



Kick-Off Symposium Commemorative Lecture

# “Towards an Archaeology of Human Diversity”

2026

April 12th

SUN

13:15 - 15:30

(Doors open 13:00)

Admission Free

## Chris Gosden

Emeritus Professor/ University of Oxford



Professor Chris Gosden is a member of Hokkaido University Global Research Unit for Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity (GRID). A member of the British Academy and a trustee of the British Museum, he is an internationally renowned scholar specialising in archaeological theory, particularly material culture studies and the archaeology of colonialism.

### Lecture Abstract

Older narratives of human history, especially common in the middle twentieth century, emphasised a single path for human history, in which societies moved from band to tribe to chiefdom to state. Each of these was seen as more hierarchical than the previous and more politically developed. The term ‘civilization’ was reserved for state forms. Built into this scheme was a notion of progress and of superiority, later forms were more advanced than earlier ones, with the further implication that some groups were left behind in the movement of human history. It was also seen that the invention of farming and later of the city were crucial in the march of progress. Many archaeologists and historians are now doubtful of such a scheme, but we have not fully developed counter ideas to help us understand very long-term history in a new way. I will argue that humans are philosophical beings as much as we are practical ones, so that an important driver of history is the attempt to understand the world in which we live and act as political animals. Forms of subsistence, such as farming do not change history themselves, but are rather driven by our attempts to build philosophical and political societies that make sense in their local context. This leads to diversity, which should be valued for its own sake and understood historically. We can then move away from a single progressive view of human history to one more accepting of the idea that people are different.

#### Registration

Follow the link below or use the QR code for registration.

<https://forms.gle/gtLPptbH3k1rB2138>


#### Organizer Contact

Global Research Unit for Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity (GRID)

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#### Language

English with simultaneous Japanese translations

#### venue

2F Auditorium, Conference Hall, Hokkaido University

