



Neolithic Studies Group day conference, Monday 3 November 2025: Kinship in Neolithic Europe

British Museum @ The Knowledge Quarter & Impact Hub London, at Regent's Place, London <https://london.impacthub.net/event-space-in-london-euston/>

Kinship has long been considered by both anthropologists and archaeologists to be at the heart of what makes many societies tick. Long anthropological debate over the years has produced shifting definitions of what kinship is and does; currently there is an emphasis on more fluid conceptions than previously (for example in the 'mutuality of being' of Marshall Sahlins) and on practice rather than rigid rules. Recent aDNA analyses have brought kinship to the fore in Neolithic studies, with the now proven ability of geneticists to detect close biological relationships in given mortuary contexts, but the wider literature warns us that kinship is not and should not be defined solely by biological relatedness. So what is it, how did it operate through time in the past, and how can we investigate it with archaeological evidence?

Our 2025 programme addresses these and other challenges through a series of archaeological case studies at different scales across Neolithic Europe, ranging from Greece and central Europe to Britain and Ireland. Presentations will include studies involving aDNA investigations of biological relatedness and isotopic analyses relating to mobility and diet, as well as considering other approaches to kinship through analysis of settlement evidence, monumental architecture, mortuary practice, and material culture.

The organisers also invite proposals for posters at the day conference in London and chapters to join the volume that is planned to follow the meeting. If you would like to contribute a poster and chapter, please email a title and abstract (max 300 words) to chris.fowler@ncl.ac.uk by May 23rd 2025.

Organisers: Chris Fowler, Josh Pollard, and Alasdair Whittle

Provisional programme

10am: Doors open; registration, coffee, posters

1030-1035: Kenny Brophy/Seren Griffiths: *Welcome and introduction*

10.35–10.45: Josh Pollard and Alasdair Whittle: *Approaches to kinship*

10.45–11.10: Stella Souvatzi: *Kinship and household in the Neolithic on both sides of the Aegean*

11.10–11.35: Penny Bickle: *Changes in kinship during the sixth and fifth millennium in central Europe*

11.35–11.50: Short break, posters

- 11.50–12.15: John Robb, Jess Thompson and Ancestors project team: *Kinship and social differentiation in fifth to third millennium BC Italy*
- 12.15–12:40: Maïte Rivollat: *Kinship and funerary practices in Neolithic France*
- 12.40–13.00: *Discussion*
- 13.00–13.45: Lunch, posters (Delegates to make their own arrangements)
- 13.45–14:10: Volker Heyd: *Kinship questions for Yamnaya and Corded Ware communities*
- 14.10–14.35: Lara Cassidy *New results from Ireland*
- 14.35–15.00: Vicki Cummings, Chris Fowler, Inigo Olalde, David Reich and team: *Kinship dynamics in fourth millennium northern Scotland*
- 15.00–15.25: Coffee, tea and posters
- 15.25–15.50: Sophy Charlton and Alistair Pike: *Kinship and mobility at mid to late fourth millennium Banbury Lane*
- 15.50–16.15: Tom Booth: *New results for the Middle and Late Neolithic in Britain*
- 16.15–16.40: Julian Thomas: *Kinship as strategic and emergent*
- 16.40–16.55: *Discussion*, chaired by Chris Fowler
- 16.55: Wrap-up
- 17.00: END