

MINUTES FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND, 12TH JUNE 2025

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, 13th June 2024, having been previously published on the PEF website, were taken as read, and there being no corrections, the Chairman proposed that the AGM accept them as a true record. The motion being carried, a hard copy of those Minutes was signed by the current Acting Chairman, Daniel Reynolds, to be kept on file at the PEF office.

2. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND REPORT

The Acting Chairman of the Fund, Daniel (Dan) Reynolds, welcomed members to the AGM. Before moving on to his report he wished to highlight a few key points.

He noted his thanks to those people leaving the PEF, both Trustees and staff; the outgoing Chairman, John MacDermot, John Ritzema, Linda Hulin, and Ivona Lloyd-Jones. We also welcome Valentina Prunas, who has been shadowing Ivona for some time, and will take over from her as our administrator. Thanks also to Stephen Sutton and Zeina Klink-Hoppe for agreeing to stay on as Trustees, to continue their vital roles in developing the CBRL partnership and Open Doors Project respectively.

Dan Reynolds wanted to draw members' attention to the increasing ethical challenges which face organisations like the PEF working in the area, and to our commitment to maintain the PEF as a non-partisan and ethically responsible organisation, upholding the highest standards of academic rigour and integrity. The Board of Trustees would be looking to make our ethical policies and statements robust and fit for purpose to face the challenges which we will no doubt face in the future. We will also be looking to recruit a new person to our external ethical advisory board to replace Jonathan Tubb, who served in this capacity.

Our Honorary Treasurer, Amy Hitchcock, is due to retire in 2026, and so we are now actively looking for a replacement for this absolutely key strategic role. The individual must be familiar with accountancy and financial investment strategies.

On the subject of finances, he reminded members that, as reported here by the Honorary Treasurer, the subscription fee would increase from January 2026 to £46 for individual membership, but student membership would, for the time being, be frozen at £20.

Finally, he wished to draw attention to the highly successful Cultural Protection Fund grant project which the PEF had been running in 2024 and 2025 - "Developing Capacities in Marine Cultural Heritage Management and Protection". Our Grants Chairman, Jen Baird, mentions this project specifically in her report, but Dan Reynolds wished to highlight it as heralding a new role for the PEF as a much more active grant-capturing organisation and collaborator

Report

I think it is best to begin by way of introduction. My name is Daniel Reynolds, and I am Associate Professor of Byzantine History at the University of Birmingham. I am somewhat of a rarity within the PEF, in that my main area of specialism is in the (dare I say) ever-so slightly maligned period of 'Byzantine' Palaestina and the Provincia Arabia. 'Palestinian Byzantinists' are a small, but merry, bunch in the UK, but we do exist. Many of you will probably be more familiar with me from my work as Chair of Publications for the PEF Committee since 2023.

In January 2025, my predecessor, Prof. John MacDermot, made the difficult decision to step down from his role as Chairman of the PEF, having served since 3rd July 2023. Soon after, I was approached by Ray Bruce and Felicity Cobbing to act as temporary Chairman of the PEF, and I have subsequently agreed to stay on as Chairman until June 2030, subject to the agreement of the PEF membership. I want to begin, therefore, by expressing my most heartfelt thanks to John on behalf of myself, the Executive Committee, and the wider membership of the PEF, for his years of work and service to the Fund.

John's period of office at the PEF has overseen some drastic changes to our overall operation as a learned society, and a volatile international climate — finalising our move from Marylebone, the social and economic effects of COVID-19, the Russian occupation of Ukraine and, over the last year, Israel's occupation of Gaza. These events have all, in their own way, impacted on the work and function of the PEF in practical terms, and have had understandably, also had intellectual and ethical implications for our work. Nevertheless, the PEF is in a strong position to meet these challenges as a direct result of the strength and calmness of John's leadership, and his commitment to ensuring that the PEF remains true to its founding principles of openness, inclusivity and commitment to academic rigour of the highest international standards. I hope that members will join me in thanking John, and in expressing our best wishes for his future endeavours.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee for the trust that they have placed in me to take up the baton in John's stead. It is a tremendous honour and one that I take up in full awareness of the weight of legacy that it carries. Furthermore, I would like to say thank you to Felicity, Ava, Ivona, Valentina, and my other colleagues on the Executive Committee, for their work over the past year. The PEF's success owes everything to the time that they dedicate to ensuring the successful operation of the Fund and ensuring that it continues to remain a leading institution in the research and study of the region.

