

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES FORUM INTERIM MEETING

MARCH 2015 MINUTES

(25TH MEETING)

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FAL BUILDING, TRURO

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## *PRESENT*

Katie Green (ADS), Nicola Scott (SMA), Quinton Carroll (ALGAO), Duncan Brown (EH), Kirsty Lingstadt (RCAHMS/HES), Helen Parslow (FAME), Caradoc Peters (SCFA), Elizabeth Walker (AC-NMW), Nancy Grace (NT), Alice Forward (EH)

### 1. *Apologies*

Scott Furlong (Arts Council), Sarah Morton (ICON), Amanda Forster (CIfA), Mike Heyworth (CBA), Sinead McCartan (NMNI), Claire Tsang (HE)

### 2. *News Update*

#### **SCFA**

A questionnaire, used by Mike Heyworth and updated for Universities, was sent to the SCFA committee for review. The group was unhappy with the questionnaire and felt that it needed to be shorter and that more appropriate questions should be asked of universities with regards to their archaeological archives.

They wanted to know why the survey was actually being conducted and what would happen to the data?

A sub-committee within SCFA has been created to deal with archives in universities.

SCFA have a new website [universityarchaeology.co.uk](http://universityarchaeology.co.uk) and Mike Heyworth is the person to contact regarding this.

It has become apparent that it will be particularly difficult to capture data from universities with regards to the archives held. There are a number of reasons for this.

- Archive policies for universities are not immediately apparent.
- Archives are spread out within departments and not centralised in a designated storage area. Instead staff offices are typically used.
- Deposition is not common practice as people retain assemblages to be used for undergraduate and post-graduate study.

Action:

Caradoc is to re-write the questionnaire and circulate the draft around the AAF before sending out to SCFA through survey monkey.

The new questionnaire is going to tackle the issue a little differently to the way in which the previous survey for archaeological units and museums was carried out.

Questions regarding responsibility will be posed: Is anyone within the department responsible for archives and if not who is responsible for any archaeological material?

How many projects are being carried out within the department which are currently creating archaeological archives?

Does the department have any guidance concerning archival retention?

A statement will be sent to SCFA, further detailing the reasons for the survey

*There are initiatives across the archaeological sector and universities have been identified as key holders to cultural resources. In the commercial sector and in museums surveys have already been conducted and universities have to date not been included in this. Our intention is to get a national picture and individuals will not be identified in any report. The data will be used to provide overall statistical results to understand the general archiving issues.*

Quinton will attend the SCFA meeting on the 25th March with Caradoc.

## **SMA**

In November 2014 the SMA had their annual conference, held in Colchester.

The SMA has been asked to attend the HS2 meeting and Gail Boyle will represent the group. Concern will be raised regarding the capacity in museums as well as staffing in order to manage the volume of archival material produced as a result of HS2. Further, the issue of dwindling numbers of curatorial staff with archaeological backgrounds will be broached. The idea of a national repository will be proposed as one solution to the archiving problem.

Concern for the Devon and Newport museums was discussed.

The SMA will be attending the Cifa conference in April where they hope to create more strategic partnerships with the commercial sector.

SMA reported that concern had been raised by the Prehistoric Society that researchers were being charged to access archives and collections. QC reported that Cambridgeshire was one that had introduced such a charge, publicised on their website, making it clear that where a research proposal was being prepared to go to a funding body, then the authority expected its costs to be included as part of the submission given it was providing a professional service.

## **ADS**

Catherine Hardman has left the ADS and moved to the Parliamentary Archives. Her replacement is Louisa Matthews, from the North Yorkshire HER, who will be in post from the 16th April.

Herald Project – Stage 1 is finished and they are waiting for a response from English Heritage, which could take up to 3 months. They are currently in the Project Design Phase for stage 2.

There is the potential for the British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography (BIAB) to be incorporated into the Herald Project. However, in Scotland there is a slightly different situation as RCS have already funded the BIAB on a number of occasions and offered further funding.

It is unknown what will happen with the Irish information.

## **ALGAO**

There are concerns regarding the threat to resources and services within HERs due to the widespread cuts within councils. Relating to this, there is also concern that staff with 20+ years experience are being replaced by people with only a couple of years and this is not suitable. Like for like is not happening.

