

LECTURE SUBJECTS
OUR SPECIAL INTEREST DAY (SID)
THURSDAY 4th NOVEMBER 2021

THE ROYAL GAME OF UR

A beautiful game board (2600 BC), a beautiful set of ancient rules (177 BC) and a world encompassing narrative. The hunt for clues has led the speaker halfway across the world in pursuit of this, the most successful board game of antiquity that survived for three thousand years until backgammon was invented. On top of that, the game survived, unnoticed, in south-west India until modern times. The result is a board game that we could play in the company of Tutankhamun and that can compete with any popular two-person race game on the market today.

THE ARK BEFORE NOAH

The interesting process of writing both a best seller for adults and an illustrated version for children. Much to ruminate on and laugh about. This talk will also explain how the adult book came to exist, and the experience of being propelled from a quiet museum desk by means of a pressurized book contract to a film set in India and the march of the book festival. And, by the way, how to write on an academic subject for all readers.

TABLETS OF CLAY

Drawings on the inhospitable medium of clay survive in rare examples on tablets from ancient Mesopotamia. They exhibit the most extraordinary level of uninhibited draughtsmanship and require to be considered within the history of master drawing at large. This talk will consider what is to be learned from the earliest pictographs and these drawings and reflects on why the native skill at drawing with which human beings are born atrophies so rapidly in children today.

THE WONDER OF CUNEIFORM & WHAT TO DO WITH IT

A practical, light-hearted but thoroughly effective one-hour workshop which demonstrates how ancient cuneiform writing functioned and how the signs can be used to spell and write contemporary English today as well as long-dead Babylonian. Participants will be furnished with all they will need in the way of crib-sheet, stylus and clay.