
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES FORUM
Annual Meeting
(24th Meeting)

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of
Scotland,
John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 9NX

Meeting 11:00 – 16:00
Wednesday 22nd October 2014

1. Attendees

Katie Green (ADS)
Quinton Carroll (Chair) (ALGAO),
Kirsty Lingstadt (RCAHMS Collections),
Iain Fraser (RCAHMS Collections),
Emily Nimmo (RCAHMS Collections),
Peter McKeague (RCAHMS Collections),
Caradoc Peters (SCFA),
Nichola Scott (SMA/ Oxford Archaeology)
Duncan Brown (EH)
Helen Parslow (FAME / Albion Archaeology)
Amanda Forester (IFA)
Sarah Morton (ICON)
Sinead McCartan (NMNI/ DOENI)

2. Apologies

Catherin Hardman (ADS)
Scott Furlong (Arts Council)
Gareth Edwards (RCAHMS)
Claire Tsang (EH)
Claire Foley (DOENI)
Johanna Vuolteenaho (DOENI)
Ken Neill (DOENI)
Elizabeth Walker (Wales Museum)
Lesley Ferguson (RCAHMS)

Best Wishes for Claire noted who is due to go on maternity leave shortly

3. Minutes of last meeting

Matters arising:

SCFA are undertaking a survey Cradoc Peters (CP) has had conversations with Mike Hayworth and X and gave them our questionnaire based on Mike's from Wales with some updates.

They are proposing to put this through the steering group. CP has updated them on the objectives of the survey and that seemed to spark further interest. CP is hurrying it along. Mike Evers? is going to keep CP up to date on progress. The coverage will be for the whole UK. The survey will also be adjusted for learned societies and sent to Mike to look over and sent out to the regional groups meeting in March 2015.

There was a discussion around voluntary and local archaeology groups. IFA volunteered their 'plain English' IFA standards and Guidance. IFA also have a voluntary and community Special interest groups. Discussion around how the various groups and bodies can work together to support these groups to adopt professional standards relating to archiving etc. CP suggested local museums might be a very useful way to get buy in.

ACTION: DB to continue work on this.

Transfer of Title: DB to review Transfer of Title section of AAF Guidance, a standard transfer of title form should also be developed.

Minute gaps updated on the e-copy by QC

At the AGM there is to be a seminar on 'collecting archaeology' **ACTION: AM to circulate flyer - completed**

Photographic policy (Wet film issues)

Wessex have raised a question related to digital photography and wet colour film.

QC suggested that IFA should put out advice. However, IFA felt this would not be appropriate. The group discussed the possibility of a new standard at the last meeting including the possibility of a joint statement, but it has been concluded that this is not possible. All that could be covered is the different approaches different organisations are taking. EH have produced a guidance note on digital image capture. RCAHMS has updated the guidelines to say we can accept digital only.

FAME had asked for this to be raised again on behalf of members.

ACTION: IFA- to look at this again and write a statement jointly with other groups on the basis that born digital is accepted. There are some caveats in that the institution accepting the archive needs to be able to deal with digital archive.

It was suggested that analogue prints of digital images might be a way around for museums that cannot accept digital.

CP emphasis on 'high resolution' digital, not just digital. Important element is pixel depth appropriate guidelines needed but see EH guidance.

EN rather than specifying a specific repository it should be an organisation that has the Data Seal or ISO16363 compliance/certification.

ACTION: New list of Acronyms for appendix.

4. News updates

ADS

ADS Easy is now up and running and archives are coming through the process. Internet Archaeology has gone to open access as well as publishing data papers. Overall archive deposition has doubled this year compared to last year.

RCAHMS

RCAHMS is still working through process of transforming to the new organisation Historic Environment Scotland which will start from 1 April 2015. Staff will transfer over between then and 1 October 2015. Recruitment of a new chair and board of trustees is underway and appointments will be announced in January. Recruitment of CEO for HES will start Feb/March 2015 and the aim is to have someone in post in August 2015.

Historic Environment Scotland bill passed stage 2 in parliament. No changes expected to the legislation now and moving into stage 3, which will finish in March and conclude the process and set up the new body.