Nothing else to report

## **FAME**

In terms of FAME broader discussions, we have spent a fair amount of time looking at how the organisation runs, its priorities, its constitution and transferring its status to a limited company. We have also agreed to open membership to organisations outside the UK following a specific request from companies based in Ireland. We have discussed recruitment (now 57 members); standard methods of measurement for project costings; the forthcoming State of the Market survey; updating the Archaeologists and Developers Code of Practice; a forthcoming initiative on Archaeological Reference Resource Project; Health and Safety; and updates with liaison with key bodies such as EH, CIfA, etc.

With regard to archives and archive standards, we did discuss this at our December meeting. Our Board felt that the nature of FAME was not to act as a 'standards-setting' body as we believe that this is the CIfA's role. It was felt however that we should both welcome the standards and encourage our members to adopt them.

Finally, we would welcome your thoughts on an issue we have been considering relating to the long-term curation of archives. Our members are finding increasingly that although archaeological work is being undertaken as a condition of planning permission, they are unable to find an institution prepared/able to receive the archival material for long term storage, curation and display. This is highly problematic for our members as you will know and we are intending therefore to invite a number of bodies to a meeting to discuss this problem further.

## **National Trust**

Sophie Houlton is in post as Archives and Records advisor and has been there for 2 years. Her post mainly deals with property and business archives.

Prior to this there wasn't a full time post specifically just for archives.

Ian Barnes and Nancy Grace are jointly in charge of archaeological archives.

There are incredibly varied archiving systems within the National Trust. The archives mostly focus on the house collections and business.

There are 14,000 boxes of records held at Wansdyke and this is recorded on their Archive Resource Management System. This is mostly property and business paperwork.

Archives that came with the properties are mainly family archives and records. These are variedly treated, some go to local record offices and others stay with the property.

The National Trust's main archive is based at Heelis where they have a Records and Archives department and manage the Collections Management System. The database has a record of house collections although this does not include many archaeological collections yet.

The Historic Buildings and Monuments Records (HBMR) sometimes contain archaeological finds but these are typically single find spots on NT estates.

In 1997 a report written internally regarding archaeological collections advised that anything found on the estates should be sent to the local museum, unless the property want to look after it themselves.

Currently there is a project to gather together all the information regarding archaeological archives held at NT properties. There is a hope that either a central store or regional archaeological archives store can be created.

The regional archaeologists come from varied backgrounds and as a result the archaeology for each region is managed slightly differently.

The National Trust has been told by the Museum Accreditation Board that they need to look after all their archives in the same manner as they care for the collections in their properties. This is very timely with the national archaeological archives project entering its second year, and able to highlight any properties that needs more input from the archaeologists.

One particular archaeological archive of note is the Crickley Hill archive. The National Trust holds half of this archive and Gloucestershire holds the other half. Phil Dixon is working with the National Trust and has been working through and digitising the photographic and paper archive. Currently there are two copies of this being held, each on external hard drives. English Heritage has been funding some of this project. Gloucester has transferred title to the National Trust, and the finds and paper/photographic archive is now in its own accessible store.

EH

English Heritage is soon to become Historic England and this includes the English Heritage archive, the National Monuments Records.

As part of the split EH have developed an action plan, Heritage 2020, which is the successor to NHPP. Projects that sat within NHPP have been revised to sit within the new Heritage 2020. New projects have been submitted by the archives team based on Rachel Edwards's report.

The Digital Archive Protocol has been through the Pilot Stage and a draft report submitted. This has now to go through the system and to be passed.

## **Scotland**

Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments Scotland are to be merged to form Historic Environment Scotland. This is due to happen on the 30th Sept.

Jenny Ryder, formally of the Scottish Museums Council, has been appointed as Chair.

10 Trustees have been appointed, none of whom were involved in either of the previous bodies.

David Gaimster has been appointed to represent castle studies and other people, such as academics, lawyers and representatives from the Castle Society are on this committee.

The first meeting of the board was in November and they have applied for Charitable Status.

The CEO is yet to be appointed and this post will be advertised soon.

Measuring Success Group: has been put in to place to assess the Historic Environment strategy, which is currently still progressing and they are about to report on the strategy. Fiona Hislop is still the chair of the HES.

The Community Engagement Group's remit is incredibly broad and as a result is struggling a little.

The Archaeology Strategy: A draft has been out for consultation and the final draft is to be released shortly. The Strategy will be released this September at the European Association of Archaeology conference in Glasgow.