This year also sees the departure of several other Trustees and staff — Linda Hulin, John Ritzema and Ivona Lloyd-Jones — whose work has been invaluable to the PEF over the past few years. Ray Bruce will speak about their individual contributions in his own report, but I would like to take this opportunity, as Chairman, to thank them personally for their contributions to the Fund over many years.

The past year has seen many challenges for the PEF which have practical implications on our work domestically, as well as in the PEF's geographical areas of research interest. As you will read in the Treasurer's report by Amy Hitchcock, the volatility of the international economy, has impacted on the financial investments and assets of the PEF and, while we remain in a robust position, it is important that we remain ever vigilant. One of our responses to this challenge, is that we are exploring alternative funding avenues (such as grants and donations), so that we can continue our vital work in archiving, cataloguing and conserving our collections. Uncertainty within the international market has, invariably, also impacted upon our membership, as people 'tighten their belts' in response to inflation and rising living costs. Membership rates of the PEF have, as a result, stalled over the past year. The PEF Executive Committee is fully aware of the importance of meeting this challenge, by adapting to the changing needs of our members, and the PEF's increasingly diverse membership body. The Honorary Secretary's report by Ray Bruce details how our new 'Open Doors' project is developing strategies which will allow us to engage new audiences, but also ensure that our legacy of rigorous academic research and resource is effectively promoted to domestic and international audiences. As ever, I welcome any ideas and suggestions from PEF members about initiatives and ideas that they would like to see implemented to improve members' experience.

It is also important that our existing work with our archives and collections, spearheaded by Felicity Cobbing, continues in tandem with this important new venture. As you will see in the following reports, we are proposing the creation of a new Executive Committee Member who will oversee the strategy for our collections and assist the PEF in grant capture to make our archives fully accessible and compliant with national guidelines. I would also like to thank Charlotte Whiting, whose work as Editor of the PEQ, continues to ensure that the PEF's long-established arm of academic and public engagement, the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, remains an important platform for the publication and dissemination of international research. This year saw the publication of our 157th issue and the awarding of several prizes to early career scholars whose work has made highly original contributions to their respective fields.

The publication of research within Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and Jordan is one of many areas of the PEF's work which continues to present us with ongoing ethical challenges and necessitates that we remain vigilant regarding our own position as a learned society to the use and 'misuse' of research and data. The events of the past year in the Gaza Strip, which have seen an unprecedented loss of human life and destruction of heritage, requires very little introduction. It has been accompanied, however, by other controversial academic events in East Jerusalem and Samaria (as-Samira/Shomron), all in breach of international law, which have also necessitated a response from the PEF. I want to use this opportunity to reaffirm the PEF's position as a non-partisan learned society, which is

committed to upholding international law relating to historical/archaeological research, heritage management and land ownership.

Nevertheless, recent events in the USA, and other areas of the globe, are also seeing radical and rapid shifts to the post-WW2 international consensus and legal frameworks which have remained in place for most of our adult lives. While the PEF is in no position to influence or mitigate the effects of these changes, we are committed to ensuring that we maintain the highest ethical standards in the work that we undertake, and that of other scholars which we facilitate, publish and platform as a learned society. We continue to review our ethical policies annually and are also exploring ways that we ensure that our research and resources are used by others in a way which is fully compliant with international law.

For all the challenges that these developments have presented to the PEF, they continue to show the importance and value of the work we undertake as a society, both within the UK and further afield. In this regard, I am delighted to announce that our CPF grant has been rolled over for another year. This vital grant has ensured that 22 Palestinian scholars have received professional training in marine archaeology, which will assist them as they develop their careers in the field.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation of you, as members. Your continued support of the PEF, intellectually, socially and economically, lies at the heart of our success. I wish you all the very best for the year ahead.

Daniel Reynolds

3. HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

John MacDermot

Last January, we received that sad news the John decided to vacate the role of PEF Chairman due to personal reasons. The good news is that he will continue the important archival research in the office.

During his time in office the PEF has faced many challenges. John's leadership during these times has been nothing short of exemplary, providing calm yet tenacious guidance. He has been utterly committed to doing what is best for the PEF. I was not around when the whole move to Greenwich happened, from planning to opening the doors of the new building. It is clear that John was the driving force during the change. As Chairman, he has left his mark in so many ways. I have not known him very long, but with charm and humour, he has served as my tutor during my ongoing and challenging apprenticeship as Hon. Sec. It is good to know John will still be around.

Appointment of Daniel Reynolds as Acting Chairman – to be ratified.

