

# EDITORIAL

## Archaeology and the International Year of Glass 2022

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This edition of *The Archaeologist* is themed around archaeology and glass in celebration of the International Year of Glass.

The International Year of Glass began as a debate on the use by historians of the terms Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. Had there ever been a time when glass was dominant? Could it be now? The concept of a 'Glass Age' resulted in the International Commission on Glass (ICG) submitting a proposal to the United Nations to name 2022 'The Year of Glass'. The UN general assembly agreed and, on 18 May 2021, the International Year of Glass 2022 (IYOG22) became a reality.

The Year recognises that glass has accompanied humankind for millennia, enriching the quality of life of millions, and that, as one of the most important,

versatile and transformative materials of history, glass is an important component in so many areas: aerospace and the automotive sector, architecture, the arts, information and communications technology, energy, health care, laboratory ware, optics, packaging and storage.

The application for IYOG22 was predicated around the UN 2030 Humanitarian Goals. While underlining the current technological, scientific, economic, environmental, historical and artistic role of glass, it will emphasise the rich possibilities the future holds, the potential to meet the challenges of sustainable development and inclusive societies, to achieve world economic recovery and build back better after the Covid-19 pandemic. It will weave together the threads of technology, social history, archaeology and art through educational programmes and museum exhibitions.



### International Year of Glass coordinating structure

To manage this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity a structure has been developed to include input from around the world and across all sectors that have glass as a component part.

Its council has 61 members representing 90 countries and is a forum for discussion, developing activities, creating events and agreeing IYOG22 policy. Sharing, dissemination and coordination is facilitated through the events list on the IYOG website: [www.iyog2022.org](http://www.iyog2022.org). The Council is briefed on progress and opportunities across the regions and specialist groups.

The IYOG Executive Committee, selected from Council, has ten members and is responsible for promoting IYOG22, disseminating and promoting the best ideas, developing major international events and ensuring that the IYOG22 resolutions are achieved.

To ensure local participation, 18 regional groups are developing and supporting programmes relevant to their locality. For

example, the UK and Ireland are covered by region 12 and chaired by Professor John Parker (Sheffield University).

Specialists' groups have been developed for: Museums/Archaeology, Outreach to younger communities, and Education. Teresa Medici (ICOM Glass) chairs the Museums group that includes archaeology. These important groups within the IYOG structure will coordinate activities across the world, promoting the most promising ideas and encouraging cross-fertilisation across boundaries.

### Museums, Arts & History (Archaeology) of Glass Group

The IYOG22 goals of raising awareness and directing attention to the value of glass in daily life could not have been achieved without highlighting its role in archaeology, art and culture. Thanks to many institutions, associations and individuals, hundreds of seminars, exhibitions and educational activities focusing on glass history and glass art are being planned across the globe by archaeologists, museum curators, artists, professionals from the public and private sectors, and academia. To reinforce this network, a working group called

'Museums, Arts & History of Glass' (MA&H) has been established, open to representatives from the 18 regional groups; ICOM Glass (the International Committee for Museums and Collections of glass); and the Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre (AIHV), the International Association for the History of Glass.

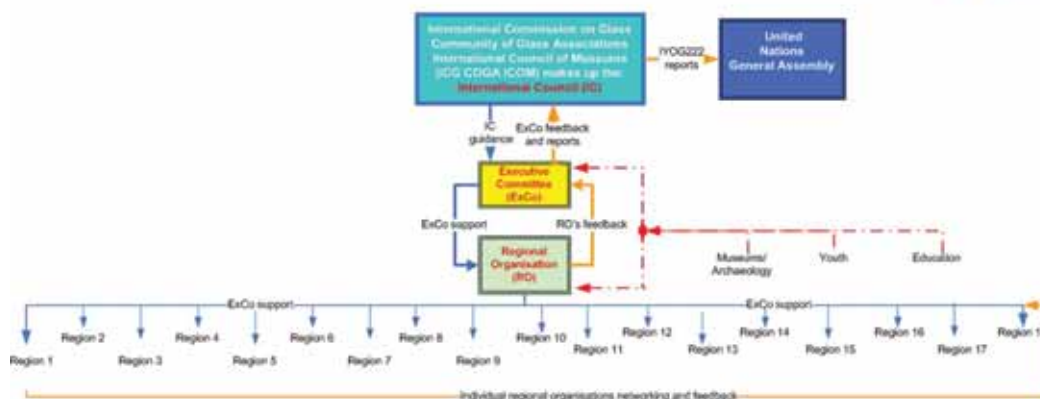
The MA&H Group meets monthly, normally online, to ensure coordination and collaboration, provide tools and share best practices, not excluding the possibility of working on trans-national projects. Among the proposals under consideration are a 'Virtual Museum of Glass' and an international contest 'Seven Glass Wonders of the World'.

The chair of the MA&H group, Teresa Medici, has a background in archaeology and is aware that it is an invaluable source of information about the production, use and trade of glass objects, not only in ancient times but also in the recent past. Celebrating the IYOG22 is a unique opportunity to improve understanding and enhance the relevance of archaeological glass finds among the community of the professionals.

*Four highly decorated glass beakers, part of the collection of grave goods found in a princely Anglo-Saxon burial chamber at Prittlewell, Essex, in 2003. Credit: Andy Chopping/MOLA*



### International Year of Glass 2022 structure



Bohemian glass from an archaeological excavation in Japan. A paper about it is published in the issue 9 of the magazine of ICOM Glass, soon available at <https://glass.mini.icom.museum/our-publications/journal/>. Photo by R. Kandori © Kota town Board of Education (source R. Kandori, The story of a wedding glass beaker, *Reviews on Glass* 9, 2021).

#### Region 12: UK and Ireland

Members of the region 12 group meet monthly on Teams; region 12 has three representatives on the International IYOG Council, with others on the MA&H, Outreach and newly formed Educational Groups. Our region is well represented on the IYOG events website, particularly by artists, historians and glass collectors; recycling, sustainability and carbon footprint are also major themes. Events are the responsibility of local task groups – the Regional Committee offers coordination, information dissemination and mutual support. Funding is limited, mostly from sponsorship by larger glass makers.

Archaeology is represented. One recent event concerned archaeological finds near Chester. A very active team is bringing to life an ancient and neglected monument between Rotherham and Sheffield,

reputedly the oldest glasshouse cone in Europe (early 1700s). They have targeted schools with events such as a laser light show and a Hallowe'en fright night but are also searching archives to consolidate the stories around the cone. The team has spoken on local radio and contacted the press, advertising the IYOG. A prestigious competition planned for younger people will encourage them to investigate the story of the Portland Vase. Other notable events include the opening of a new glass museum in Stourbridge, a small garden at the Chelsea Flower Show and a conference on the birth of UK and Irish drinking glasses. The website ([www.iyog2022.org](http://www.iyog2022.org)) has a searchable list and is growing daily.

We look forward to archaeologists, museum staff, historians and all ClfA members joining us for this notable event to promote glass in all its various historical settings.

For further information contact:



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