Archives Strategy: Momentum has been lost a little and to overcome this, the National Museum of Scotland thinks there needs to be more specific direction. Collaborative work has been identified as a possible solution to this. Jane Carmichael is about to retire and this will also have an effect.

Data Strategy: It is thought that the Past Map website can be an improved portal to Historic Data in Scotland. More polygonised data is to be made available.

In Scotland there are 23.8 members of HER staff and these posts are not being replaced.

Commission: There has been success as MEDIN has become an accredited Data Archive Centre.

Underwater archaeology: There is a programme of digitising dive footage and the Scapa Flow material is being catalogued. There is a current court case dealing with illegal salvage and as a result Scapa Flow has been a focus of attention and highlighted the work of heritage protection.

There have been improvements to digital archiving with the introduction of new software, Preservica. The software allows you to be able to manage data more effectively. The Commissions team is aiming to gain the data seal of approval.

Digital Cultural Organisations are now looking to the National Archives of Scotland as a repository.

### **AC-NMW**

After the proposed merger between CADW and RCHMW and the resulting decision not to change the structure of the two organisations the political situation is settling down.

There has been ministerial change with Ken Skates now in post as Deputy Minister of Culture, Sport and Media. A new Heritage Bill is currently in process and will be introduced to the National Assembly in late spring 2015.

Changes are to be made to the structure of the current County Council boundaries and this could have an impact on museums, which is inevitably causing an unsettled situation.

The museum sector is also going through a big review and Hayden Edwards is reviewing local museums in Wales. Questions are not being specifically directed at archaeology.

The National Panel has accepted a report in which 21 recommendations have been made to improve the state of storage and access. The roadmap for the delivery of these recommendations went through to the Ministerial Advisory Group and Historic Environment Group. This has given steer to sort out the problem but does not address issues of legacy,

The panel have gone back and suggested using the ARCHES standard for Wales but with an additional Welsh focused section. The panel are examining some of the recommendations using the Standards as a guide. For deposition standards there is technical advice that sits beneath the Heritage Bill.

Work has been carried out by the Record Co-Ordination Group, led by Gareth Edwards developing guidance on the deposition of digital archives.

The SMA representative for Wales, Olly Blackmore, has been investigating box deposition charges.

Further updates on archiving issues in Wales will be provided by Elizabeth Walker and Andrew Marvell at the CIFA conference in Cardiff in April.

### 3. *Membership*

Nancy Grace is to be the representative for the National Trust.

The Historic Royal Palaces have been approached but with no response so far.

Mike Heyworth is to remain as the main contact for the CBA

Annoushka Rawden from the Antiquaries of London is keen to be involved.

Giovanni Vitelli (based in Oxford) is the Chair of the Society of Museums in America Committee Collections and she is keen for this committee and the Archaeological Archives Forum to continue contact. Julie King, based in the States, is going to be the new Chair.

### 4. *Born Digital Updates*

There hasn't been any progress.

PP went to English Heritage and the comments were discussed. Changes have been made as suggested but an updated draft has not been received.

### 5. *Transfer of Title Issues*

There is a crisis within units regarding the issue of receiving transfer of title at the beginning of a project. This has been a growing concern and no resolution has been met after 10 years.

There are a number of key obstacles:

- Consultants are not seeking transfer of title for current new sites.
- For many sites compulsory purchase was not completed before archaeological work was carried out. In cases where treasure was found the discovery pre-dates the transfer of title and as a result the landowner is the owner of the find rather than the council.
- For infrastructure projects – road schemes, pipelines etc. landowners are not being contacted due to compulsory purchases and as a result landownership is not clear.
- Correspondence between the council and the landowner goes through the Consultant and not the Archaeological Contractors a lot of the time and archiving issues are not included and tackled at this point.
- There are cases where the transfer of title goes to the contracting unit rather than directly to the museum.
- Museums are not always willing to receive until they know exactly what they are getting.
- For old sites transfer of title just wasn't part of the process.
- Community projects creating large project archives. There are fewer people on the committees for many of these groups willing to give time to sort out archiving issues. Problems of continuity will also affect these groups.
- There is no way of monitoring the digital archive for HLF and AHRC projects and these projects are not being deposited.

