In this illustrated lecture Professor Magee will speak on the themes of his latest book *The Archaeology of Prehistoric Arabia* (Cambridge, 2013). He argues that the Arabian peninsula was characterized by a social formation that not only differed from that in nearby states but actively resisted attempts by foreign powers to control and manipulate local societies. He suggests that this social formation was first characterized by the North African historian and sociologist, Ibn Khaldun, in the 14th century AD as *assabiya*, or ‘social cohesion’. The detection of this form of ancient society has been obfuscated by the relationship between European colonialism and the practice of archaeology as well as the desire on the part of Western archaeologists to research recognizable forms of ‘complexity’.

Peter Magee is Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology at Bryn Mawr College. He obtained his PhD from the University of Sydney in 1996 and has excavated across the Middle East and South Asia. Since 1994, he has directed the excavations at Muweilah (UAE) and since 2009 the excavations at Tell Abraq (UAE). He is the author of *Excavations at Tepe Yahya IV: The Iron Age settlement* (Harvard University Press, 2005); *The Archaeology of Prehistoric Arabia. Social Formation and Adaptation from the Neolithic to the Iron Age* (Cambridge University Press, *in press*); and numerous articles and book chapters on the archaeology of Arabia, Iran and South Asia.