Given John's resignation and in conversations with staff and trustees to identify a suitable candidate as Acting Chairman from within existing board members, I am pleased to announce that, with the approval of the board, Dan Reynolds has agreed to be Acting Chairman. We will be asking you to ratify his appointment at the AGM in June. Like many people, I have been impressed with Dan's enthusiasm, commitment, humour and knowledge which he brings to the PEF. Since joining, as recently as 2022, he has been very active in the grants sub-committee, serving as chair of publications and involved in the important issue of the database. As Senior Lecturer at Birmingham University, where he directs the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, he undertakes teaching, research and administrative duties. His academic credentials and prodigious output cover a range of topics including work on the history and archaeology relating to the Middle East. I believe we are very fortunate to have a new Chairman with the skills, knowledge, and the personality to lead and support the PEF in its future ambitions. Dan's C.V. can be viewed by appointment.

Other Board members leaving us.

We are also very sorry to lose Linda Hulin from the Board of Trustees. She resigned on the 13th March 2025. John Ritzema, who joined the Board in 2020, will also be leaving at this AGM. We thank both of them for the invaluable contribution they have made to the PEF.

Fortunately, two existing board members with key roles have agreed to stay for another term, and we are seeking ratification for their re-election at this AGM. Stephen Sutton has been and continues to be very closely involved in the evolving relationship between the PEF and CBRL, with particular reference to the jointly held BSAJ archives, so

his continued presence on the board is vital at this time. The same can be said of Zeina Klinke-Hoppe, who has been an essential team member of the PEF's decolonising subcommittee, and now also on the Open Doors project. The continued input of both of these Board members ensures their expertise and dedication is retained at this critical time when continuity amidst change is so important.

Ivona Lloyd-Jones

As many of you know, Ivona has been caring for her husband Malcolm for some time, who sadly passed away recently. Ivona has decided to leave the PEF. She will be sorely missed, and we wish her all the best and happier times ahead.

I have only known Ivona for a short time but have always been impressed with her warmth, friendliness, her immense experience and knowledge, in dealing with PEF administration which she freely shares. Given her challenging personal circumstances, Ivona still made time to help with current administration issues. Ivona has been at the heart of the PEF, managing its financial and administrative affairs since her appointment as Executive Secretary as long ago as 1991. I understand that Ivona transformed the financial and administrative management of the PEF into the well-oiled machine it is today.

Staff Reviews

These were all carried out in September/October with the exception of Ivona due to her challenging personal circumstances. I very much appreciated that part of the review discussions related to looking to a positive future in the light of an Open Doors strategy.

Staff Activities

In the last 18 months, Ivona has been handing over the financial and administrative affairs to Valentina Prunas, who will succeed her in that role. Valentina is a very welcome addition to the PEF team and our future administrative concerns are safe in her hands.

Felicity and Ava have been working together on the full range of PEF activities. Ava has been focussing on the management of the PEF's collections, coordinating the volunteers, and developing the museum accreditation process. Felicity has been overseeing these activities, including the CPF grant (more below), the database project, running our lecture programme, liaising with our auditors, insurance brokers and assisting with publications. Both are playing an important part in the ongoing Open Doors project.

Elisabeth is now employed full-time at the British Museum on a catalogue project, and as a curator on a forthcoming special exhibition on animal mummies. Congratulations are in order for the position of an exhibition curator so early in her career. She continues as our librarian and reviews editor. However, some changes are anticipated in the future regarding how this workload is managed.

Penny Butler has been our copy editor on the annuals for many years. She is currently working through the last stages of the Turkowski publication project, shortly to be delivered to our publishers. When these volumes have been completed, the role will transfer to Dr Rebecca Darley, Associate Professor in Global History, University of Leeds.

Sam Ashdown continues to promote the PEF's activities on our social media platforms, which now also includes BlueSky @palexfund.bsky.social

Library

Regarding Jonathan's bequest, we are liaising with Dr Mahmoud Hawari and his colleagues at the University of Bethlehem to arrange the transfer of a number of his books to the University. Hopefully, a number of books from Peter Parr's collections can be added to this donation as well. In general, the library continues to grow, and there is a focus on expanding its holdings with titles concerned with ethics in archaeology and cultural heritage. There is also a focus on identifying and caring for the rare books in our collection. We are always grateful for donations, which help us make the most of our limited budget to expand our library's holdings.

Lectures

Many events were held at the PEF's premises in 2024 and 2025. Where possible, these talks are available to view at your leisure on

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQUegUpcDcO AQN7ou8qto4A>

2024

3rd July 2024: Reclaiming the Road Not Taken: Indigenous Knowledge versus Classical Perceptions at Beth-Zur

Laura Mazow, East Carolina University.

