
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES FORUM INTERIM MEETING minutes

Room K/111, Archaeology Data Service
Kings Manor, York

21st March 2013
10-30am – 15-00pm

1. Present: Quinton Carroll (QC); ALGAO [Chair], Amanda Forster (AF); IFA Archives group, Iain Fraser; (IF) RCAHMS, Rachel Edwards (RE); Arboretum Archaeological Consultancy, Duncan Brown (DB); IfA Finds Group/EH, Catherine Hardman (CH); ADS, Nicky Scott (NS); SMA, Jim Spriggs (JS); ICON, John Shepherd (JS) (Academic) and Claire Tsang (CT): EH [Sec].
2. Apologies: Kirsty Lingstadt, Roland Smith
3. Minutes of last meeting: No additions
4. News updates
 - 4.1. Scotland: Work is continuing on the merger of RCHMS and Historic Scotland
 - 4.2. IfA are undertaking a review of their standards and guidance documents
 - 4.3. Wales: Welsh Government's Historic Environment Group's (HEG) project to review and update the existing standards document for the collection and deposition of archaeological archives is complete and are currently tendering for a project to review of storage of the archaeological archive, which is to be completed in November 2013.
 - 4.4. Icon: No urgent matters, but wish to emphasise that they are willing to voice their support for any AAF projects, and locally noted that YAT is developing a new store.
5. Membership – We have a new member, Sinead McCartan from National Museums Northern Ireland, they are currently developing new standards and have a working group on AA. MH to ask SCFA to nominate a representative.
6. EH/SMA Project Report and Recommendations – see attached
Chair asked for thanks to be recorded to the SMA, EH, Fame, SCFA and Rachel Edwards for their work towards this report.

The project has successfully concluded and produced an invaluable report that raised several key areas about archives and archiving.

It put forwards eight core recommendations for the future, as well as identified those organisations who should take it forwards. The recommendations were discussed in turn:

Recommendation 1: produce a policy statement on the significance of archaeological archives nationally, and their importance as a key resource in the future.

The initial focus of this project was England, because of England's specific collecting problems, however it could potentially be adapted to be generic for all countries. Wales and Scotland both keen for a nationally standard to cover their countries. **Action:** EH (DB) and ACE (HS) to complete standard and edit and circulate to other countries.

Recommendation 2: Promote the potential of archaeological archives as a resource for engaging all communities.

The recommendation was discussed; a single project on how this could be undertaken was not defined. The AAF will take opportunity to comment of NPPFs. Museums need the tool to promote their archives and activities. Need to increase public understanding of the process of archiving and the process of archiving and where archives are deposited, for Wales and Scotland this is easier, but for England it is more difficult. **Action:** Ask every member of the forum to state how we can contribute to this and put for recommendations, opportunities and current activity, for September 2013.

Recommendation 3: Establish a national strategy for archive completion as a means of providing easy access to the archaeological record.

There remains an issue that recording on Oasis is focused on recording current and developer funded archaeological excavations. This could be looked into to allow and encourage wider use.

A possibility of a national recording number was discussed. Recording of excavations in a single system would make investigations/archives traceable, help ensure the HER was complete and would be the start of the process of managing the heritage resource.

The move towards universal standards for archive creation is being developed for digital archives, through the Beadam group, which next on 12th April 2013.

It was questioned whether there is a need for a review of standards, to map out similarities. **Action:** A review of current standards will be undertaken by the SMA.

Recommendation 4: Develop a national strategy for the storage and curation of archaeological archives.

Scotland has developed its strategy and Wales is funding now, again England is a larger issue.

The SMA is undertaking a review of HLF bids for storage projects, to review why they approved and fail, in order to improve bids.

The SMA is reviewing retention and selection guidelines and are looking at also developing procedures.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that the significance of archives is fully recognised at all stages of planning-led archaeological work.

Work on encouraging cooperation between planning teams, museums curators and archives creators will be undertaken by ALGAO

Recommendation 6: Seek solutions for archive material that currently cannot be transferred to a repository

There are 2 problems; where developers do not fund deposition and where there is no museum.

It was discussed that many problems could be solved if there had been transfer of title early on in the project stage and this should be promoted.

Recommendation 7: Develop a framework for the provision of archaeological advice to practitioners in planning authorities, contracting organisations, museums and community groups.

Collections Link provides this kind of 'intelligence hub' to museums, a similar format could be used.

Recommendation 8: Promote and publicize the collecting areas map.

There was discussion on the naming of the Project and whether it fully conveyed the aims of the current project – Map of Museum Archaeology rather than collecting areas, which would cover its new aim of listing specialist knowledge. CH noted that it is difficult to change as it is the name of the archive rather than a web page title, and that efforts to change it might be better to be delayed once the ADS has undertaken a project to better list expertise. Action: CH to make plans for project. The project can be expanded into Wales and Scotland, Action: IF and Wales to investigate filling in RE's template.

7. Academic use of archives: see attached papers

Prof. Charlotte Roberts, Durham University, wrote to the AAF about the academic use of archives in response to the Open Meeting. **Action:** QC to respond

8. Policy changes/developments with opportunities for archives

Community Infrastructure Levy:

The Community Infrastructure Levy replaces Section 106 agreements in 2014 and provides a lump sum to assist the provision of infrastructure. It is feasible for the AAF to have input into the policies developed to support the NPPF, at a national level.

9. A.O.B.

Cambridgeshire have now deposited archives into Deepstore.

10. Date & location of next meeting

October 17th 2013. Bristol: Government Office for the SW, 2 Rivergate, Temple Quay, BS1 6EH