The main leverage for transfer of title is that the archive is going to the local museum. If the unit takes the title then more often than not the landowners are less co-operative.

There are some units who embed transfer of title within their terms and conditions and at the end of the site this can be reviewed.

Suggestion:

To establish a model practice and then, in theory, the contractor could reduce costs.

In older cases, where landownership at the time of excavation is not clear or people are no longer contactable, paper records which demonstrate attempts to achieve agreement for T of T should be enough to be able to deposit with a museum.

Quinton has talked to the Cambridgeshire Solicitors regarding issues surrounding transfer of title, and it has been suggested that there should be a clause in the brief for transfer of title as a standardised planning condition.

Units don't want to be responsible for the archives. In principle the archives should be made publically available and units do not have the means by which to store archives in perpetuity.

There should be simplified guidelines for local societies.

We are collectively liable for archaeological material and a collective solution should be developed.

**Action:** AAF will take a lead on T of T and develop a policy document.

DB to approach EH and make the suggestion that HE will assume responsibility where there is no local museum.

A group will meet in the summer to further discuss the issue and develop possible solutions.

## 6. *Treasure*

Any artefacts identified as Treasure are being removed from the archive and placed into a separate process, divorcing these objects from their original site archive.

In Wales, treasure is managed from AC-NMW and here treasure would remain with the archive

At the moment treasure rarely ends up with the archive.

**Action:** Quinton will talk to the treasure registrars.

Nicola Scott will ask SMA if this is a similar issue with other members.

## 7. *HS2*

Heritage Memorandum – Single policy document regarding archiving.

Workshop on 19th March and a Report on the 23rd March

Jon Sheppard is leading on the physical archive procedures.

Helen Glass is the archaeological advisor to HS2 Project

The meeting for museums along the proposed line of HS2 was not particularly effective as not all the museums were invited.

Local Museums should have the option to take on the material but there has also been a suggestion for central storage although this is not generally considered to be the best solution.

#### *8. OASIS – aka the New Herald*

Nothing to report.

#### *9. Cifa RO Inspections*

It has been decided to leave this issue to the Cifa Archives Group.

#### *10. European ARCHES Standard*

In response to the Standards documentation ADS and ALGAO UK have agreed to the suggestions. FAME is not willing to commit to the guidance but will recommend it. SMA will follow the lead of the AAF. Wales is still looking at the document. Nancy is going to put the recommendations forward to the NT and SCFA is in the long grass.

#### *11. Action Plan Updates*

R1 – DB has written a draft and received comments from Headley Swain and Scott Furlong. There is now a position statement and this will be circulated around the Forum once agreed by Historic England and the Research Council. Elizabeth Walker has also suggested that the document should be circulated to Wales and Scotland.

R2 – This is on-going.

R3 – Herald is currently at consultation.

HAIS – AAF is on the board.

NS and HP looked at 129 museum guidelines. Some were very long and others were only 1 side of paper.

The main common elements will be brought together and developed into basic high level guidance for people wanting to deposit archives.

**Action** – HP is going to co-ordinate establishing key questions of the documents and report back next meeting. NS will send this electronically.

R4 – The first part of this was covered earlier in the meeting – storage issue

R5 – FAME would like a meeting to discuss the archiving issue and SMA should be invited. HP to action this.

R6 – Discussions have already happened this meeting regarding HE's role.

R7 – Cifa, SIG and SMA

The creation of a network of advisors – a national panel

This is something Wales is currently developing. A page will be created on the CADW website similar to a JISC mail area where people can ask questions. Herald was possibly going to provide a similar resource.

SMA needs to develop a framework for providing advice. Establishing a line of communication and formalising a role similar to a regional science advisor. Expertise has been lost with the redundancy of Museum Liaison Officers.

It was suggested that the AAF should be used and the website act as the host for the network. If this were to happen the website would have to be developed accordingly. If the AAF were to become the network the terms of reference would have to be revised.

There are two possible structures within which the specialist network could be held

- CBA and CifA archives group could form the network.
- AAF are the network

CBA and CifA were decided not to be suitable due to their broad memberships. NS also worried that the SMA would have reservations.

R8 – The map is still there and updates are coming soon.

12. AOB

Action – to get details from CJ for the website (AF)

CifA Archives Group AGM and workshop 25 March

CifA Conference SMA and Finds Group

13. Next Meeting

15th October and Venue to be confirmed.