Historic Environment Strategy has had a new governance structure set up to ensure it's delivery. A forum is being chaired by Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary with working groups representing cross sections of the sector. These are all meeting for the first time.

The first draft sector wide Archaeology Strategy is out for consultation.

Progress on undertaken a survey to establish the state of Archaeological Archives in Scotland has slowed down due to the volume of other activity.

RCAHMS is procuring Digital Preservation Software. Bedern Group have produced a document clarifying collecting remits. Available now for circulation.

FAME

Malcolm Cooper is now the chief executive. There are currently particular concerns around the transfer of title and digital photography.

IFA

IFA will be re-launching as the chartered institute on 9th of December

Next conference will be the first as the Chartered institute – in Cardiff. 'Future of archaeology is on the shelf' is the archives focused session lasting a full day. Main conference is about the 'future of your profession'

Overall the good practice workshops have trained c250 people. The IFA Archives Group are now thinking about next steps and stages. They are thinking about a day conference looking at different archives and good practice.

IfA have identified five priorities to pursue in the next years – these will be released soon. They are also thinking about e-learning packages.

IFA regular inspection, within that process they are asked about archives. Going to look through the recommendations that are made as a result of those visits and see how many are linked to archives to see if this is stable, improving or getting worse.

SCFA

SCFA are re- vamping their website and HEFCE have undertaken a survey of HEIs and looked at the link between employability and the presence of an HEI in the area. General – not focused on archaeology.

REF is going to be extended internationally. There was a discussion over the focus on field work for archaeology students as the outcome.

There is still gender disparity in the recruitment of students to courses, with more males than females and very little diversity. Generally there are falling numbers in recruitment

Q thinking about training academics on managing archives? A questions were added to the survey that cover training needs. Someone should come to a SCFA meeting and talk about what is available and what are the benefits. If phrased as a STEM skill there will be millage.

EN suggested that partnering with UKCORR (ukcorr.org) which represents the HEI institutional repositories managers who are involved in trying to capture digital archives/scientific publications. They would likely be interested in partnering to promote deposit and skills among their local academic communities.

ACTION : IFA Archives group to do a talk at next meeting (March, London) on archives or the next. (Cradoc to confirm speakers and dates)

SMA

Notes circulated via email

EH

EH is still undergoing review and separation. This will be completed by April 2015, when Historic England will be formed. Duncan Brown and his team will be part of Historic England.

Claire Tsang has been developing the digital archiving protocol, and it's now being tested in the field with current excavations at two different sites'

ICON

A new code of conduct is under consultation. The Archaeology group – have raised concerns about units storing archives alongside other material. There

is also a concern over the number of specialist archaeological conservation posts. A meeting will be held in March to discuss this as well as a focus on the impact on the conservation of objects.

New post for a lobbying member on the archaeology group – Edwin Godphrey (?) taking that up

NMNI

Two papers have been produced recently one on our current position on archaeological archives. This has been sent to funders and currently it has been stated that they are not in a position to take any new material in. It has been identified that there is a gap in legal framework and the licensing agreement does not stipulate in detail the deposition of archive. Figures to date indicate that 1.47 million objects are being held by private archaeological companies. This does not specify whether documentary archives are included or on top of that.

FAME report indicated over 2000 archives, of which less than 500 are ready for deposit. The NMNI entire collection is 1.5 million, so if this material were to come in it would double their holdings, and they have reduced staff from 3 to 1 archaeologist.

NMNI are currently working towards an agreed summary with NIEA as to how to take this forward. The Stormont committee on culture, arts and leisure and the committee on the environment are going to be looking at this. There is a discussion around incomplete archive, and liability and who might fund this including retrospective archives.

Ken Neil report – see notes circulated electronically

ALGAO UK

Biggest concern is now the funding issue with some members suffering up to 100% cuts. There is a Central Government review into local government archaeology services, ALAGO is involved and has submitted responses. The report is due out in November 2014.

ALGAO are increasing awareness of the lack of coverage in England of collecting museums for archaeological archives and archiving is now on agenda for next meeting.

National Historic Environment forum, an EH initiative, is going through a possible reform. The List aspect of the heritage sector needs to be changed and what the requirements of legislation are. Quinton will feed into this by the end of November.