26th September, Special Open Day Event:

Stories from my Grandmother's House: A Virtual Reality Tour through Time, Space, and Memory.

Mado Kelleyan, Royal College of Art

24th October: Jointly with the Kitchener Scholar's Association:

Lord Kitchener and the Survey of Western Palestine

Felicity Cobbing, PEF, and Charles Bryant, Kitchener Scholars Association.

28th November: The Practical Mariner: sailors and fishermen in the eastern Mediterranean in the Late Bronze Age.

Linda Hulin, University of Oxford

5th December 2024: Looking West: Assyria in the Levant in the Times of Adad-nerari III.

John MacGinnis, University of Cambridge.

2025

16th January: Talk & Book Launch – PEF Annual XIX: Final Report of the Excavations on the Hill of the Ophel, Jerusalem, by R.A.S. Macalister & Rev. J. Garrow Duncan, 1923-1925

Garth Gilmour, University of Stellenbosch.

20th February: Mormons in the Holy Land: Pilgrimage, Exploration and Adventure in 19th Century Palestine.

Matthew Grey, Brigham Young University.

13th March: Talk & Book Launch: The Dead Sea: A 10,000 Year History

Nir Arielli, University of Leeds.

27th March: Flying High - 100 Years of Discovery and Recording Destruction from the Air in the Middle East.

Robert Bewley, Aerial Archaeology in the Middle East Project

24th April: Material Afterlives - The Hijaz Railway in the Post-Ottoman Landscape

Nikolaus Cox, University of Bonn.

15th May: The Beth-Zatha Vase and the Gospel of St. John: Memories of Pagan Jerusalem

Nathanael Vette, King's College London.

22nd May 2025: Lessons Learned? Loss, Looting, and Landscape at an Early Bronze Age Site, Jordan.

Morag M. Kersel, DePaul University.

Group visits.

As well as our regular lecture series, and making our collections accessible, the PEF welcomes larger groups of visitors by appointment for guided tours, and special events.

19th June 2024 - Sion College

1st October 2024 - Royal College of Art, Architecture MA group.

20th February 2025 - Brigham Young University Student Group

4th April 2025 - Digital Archives Working Seminar Group

Collections

The PEF's collections, archives and library continue to be accessed by numerous researchers, from people looking to learn more about their own heritage, to academics with extremely wide-ranging and specific research enquiries. Our staff take great pride in making the collections as accessible as possible, assisting our visitors not only by making the material available but by suggesting possible new avenues of enquiry when this is relevant. This is only possible because of the depth and breadth of staff knowledge and experience.

We are looking to redesign the database project, and put in a funding bid in to achieve this. The archives, maps, plans, photographs and watercolours from the various surveys, undertaken by the PEF have been selected as the material most suitable for a coherent funding project. This is a total of 10,000 items.

The 'Provenancing' Project has been a significant undertaking over the last few years – to attempt to reunite those items in our archaeological collections which had come adrift from their associated records.

The project was actually begun by John Matthers, the PEF's Honorary Secretary in the 1970s, but ceased due to his premature and tragic death. Since then, the records he had been compiling existed in different areas of the old premises in 2 Hinde Mews. It was only with the move to Greenwich and new, much improved storage, that the records could be pulled together, and this project restarted in earnest. It has involved both Ava and Felicity, and numerous volunteers, to first compile and rationalise the records, and then to look through the 1,532 unprovenanced objects to see if they could, with the help of these records and any relevant publications, be identified. This part of the project has taken about a year, and as you will appreciate, is very labour intensive. 108 artefacts have been securely identified. A brief second trawl through will now be undertaken. Whilst 108 seems like a relatively small number of successful identifications for such a labour-intensive process, this project is about our ability to be honest and clear about what our collections consist of and where they come from. The unidentified objects include items which were most likely donations, for which the information has been lost, as well as items which undoubtedly come from PEF excavations, but because of their ubiquitous nature (they include jar handles and pottery sherds), it is impossible to identify which excavation they came from without clear records.

Museums Accreditation

This involved and complex process continues to evolve. We are looking for your approval to amend the PEF Articles of Association so that the document properly protects the collections, archives and library in a manner which is acceptable to the Museums Accreditation Scheme. We are looking for someone to be our Accreditation Mentor, to help us move to the final stages before applying for accreditation. This person must be someone with museum experience, and preferably someone who has been through the process themselves.

