

# Archaeological Archives Forum Minutes

## Annual Meeting (28<sup>th</sup> Meeting)

National Museum Cardiff

10:30-16:30, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Caradoc Peters (University Archaeology UK), Claire Tsang (Historic England), Duncan Brown (Historic England), Elizabeth Walker (Museum Wales/National Panel for Wales), Ian Fraser (RCHMS Collections), Sarah Morton (ICON/AG), Nicky Scott (SMA), Quinton Carroll (Chair) (ALGAO), Helen Parslow (FAME), Louisa Matthews (ADS), Nancy Grace (National Trust), Sam Paul (ClfA)

### **Apologies**

Scott Furlong (Arts Council), Sinead McCartan (National Museums: Northern Ireland), Matt Thompson (English Heritage)

### **Minutes of last meeting**

There was discussion on museums not accepting archaeological archives of negative results and the issue had expanded to a museum not accepting archive which had no material. It remained agreed that is an issue.

The website is now up to date: <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/archives/>

Page 4: Sam Paul is the new ClfA representative and was welcomed to the forum.

### **News Updates**

#### *National Trust*

There are two current major projects; an audit of what archives the NT holds across the charity, including the development of single database to hold the data, and development of new stores at properties.

#### *Fame*

The fame position statement on archaeological archives has been released:  
<http://www.famearchaeology.co.uk/2016/06/fame-position-statement-on-archaeological-archives/>

Fame are also in the process of finalising guidance to members as to the content of sections within WSIs relating to archiving; specifically to limit their liability in the event that owners cannot be located or where there are no depositories to take the archive.

Fame's main point of attack is still the need for the planning system and planning conditions to be transparent and up front so that the requirement for an applicant to take responsibility for transfer

of title from the owner to a repository is clear and linked to discharge of the condition. FAME advocates the three part condition approach as this makes it much clearer, and it should also be raised at pre-app advice stage. ALGAO agree with this approach, but change to the standard preferred wording for conditions has to follow formal review apparently.

Consultants are urged to raise the issue with clients at an early stage in the process as well. The Transfer of Title issue is complex, but we have been told that a generic document exists called spectrum

([http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/media/documents/c1/a938a/f6/566\\_acquisition\\_factsheet\\_02.pdf](http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/media/documents/c1/a938a/f6/566_acquisition_factsheet_02.pdf), <http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/shop/forms-registers/item/2026-transfer-of-title-forms>).

However this doesn't seem to solve our problem of dealing with the matter as commercial archaeological organizations.

## Wales

A national guidance document is in the final stages of development. It will be structured as six individual papers

1. Framework
2. Standards
3. Guidance
4. List of Museums
5. Deposition with Royal Commission
6. Bibliography

This has been submitted to CADW and the Historic Environment Group and is now awaiting confirmation of acceptance.

The next stage for the national panel is making recommendations for the future. They have a web presence of the Historic Environment Website and are currently investigating options for a collecting areas map, linking to the SMA site. They have also been undertaking digital data training days and are investigating box charges for Wales.

There is currently a government led feasibility study into the merger of CADW and the Museum of Wales, this has mainly focused on commercial activity and was undertaken by Price Waterhouse Cooper with no consultation of the involved organisations.

## *CIfA*

The CIfA Archives Group are investigating the creation a toolkit for selections strategies based on the Wessex template.

This year's AGM sessions are now available online:

<http://www.archaeologists.net/dayconferencepresentations2016>. Next year's session will be entitled 'relevance of archives'

In the wider CfA world there has been a lot of work ensuring access to work sites for archaeologists, pending changes to the Construction Related Occupation card scheme.

<http://www.famearchaeology.co.uk/2016/10/cscs-cards-for-archaeologists-a-joint-statement-from-cifa-and-fame/>

### *Historic England*

Historic England is currently commissioning three projects:

1. The SMA Survey
2. Scoping studies for rationalisation of local authority archaeology collections (this is funding up to 5 audits are different museums, to report back on how collections can be rationalised and feed into a main report which will lead to the development of guidance. 14 museums have applied)
3. Gathering Information on deep storage archive facilities in England, being undertaken by Claire Tsang.

The group that created the Arches European Archaeological Archives standard has now been disbanded and reformed under the title 'Archaeological Archives Europe', the group is now producing guidance on selection.

### *Historic Environment Scotland*

They are now one year in after the merger and there have been initial structural changes; there are five directorates:

1. Corporate Services
2. Commercial and Tourism
3. Conservation
4. Heritage
5. Finance and Performance

There are possibilities for restructuring below this.

In other news the skills for the future project has come to an end. Scotland are also making headway with digital archiving and are looking for archive accreditation by the end of the next financial year. They are also undertaking an IT review.

### *SMA*

SMA have been very focussed on the first year of a three year museums survey assessing, amongst other things, the current capacity of museums to receive new archaeological archives and also how many staff with archaeological expertise are working in the collecting museums

So far there have been approximately 200 responses, some of which amalgamate several museums or repositories, so the actual number represented is nearer 230 and covers all major areas in south West, and urban areas such as Leeds, Newcastle, Liverpool, Derby and lots of smaller museums in the South East.

Preliminary findings indicate the main reason for closure to new archives is lack of space e.g. in South East this is the given reason for approx. 77% of respondents. Other reasons include shortage of funds, staff or staff expertise but is not due to a change in governance or collecting policy.

