

## Introduction to ‘A celebration of Prof Rick Battarbee’s contributions to paleolimnology’

Jonathan A. Holmes · Viv Jones ·  
Anson W. Mackay · Neil L. Rose

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This volume is a collection of fourteen papers brought together to celebrate the many and varied contributions of Rick Battarbee to the discipline of paleolimnology. Rick recently retired from his full-time post as Professor of Environmental Change at University College London (UCL), where he was also the founding Director of the world-renowned Environmental Change Research Centre (ECRC). However, he remains extremely active in research and research leadership within the field of paleolimnology, and retains a close working relationship with the International Paleolimnology Association, of which he is immediate past president, and with this journal. This volume, which brings together a diverse array of paleolimnological research, is a tribute to one of the discipline’s leading lights.

The opening paper to the volume, by John Birks and John Smol, provides an overview of Rick’s scientific career, from his undergraduate days at UCL and his postgraduate research at the University of Ulster to his return to UCL where he has spent the majority of his academic career, interspersed with sojourns in Sweden, Finland and the USA. Although primarily a diatomist, Rick has been a champion of multiple-

indicator approaches to environmental reconstruction and has used, often as part of multi-investigator studies, a wide range of physical, chemical and paleobotanical indicators in his work. He has, moreover, tackled a broad spectrum of scientific issues ranging from new methods of quantifying diatoms to questions related to climate change and to surface-water acidification, across a range of timescales from very recent through to orbital. Birks and Smol also highlight Rick’s role as an inspirational academic, pioneering paleolimnological approaches around the world, in addition to his direct contribution to the science. As a reflection of Rick’s international influence, an annual lecture series has been instigated at UCL in order to show-case key paleoenvironmental themes. A version of the inaugural lecture, which was presented in May 2012 by John Dearing, is included in this volume.

The papers in this volume reflect the breadth of Rick’s work, tackling a range of problems from across the globe. The authorship is truly international, coming from 13 countries spread across four continents. Closer to home, the contributors and editors include 12 of Rick’s current or former UCL colleagues and students as well as Frank Oldfield, his own PhD supervisor. The editors are extremely grateful to their colleagues in ECRC at UCL for support and to the reviewers who have helped in the careful evaluation of the papers within this special issue, namely John Anderson, Subir Banerjee, Phil Barker, Helen Bennion, Christian Bigler, Jan Bloemendal, Laurence

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J. A. Holmes (✉) · V. Jones · A. W. Mackay ·  
N. L. Rose  
Environmental Change Research Centre, Department  
of Geography, University College London, Gower Street,  
London WC1E 6BT, UK  
e-mail: j.holmes@ucl.ac.uk

Carvalho, Chris Caseldine, Frank Chambers, Dan Conley, Brian Cumming, Ian Foster, Irene Gregory-Eaves, David Jewson, Andrea Lami, Pierre Legendre, Anson Mackay, Jim Marshall, Suzanne McGowan,

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