Conservation audit

A preliminary conservation survey was carried out to assess the suitability of the PEF's storage arrangements at its Greenwich premises. Overall, things were very satisfactory, with only some small adjustments recommended, particularly for the metals and some of the photographic items. We have been working to put these in place.

CBRL MOU

Following long negotiations between the two societies, an MOU has been signed pertaining to the future management of the archive of the British School of Archaeology at Jerusalem which is held in London at the PEF, in Jerusalem at the Kenyon Institute and in Amman at the CBRL Institute there. The aim is to make this jointly held and owned archive available to researchers in the most efficient and accessible way. With the MOU signed, talks between the PEF and CBRL are now taking place to thrash out how this might be achieved.

Volunteers

- Matthew Foster (Birkbeck University) – Map cleaning, Belmont Archive rehousing and sorting.
- Bianca Eugenia (La Sapienza University) - Eyres Photo Archive cataloguing and scanning, Matthers-Project part 2
- Geoff Cosson – Matthers project part 2.
- Erroll Youngerman (Goldsmiths University) - Matthers project part 2.
- Sam Ashdown (UCL) - social media Officer.
- Georgios Gkatzoflias (Birkbeck) – Library.
- Martine Maugué (University of Cambridge) - July to September, BSAJ Lantern Slides
- Rachel Yi (UCL) - BSAJ Lantern Slides.
- Oscar Slater (Goldsmiths University) - Wikicommons Scanning, other database and scanning projects as required.
- Nikolaus Cox (University of Bonn) - Eyres Photo Archive and Transjordan photos
- John Sellars (UNC) – Bethlehem books, newspaper cuttings and metals rehousing.
- Atta Wongsuchat (UCL) - BSAJ Lantern Slides digitisation and PEF YouTube video editing.
- Richard Hills - PEF YouTube video editing.

- John MacDermot - PEF Office Archive.
- Penny Butler – PEF Annuals Copyediting.

Open Doors Project

Following on from last year's AGM, this project has developed at apace. Tasked by the Trustees to develop the Open Doors Project, to research outside companies that could work with us on a branding exercise and work on a website, we are fortunate in having two trustees, Richard Hills and Nikki Elvin, both working in marketing and communications. Their knowledge and experience continue to be invaluable.

Trustees approved the project internally funded by the PEF. After extensive research it became clear that given the current financial climate, external funding would be difficult and nearly impossible. I produced a document for trustees on the challenges of external funding given the intended use of the funds. Funders like donating to actual projects with mission intent, creating an impact and making a difference. Money for branding and website work does not fit the bill. They should already be in place as tools to go looking for funding.

Meetings were held in-house with staff and colleagues exploring the impact of an Open Doors project internally as we look more to the general public for new audiences and opportunities. We have a wonderful building, but do we have the capacity in terms of staffing? These and other questions continue to figure large in our discussions

After an extensive search, Richard found a company, Ark, that could undertake both branding and producing a new website at a very competitive price. A budget was approved. Before meeting Ark, it was felt that we trade information so as to prepare for a first meeting together and make good use of time when we do first meet. For our part, we put together information about the PEF drawing upon articles that Felicity and others have produced. We developed a questionnaire for Trustees seeking their views and opinions about the PEF and its Open Doors plan. Ark said this exercise was of particular value in terms of understanding the PEF, both past and present. For their part, the Ark team of Mike Skipper and Neil Wright were able to frame questions and ideas for us to consider prior to our meeting.

The meeting on the 9th April, with a home team of myself, Dan, Richard, Ava, Felicity and Zeina was a success. We focused on the PEF, who we are, the challenges we face and how branding will support and direct our Open Doors ambition. The Ark Duo listened attentively and interrogated us judiciously with questions very pertinent to what needs to be done.

The Ark team has just delivered Mike has sent over a comprehensive first draft 13-page document 'Brand direction and next steps' which the home team is currently studying and discussing. So, it continues....

Ray Bruce

4. HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

The PEF has seen another financially challenging year, with continuing increased costs against overall stagnant levels of core income meaning that the PEF has continued to make an overall deficit before investment gains. The deficit has however, decreased from £26k in 2023 to £16k in 2024 showing some progress on the hard work of the team to improve PEF's finances.

For the first time in two years investment income, being the bulk of the PEF's core income, did rise as predicted by 2%. Although this is a positive news this increase was still overall lower than the level of rising costs.

The team has worked hard to continue to lower costs and bring in new streams of income. In the year a card machine has been purchased which means card donations and payments can be made, it is hoped this will be a way to facilitate more income in the future, particularly at talks and events.

