SOCIETY FOR EAST ASIA ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE 2025
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN HOSTING PROPOSAL

The University of Aberdeen is one of the ancient universities of Britain, having been founded in the 15th century and now having more than 14,000 students. The University of Aberdeen's connections to Asia include biology and traditional medicine in the Himalayas, international law, the anthropology in Siberia, teaching Mandarin, and archaeology. The department of archaeology has included an Asian archaeology lectureship since 2016. Other faculty also carry out research in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. In the past faculty have worked in Siberia and Hokkaido. The city and region of Aberdeen have historical industrial connections with Asia ranging back into the 19th century and being central to global shipping and the industrialization of Japan.

The archaeology program is built around 8 full time faculty and has approximately 75 undergraduate and master's students and 15 PhD students studying a range of subjects. The departments specialties include human paleoecology, osteoarchaeology, biomolecular archaeology, the Iron Age, community archaeology and heritage policy with research foci in Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia, Eastern Scotland, Paleolithic Europe and more. The department recently hosted the UK Archaeology Science Meetings, a 150 attendee 3 day event.

Following the SEAA tradition this proposal is for a 5 days event including a mid-conference trip to visit archaeological sites around Aberdeenshire. The conference will include a supported hybrid capability to integrate off-site attendees. Conference days will include 3-4 concurrent venues with an opening and closing reception, coffee breaks and lunches. The opening reception could be a 'civic reception' supported by the City of Aberdeen and taking place in an interesting venue in the city.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

The conference will be organised by Joshua Wright and include academic colleagues from archaeology (Crozier, Oliver, Noble, and others) and post-doctoral fellows as well as faculty from other departments in the university. We will also approach curators from the National Museum of Scotland and the Aberdeen University museums to take part as well as, and if

appropriate, colleagues from other Scottish universities (Sterling, St Andrew, Glasgow etc.). This group will be supposed by Aberdeen University Conference Services throughout the process.

VENUE AND FACILITIES

The exact venue for the conference is not yet clear. The first choice is the Kings College Conference Centre on the Old Aberdeen campus housed in the historic quadrangle of King's College. The main hall in the KCCC seats 140, expandable to 190 with the use of the balcony over the main floor. Smaller lecture theaters in the King's College Quadrangle (KCG7 & 8) can contain 150 people. However, the rooms and buildings next to the KCCC are planned for renovations in 2024-early 2025. If they are unavailable there are other venues on the Old Aberdeen campus with the facilities to support the conference. The best among these is the Fraser Noble Sciences building, which features three lecture theaters connected by a lobby and atrium with a capacity of 349, 183 and 205 respectively. The largest lecture hall on the Old Aberdeen campus, the William Guild Arts Lecture Theater, seats 600. Finally, as an off-campus option there is the 'P&J Live' event and conference center near Aberdeen Airport, which can support small and large events in its various conference spaces.

On the old Aberdeen campus, refreshments can be served close to the lecture halls in the common lobbies of adjoining rooms. As well as incorporating sheltered locations outside, weather permitting, or using scenic spaces such as the upper level of the Sir Duncan Rice Library— this room has sweeping views over the north sea and the shoreline. Also the large oak beamed Elphinstone Hall can be used for poster sessions and refreshments.

POSTERS

A poster venue will be available for much of the conference in any of the possible settings. This can be used for coffee breaks and a scheduled poster session can be staged to increase the visibility of posters. In the past SEAA has not featured many posters, but in the future more might by desirable.

HYBRID

The UOA is currently changing hybrid event platforms so we cannot be sure what will be available in 2025. The aim for the conference is to have synchronous online deliver integrated into regular talk sessions with live Q&A as well as online viewable posters and meeting sites. IT support for online is part of conference services venue package. Sessions chairs would not need to manage any of this. This system worked well at the UKAS meetings this year.

MID-CONFERENCE TRIP

There are many historical and archaeological sites within 1 hour drive of Aberdeen. These include stone circles, Iron Age hillforts and settlements, carved Pictish stele, early medieval hillforts, castle ruins, religious sites, and historical planned villages, fortresses, great houses and industrial heritage. The proposal includes a day long bus trip for all attendees to visit 4-5 sites guided by local archaeologists.

POST-CONFERENCE EVENTS

Post conference travel options can include visits to the 'Heart of Bronze Age Orkney' World Heritage Site, the newly re-opened Burrell Collection in Glasgow with a notable collection of Asian antiquities and art, the National Museum of Scotland with one of the largest collections of oracle bones outside of Asia, as well as other more leisure focused trips around Scotland. These could include whiskey, golf, hiking, gardens, castles and the like.

COSTS AND LOGISTICS

Aberdeen University Conference Services office will support the bid with staffing, logistics, sponsorship arrangements and budget management. Their estimation is that the conference cost around £60,000-£74,000 to carry off with most of that cost being venue rental and catering.

To meet these costs the AUCS recommends raising the cost of the full participant conference fee to £220 (with variation for students, day-of, and remote attendance) in order to meet the vast majority of the costs from attendance fees alone. This is substantially more than is traditionally charged for the SEAA meetings (c.£120). The actual cost to attendees will depend on fundraising before the event. 300 attendees at £120 would leave £38000 required from other sources. We will seek out funding and sponsorship from both within the university (School of Geosciences, Principle of the University and University Development Trust) and outwith the university from sponsors, the British Academy — which regularly funds academic conferences in the UK, and other public and private funders. A conservative estimate suggests that these approaches produce c. £20,000 from these sources. At that amount, individual costs would be £180. A better fundraising outcome could make £120 attendance easily obtainable.

DATES

We are proposing a meeting in mid to late August of 2025, before the European Association of Archaeology Meetings.

TRANSPORTATION

Aberdeen is connected by train and road to the rest of the UK the journey from London by train 7 hours, one of the longest possible journeys in the UK! And featuring the last remaining sleeper train, the Caledonian Sleeper. The International Airport has regular flights several times a day from Amsterdam, Copenhagen, London, Manchester and Dublin, all about 1-1.5 hours away.

ACCOMODATION

The city of Aberdeen has 6800 hotels rooms spanning a wide range of types. There is no pressure on available accommodations.