work on the record of his later (1969–70) excavations at Knossos, systematising and computerising the archive. With the recent re-awakening of interest in the Cretan neolithic and in his excavations at Knossos, John was always willing to provide information about those excavations, and to make material available for study and further analysis. He participated in the tenth Sheffield Round Table on Aegean Prehistory, organised in honour of John and his Knossos excavations, in January 2006. He contributed an informative autobiographical memoir to the ensuing volume,[67] which was dedicated to him (as was a subsequent volume on the neolithic of Crete[68]). It was his last published paper. He was pleased that the site was still of interest and that the way he had collected the data meant that these were still useful and could be passed on to be utilised for further work.[69]

He died in Salisbury hospital on 4 July 2011, which he entered in the last week of his life, having been able until that time to live at home in Shaftesbury.

COLIN RENFREW
Fellow of the Academy

Note. This memoir has been written using the recollections of several of John's friends and colleagues (upon which I also drew when preparing some remarks for his funeral service at Salisbury on 22 July 2011), among them Peter Brown, Judith Conway (Evelyn Evans's niece), Paul Halstead, the late David Harris, John Lewis, Martin

[65] Pers. comm. from Todd Whitelaw, 14 Aug. 2014.
[66] Whitelaw (2012), Digging in the archives: re-discovering the excavations of John D. Evans.
[67] Evans (2009).
[68] E. Efstratiou, A. Karetsou and M. Ntinou (eds.), *The Neolithic Settlement at Knossos in Crete, New Evidence for the Early Occupation of Crete and the Aegean Islands* (Prehistory Monographs 42: Philadelphia, PA, 2013).
[69] Pers. comm. from Todd Whitelaw, 14 Aug. 2014, based on his conversation with John Evans at the Sheffield Round Table in January 2006.

Millett, John Nandris, Pamela Jane Smith, David Trump, and John Wilkes. It also relies on the transcript of the interview with John and Evelyn recorded at their house in Shaftesbury by Pamela Jane Smith on 17 August 2000 (Evans 2009). I am particularly grateful to Todd Whitelaw for his suggestions and additions. These were aided by his work on the Evans archive (see n. 5), donated by Evelyn's family to the Institute of Archaeology in London through the kindness of Judith Conway.

I first came to know John well personally when he was proposed by A. H. S. Megaw, then Director of the British School at Athens, as co-director for the planned excavations at Saliagos near Antiparos in 1964. The collaboration proved a great success, and he and Evelyn became good friends of my wife Jane and myself from that time forward. I was at that time a research student at Cambridge, while he was Professor of Prehistoric European Archaeology at the Institute. I had good cause to value and appreciate the openness and informality of our collaboration and of our friendship, then and subsequently.

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