The overseas project funded from the grant received in 2024 from the Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) ended in early 2025. The team worked very hard to keep the project running smoothly with various changes needed due to the sad events that transpired in Gaza. Overall, the project was a great success, and ran to budget, with some core

staff and overheads being covered by the project helping to ease some of the financial hardships in the year. It is hoped that this is the start of the PEF being able to undergo similar projects in the future.

There were some unexpected and unbudgeted emergency costs in the year- replacing a shattered window at the offices in Greenwich- unfortunately this was not covered by insurance so was a cost that the PEF had to cover.

Looking forward there are plans to start the Open Doors project which will cause some one-off expenditure in 2025. It is hoped that this project will be a way to facilitate more income in the future with the new branding and website being able to be shared to prospective funders. PEF is looking to fund some of these costs from donations which the Trustees are currently in the process of reaching out to potential donors.

Investment managers have predicted a welcome increase of 2% in investment income in 2025. However, it should be noted that this was predicted before the various tariffs put in place by the USA which has caused markets to fluctuate. It is believed the investment managers have put mitigations in place to protect the levels of return but they have not yet confirmed if the 2% increase will still be possible.

After a review of the membership fees Trustees have agreed that there will be a slight increase in price in 2026. Full membership fees will increase from £40 to £46 a year but the student fee will remain at £20 a year. Fees have remained the same for many years and as PEF struggle to exist within its existing income it is hoped that this slight increase will help ease some financial strains in 2026.

Overall PEF's finances are in a strong position in that we are not expecting to have to draw down from the money held in investments in the foreseeable future. The team continues to work hard to try and reduce the current deficit and it is hoped that current spending will be a way to facilitate future gains.

A special thanks from me to Felicity, Ivona, Valentina, Ava, Elisabeth and John for their hard work and efforts to ensure that the PEF finances are controlled, sensible and well monitored.

Amy Hitchcock.

5. HONORARY EDITOR OF THE *PEQ* REPORT

PEQ was published by Taylor and Francis in 2024/5 with Charlotte Whiting as Editor and Adam Fraser and Claire Ruben as Assistant Editors. Elisabeth Sawerthal was the Reviews Editor. Adam Fraser resigned from his role in February 2025. Each of the issues of *PEQ* 156 in June, September and December 2024 and *PEQ* 157 in March 2025 were published online and in print as scheduled.

Seventeen articles of high quality and wide interest were published in *PEQ* issues 156.2-4 in 2024 and 157.1 in 2024, as well as four book reviews and four acknowledgements of books received by the PEF library with the help of the Reviews Editor. Two grant reports outlining research conducted by PEF's grant recipients were also included. Short notices, including an overview of the The Memory of History Project by Loay Abu Alsaud and Mahmoud Mustafa in Notes and News, and obituaries for Professor Alan Millard (1937-2024) by Bruce Routledge and Charlotte Whiting, and for Barbara Lee Johnson (1943–2022) by Ron Tappy, Sherry Whetstone and Samuel R. Wolff, were also published.

PEQ achieved 27,169 downloads in 2024, which compared to 2021's downloads (23,657), shows a continued growth in readership numbers over the past 4 years. The number of articles submitted remained stable, with most coming from the US, Israel and the United Kingdom.

In terms of citation metrics, *PEQ* received a 1.4 Citescore (Scopus) - up from 1.1 in the previous year and 0.8 before that – as well as an Impact Factor of 0.6, placing it in the top 100 of journals in the archaeology subject category.

Regarding alternative metrics, *PEQ* was mentioned 227 times in 2024 (as opposed to 69 times in 2023), including 162 times on X, Wikipedia, and BlueSky, 61 news mentions and 4 blog mentions.

Charlotte Whiting

6. HONORARY CHAIR OF PUBLICATIONS REPORT

New Chair of Publications

I will be stepping down from my role as Chair of Publications in the next few months, as I prepare to assume my role as Chairman. Prof. Joan Taylor has kindly agreed to take over as Chair of Publications for the new academic year 2025/6.

New publisher arrangements

Felicity and I have expressed our dissatisfaction with our current arrangements with T&F. Earlier this year, we met with a representative from Edinburgh University Press to discuss the possibility of negotiating that they assume responsibility for the publication of the *Annals* series. At present, we are tied to our contract with T&F for another two years, but we anticipate that we will give formal notice to them 18 months in advance and negotiate.

Turkowski volume

The Turkowski volume is in its final stages and the final editorial comments are being addressed by Carol Palmer. At present, we are hoping that the volume will be published before the end of 2025.

