



Sixth Annual Pitt Rivers Lecture: 2022

Excavation as Experiment: Prehistoric communities and monuments on the Fenland Ouse

By Christopher Evans (University of Cambridge)

Tuesday 25 October 2022

7:00pm (Displays and networking from 6:30pm)

This free public lecture will be delivered live in the Fusion Building, Talbot Campus, Bournemouth University BH12 5BB, and will also be available via Zoom.

For further details, registration, and updates please visit the Eventbrite page at:

<https://Sixthpitriverslecture.eventbrite.co.uk>

Informed by the subject's historiography, and arguing that our fieldwork needs to be imbued with a greater experimental ethos (i.e. 'failing better'), the talk will address a number of themes arising from over 40 years of investigation along the River Great Ouse at its junction with the Fens. Starting with the Haddenham Project of the 1980s – with its great causewayed enclosure and long barrow excavations – the early 1990s and beyond have seen development-led fieldwork at Barleycroft Farm/Over expose

ancient landscapes on a huge scale. Against a background of cross-landscape artefact and environmental sampling on a multitude of sites (tackled by wide-ranging methodologies) and the investigation of numerous monuments (including 16 barrows/ring-ditches, henges, and five long mortuary enclosures) the unprecedented scale of the work allows unique insights into prehistoric communities and their riverine land-use. The talk's key themes include the character of early pit cluster 'occupations' and the expression of distinct group identities at a local level; varying period-settlement floodplain distributions; the nature of 'ritual landscapes' and their relationship to contemporary settlement; and whether barrow cemeteries on mid-stream islands were central places or instead had territorial linkages to one of their adjacent bank-side landscapes.

Christopher Evans is Emeritus Director / Director of Research of the Cambridge Archaeological Unit at the University of Cambridge. Having worked in British Archaeology for over forty years, he co-founded the Cambridge Unit together with Ian Hodder in 1990. He has directed a wide variety of major fieldwork projects, both abroad (Nepal, China, & Cape Verde) and in the UK. A Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and a Fellow of the British Academy, he has published widely on the history of archaeology, and has written numerous reports covering his own landscape projects, such as *Fengate Revisited* (2009) and *Twice-crossed River* (2016), and those of earlier-era practitioners in the Unit's *Historiography and Fieldwork* series. Together with Tim Murray he edited *Histories of Archaeology: A Reader in the history of archaeology* (OUP 2008).

The lecture is presented by the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology in association with the Prehistoric Society

The annual **Pitt Rivers Lecture** was established in 2017 as part of the celebrations marking 50 years of archaeological and anthropological teaching and research at Bournemouth University and its predecessor institutions. It is organized by staff and students, and presented in association with the Prehistoric Society. The lecture celebrates the achievements of General Pitt Rivers (1827–1900), a distinguished Dorset-based archaeologist and anthropologist whose descendants still live in the area and have close connections with Bournemouth University.

Previous Pitt Rivers Lectures:

2017 - Richard Bradley (University of Reading) "Pitt Rivers as pioneer"

2018 - Alison Sheridan (National Museums Scotland) "Long before Brexit...."

2019 - Ruth Tringham (University of California, Berkeley, USA) "Fire: Friend or fiend?"

2020 - Chris Stringer (Natural History Museum) "The origins of our species"

2021 - Sue Hamilton (UCL Institute of Archaeology) "Rapa Nui: Myths and realities of an iconic past"