A lot of museums said yes to the question as to whether they collected digital data archives however there is a concern by the project team that this question, especially assuming it means providing ongoing support needed by digital data, is not always clearly understood by those collecting. One outcome of the survey maybe to assess the training needs of museum staff relating to maintaining digital data.

At least half the museums responding have deposition guidelines and were willing to share them.

Typically, only about half the respondents had archaeological expertise which would be comparable to AIFA competence matrix for museum archaeologists. There is up to a 25% staffing decrease in some regions since the 2012 Edwards survey and where staff numbers have increased these sometimes include volunteer staffing or curators in dual roles so that the actual time spent with the archaeological collections has decreased.

A summary report to the findings will be given at the forthcoming SMA conference on 3-4 November in The Hive Worcester. The information is being used to inform the DCMS survey report response from SMA.

Other reports of interest to SMA are;

The Seeing the Light of Day project looking at alternative storage solutions for archaeological archives in SW. A tender for a consultant to carry out the project is currently underway.

Historic England museum collection rationalisation project.

The AGM conference is on 'A World of Archaeology: from Local to Global' and will take place at The Hive, Worcester; Thursday 3rd – Friday 4th November.

### *University Archaeology UK*

The survey, similar the SMA, has developed been and is ready to be sent out.

The AQA exam board has recently cut archaeology from its A level program. This was the only remaining archaeology A level and creates a problem for archaeology as it removes a route in. This comes at a difficult time in archaeology: HE has just released a report on (lack of) capacity in the sector for future large infrastructure projects: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/national-infrastructure-development-and-capacity-2015-33-assessment/>

## *ICON*

ICON are currently updating their action plan. Their last plan ran from 2012-2016.

## *ADS*

ADS easy has been updated and there have been training sessions and trails. The BIAB is now held by the ADS. Radiocarbon dating results for Scotland can now be submitted online. Paul Young is the new developer.

## *ALGAO*

Lancashire has stabilised a little, with the Lancashire Planning archaeologist going independent and running the HER on behalf of the council. However this leaves Cumbria without any coverage. Survey of staff numbers have found further reduction of staff this year. Equating to a loss of a 1/3 of all staff since 2006, there has been a general cut of 18% across local authorities so ALGAO have been hit with almost double.

The Future of Local Government Archaeology Services Report (Ed Vaisey report) ([http://www.appag.org.uk/future\\_arch\\_services\\_report\\_2014.pdf](http://www.appag.org.uk/future_arch_services_report_2014.pdf)) has now been released; it was embargoed for two years following discussion of its recommendations.

It was reported that there was a government response to national discussion of proposed changes to the Planning Policy, and that this was to assure people that this would not affect archaeology.

## *Membership*

The forum welcomed new member Matt Thompson (English Heritage). CT requested that people reply to the meeting invite and expressed the importance of sending replacement representatives if the meeting cannot be attended. Arrangements for telephone or video conferencing can be made if requested.

## *DCMS Museums Review England*

The review closes on 30<sup>th</sup> October. The AAF will be making a response.

## *Developments and ideas from the south-west projects*

Wiltshire Heritage museum has funding for a new store.

Seeing the Light of Day – Sustaining Archaeological Archives - Wessex Archaeology and Devon County Council convened a meeting under the title of ‘Seeing the Light of Day’ in January 2016

attended by archaeological contractors, planning archaeologists and museums from across the South West.

Following the meeting, a project proposal was submitted to ACE for a project to develop a sustainable solution to the management, accessibility and long-term preservation of archaeological archives in the SW. Wiltshire Museum is the lead partner on this project. It is now out to tender with the project starting in November and with draft reports due in March/April 2017.

In Gloucestershire Sam Paul is developing deposition standards and a charging structure.

Dorset County Museum has £10.3million HLF funding for a new discovery centre:

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/dorset-county-museum-wins-%C2%A3103million-national-lottery-funding>

### *Heritage Information Access Strategy for a national register of archives*

There was discussion on the benefits of this, and how much of the data is included in extant datasets. There was discussion that although the data exists it currently isn't fully accessible through existing search function. Museum accession registers were discussed as an underutilised resource. Action DB to discuss with the SMA.

### *Action Plan*

R1 : This is being undertaken through a HE project and will be a position paper.

R2 : This an on-going task for all members, and will also be covered by the ClfA Archives Group annual meeting on 'Relevance of Archaeological Archives'

R3 : This is being undertaken through the HERALD Project

R4 : This awaits update by Scott Furlong who was unable to attend the meeting

R5 : See Recommendation 3

R6 : This has been revised into an internal HE project and be undertaken by Claire Tsang

R7 : This is covered by the SMA SSN and ClfA Archives Group

R8 : The map is managed by the SMA the funding of the survey is now a formal HE project for the next 3 years.

### *AOB*

### *Date next Meeting*

The next meeting will be in Birmingham, hosted by ALGAO, date to be confirmed

## **Appendix 1**

### **Action Plan Recommendations**

R1 Produce a policy statement on the significance of archaeological archives nationally, and their importance as a key resource in the future.

R2 Promote the potential of archaeological archives as a resource for engaging all communities.

R3 Establish a national strategy for archive completion as a means of providing easy access to the archaeological record.

R4 Develop a national strategy for the storage and curation of archaeological archives.

R5 Ensure that the significance of archives is fully recognised at all stages of planning-led archaeological work.

R6 Seek solutions for archive material that currently cannot be transferred to a repository.

R7 Develop a framework for the provision of archaeological archive advice to practitioners in planning authorities, contracting organisations, museums, and community groups.

R8 Promote and publicise the collecting areas map.