Rothschild volume

This is still in preparation but has been delayed due to personal reasons. I have sent provisional comments on an early draft of the work to Walter Rothschild, so that the manuscript conforms to our in-house style and standards.

Nagareh volume

I have sent comments and suggestions to Ghassan Nagareh on his draft chapters, so that the manuscript conforms to our in-house style and standards. The work has been delayed by other commitments, but I will follow up with the author before handing over the role to Joan Taylor.

Daniel Reynolds

7. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE GRANTS SUBCOMMITTEE

General Matters and Membership

Jen Baird continued as chair. The committee is made up of Dan Reynolds, John Ritzema, Zeina Klink-Hoppe, as well as Ava Clark and Felicity Cobbing.

PEF Grants

The budget remains reduced this year at £6,000 due to the financial situation in the UK. Consequently, some difficult choices have been made to maximise the benefit of the PEF grants. The level of competition increased this year, and we received 11 applications, of which 10 were eligible. Decisions were made on the basis of our published criteria.

The total awarded in 2024 was £6,000:

- Yasmin Fedda, Queen Mary University London: To make things grow: agriculture, orphans and history in Palestine. £2,000.
- Alexander Wasse, Yeditepe Uni Istanbul, Desert Air Routes Project. £1,836.
- Anne Caldwell, University of Leeds, Decolonising the Institution: A Workshop on the Role of Storytelling and Technology in Public History. £1,865.36

Grants will reopen in December 2025.

2025 PEF/Albright Institute Fellowship

Last year's awardee was unfortunately unable to take up her fellowship due to the continuing conflict. We had suspended the fellowship for 2024 due to budget constraints, but as this funding was already allocated, we have

decided to re-advertise this fellowship. It was thus awarded to Lisa Randisi, University College London, for her project on *Archaeological Ephemera in Historic Collections from Palestine and Israel*.

Routledge/Philip Davies Award

This award, which is funded by our publishers T&F (Routledge) was established to honour the contribution to scholarship and scholarly publication of our Chairman, Philip R. Davies, who died suddenly in 2018. The award in its current format has had very slow uptake in recent years, because of the wait time between submission and publication in PEQ. A new model has been agreed with T&F that early career scholars who wish their submissions to PEQ to be considered for this award, should indicate so at the time their article is submitted to the journal. This way, we will be encouraging early career scholars in a more productive and efficient way. The grants committee has collaborated with the PEQ editor on a workflow, and the first Davies award was decided by the committee to be for Quinn Daniels for their article 'The Meşad Ḥashavyahu Ostrakon in its Regional Economic, and Political Context'. The first runner up was Erin Hall for their article 'Agency, Kinship and the Case of the Northern Kingdom of Israel', and the second runner up was Abra Spichiarich for their article 'Strategies of Animal Exploitation in the Late Iron Age IIA Horvat Tevet (the Jezreel Valley) Reveal Patterns of Royal Economy in the Early Monarchic Israel'.

Cultural Protection Fund application

In 2023, the PEF applied for and was awarded a grant of £73,852 for its project "Developing Capacities in Marine Cultural Heritage Management and Protection". The Developing Capacities in Marine Cultural Heritage Management and Protection project (DCMCH forthwith) focused on the protection of endangered Marine Cultural Heritage (MCH: submerged sites, monuments and objects) in Gaza and Libya through capacity building in recording and management of underwater heritage.

The project's conception stemmed from previous collaborative work conducted by the MarEA project in conjunction with the Department of Antiquities (DoA) and the University of Benghazi, the Islamic University of Gaza, and the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). The in-country partners identified a gap in capacity among their staff regarding underwater recording methods and techniques, which are essential for monitoring and protecting significant and highly vulnerable MCH.

The project was directed by Dr. Georgia Andreou (MarEA project, University of Southampton) and Dr. Julia Nikolaus (MarEA project, Ulster University), hosted by the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) under the direction of Felicity Cobbing, Chief Executive & Curator and funded by the Cultural Protection Fund (CPF). They collaborated with local partner institutions (CMAUCH, Alexandria; University of Benghazi, DoA Libya, MoTA Palestine,) to implement a program of training and education in maritime cultural heritage theory, methodology, and protection aimed at Libyan, Gazan, and Palestinian heritage professionals and students of Archaeology, through dive training in Egypt, and field training on marine sites in both Libya and Gaza.

This was an area of expertise that the archaeological partners in Gaza and Libya recognised as being lacking in their current skill-set, and this project was designed to begin addressing this situation. The need for this was recognised as being especially urgent given the fragility of many of these coastal and marine sites, and their vulnerability to risk factors ranging from climate change to unchecked development and to war damage.

With the Israeli war on Gaza following Hamas' attack in October 2023 the project had to be redesigned, and was conducted from April 2024 to February 2025. Its focus was on capacity building in maritime recording and management. The project was structured into five primary phases: (1) In-person training in underwater recording and management techniques in Hurgada, Egypt of 6 Libyan and 3 Palestinian heritage professionals and students; (2) In-country mini projects to apply and consolidate skills in Libya (3) Development of online training materials; (4) In-country media training in Gaza; and (5) In-person training to obtain professional dive qualifications (PADI/SSI) in Libya and Egypt.

The funding also went to providing mobile phone and internet access to the participating students in Gaza so they could access the online materials. The students in Gaza connected via WhatsApp so that it was certain that everyone was able to access the online material. Plans have been approved for the establishment of a marine heritage training centre in Libya, which would diversify the options for training to students from the region. Libya's coastline shares

similarities with that of Gaza, and the visa requirements for Palestinian students are less difficult than those for Egypt. In total, there were 6 Libyan participants, and 22 Palestinian participants, 4 of whom were in person, and the remaining via the online provision. The PEF has applied to and been awarded a rollover grant of £45,000 to extend the project into 2025, and the development of the Libyan facilities will be the focus of this year's grant project.

Jen Baird

8. ELECTION OF NIR ARIELLI, LEILA SANSOUR, AND DIMA SROUJI AS ORDINARY BOARD MEMBERS, TO SERVE FROM 2025 TO 2030
RATIFICATION OF CO-OPTION OF STEPHEN SUTTON AND ZEINA KLINK-HOPPE TO EXTEND THEIR MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR ANOTHER TERM, AND TO SERVE AS ORDINARY BOARD MEMBERS FROM 2025 TO 2030
RATIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT DANIEL REYNOLDS AS CHAIRMAN, TO SERVE FROM 2025 TO 2030

Ray Bruce announced the results of the postal ballot for the above elections. The elections and appointments were **Approved**. Dan Reynolds welcomed the new members to the Board, and thanked Stephen Sutton and Zeina Klink-Hoppe for staying on the Board, and the membership for approving his appointment as Chairman.

9. APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2024
Ray Bruce reported that there had also been approval in the returned postal ballots for the 2024 Report and Accounts.
Dan Reynolds referred the members to the Annual Report and Accounts for 2024, copies of which had been sent by email to the membership in advance of the meeting. This document was also available for consultation in the PEF office.
The members present **Approved** the Report and Accounts for 2024.

10. APPROVAL OF AMMENDMENTS TO ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION TO ALIGN THE PEF WITH THE
REQUIRMENTS FOR MUSEUMS ACCREDITATION
Ray Bruce reported that the submitted postal ballots for this proposal showed approval for this measure. The members present **Approved** the motion. The PEF's Article of Association would be edited to reflect this change and the new document would be posted on the PEF's website.

11. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR JUNE 2025 – JUNE 2026.
Ray Bruce reported the results of the postal ballot which were in favour of reappointing our Auditors, Hartley Fowler Llp for the forthcoming year.
Dan Reynolds proposed the appointment of Messrs Hartley Fowler as Auditors for the year June 2025 – June 2026. The proposal was **Approved** by the membership.

12. SUBSCRIBERS' QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
No questions had been submitted in writing prior to the AGM.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Dan Reynolds asked if any of the members present had questions they wished to raise.
Hugh Williamson raised the issue of the PEF's ethical position, and asked if there was alignment with other similar British institutions.
Dan Reynolds answered that this was an excellent point. A more united voice would have a greater impact than if we remained isolated. With our close relationship with CBRL, this was of absolute importance, especially with regard to the permissions and uses of the joint BSAJ archive, and this would be something we would work with our CBRL colleagues on. Our own protocols regarding the use of the PEF material would be reappraised to make them more rigorous and consistent.

He thanked the PEF Officers and all Board members for their essential input during the course of the year. He also thanked the PEF staff, particularly Felicity Cobbing, for her excellent work in the preparation of the paperwork for the AGM.

John MacDermot thanked the Chairman, Honorary Secretary, and Board of Trustees, for their kind words following his stepping down earlier in the year.

14. DATE OF THE NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The membership would be informed of the date of the next Annual General Meeting when it was known.

Daniel Reynolds