ACTION: English members to send comments to Quinton by 25 November 2014 with specific focus on changes not requiring primary legislation.

5. Membership

Nicky Scott is now representing the SMA again.

The membership list was circulated by Claire. A number of members are down as corresponding members and a few people on the list have not been heard from in quite a while.

The FAME representative is now Malcolm Cooper and Adrian Smith will be taken off the list.

ACTION: QC is to contact CFA/ Society of Antics / EH and ask them to nominate members.

Question: should the future 'English Heritage' also be brought into the fold, in addition to the new 'Historic England'

QC to follow this up following the new bodies set up.

In addition it was agreed that the following bodies should also be invited: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, National Trust England and Scotland NI and Wales as well as Historic Palaces.

ACTION: KL to send QC contact details for NTS. QC to contact bodies.

6. Consultation responses and updates: NPPG and NHPP(Affects England only).

QC sought comments and put forward a response on behalf of the forum.

NPPG good practice advice:

Closed end of Aug and collating responses now. There appears to be a desire to try to get the wording right to take into account the issues around archiving in the planning process. The aim is to have an updated version early new year.

NHPP/Heritage 2020

Five year program of funding from EH ends 2014. A new scheme 2015-2020 being proposed and written up by Mike Hayworth, CBA. Idea is to be more inclusive across the heritage sector – less archaeology focused – and to encourage other aspects of the heritage sector.

5 core areas each with a working group to be governed by a historic environment forum.

Heritage 2020 work streams:

- Discover identification understanding
- Constructive conservation and sustainable management
- Public engagement
- Capacity building
- Advocacy

(currently draft form)

This is an opportunity to raise the issues focused on by this group QC urged us all to do this

7. 'Born Digital' project

Discussion at last meeting around born digital this led to IFA, ALGAO, EH and FAME, and ADS putting a bid in to EH for funding a project that supports archaeologists all the way from site to deposition. Aims to break down the groups involved, identify the issues and put forward some solutions. The project design has been returned with requests for some more detail, but there will be addressed and then bid re-submitted.

Once we know the status of this project bid, the organisations might be able to put out a position statement on digital archiving.

8. EH Heritage Information Access Strategy

Project to address issues of heritage info access – EH is concerned that there are too many different sources of heritage information and none of these are complete (England only). The aim is to try to work out ways to make these sources more comprehensive. An initial forum has been set up and then there will be individual meetings to bottom this out. AAF have been invited to sit on the steering group for this.

The idea is still in the development stages, seeking to understand how what already exists can be linked together and support each other, and then ensure that this is managed and made accessible.

5 principles identified – QC has this electronically.

ADS in talks to provide a security copy of HER data sets EN Suggested that a CLOCKSS network would also meet that requirement (HER dataset security copies), a democratic and multiple back-up solution – might be more sustainable. The question is what action should be taken for Scottish HER data sets?

EH – heritage protection and planning is leading on this

9. OASIS new version a.k.a. HERALD

Two updates to OASIS, the image upload facility has been added and up to 50 images can be added for £40. ADS EASY would be £150 up front fee plus the image charge. Images can only be added in batches of 8 and anyone that uses OASIS can do this.

Wales is now starting to use OASIS for Grey literature

KL – there needs to be a flag to direct depositors to RCAHMS.

ACTION: KG to seek clarification as to what is happening with Scottish sites now as this is already rolled out to the whole of the UK.

HERALD

Survey of OASIS users with over 500 respondents overall submitting. The results of these surveys are being compiled, and specialised reports are being produced for the different sectors.

From those results the main points are:

- Needs to maintain consistent and ongoing training and support
- Should be a range of workflows for different people interacting with the system.
- Needs to encourage archiving and dissemination of grey literature
- Needs to museum curators
- Include ability to include specialist information
- Import and export system should be as simple as possible.

Initial thoughts are that there should be a tiered system

- OASIS light – simple bibliographic details
- OASIS basic- similar to current (events)
- OASIS plus – specialist areas

Project is still in analysis stage. March is the deadline to have the analysis completed.

Catherine is writing regular blog posts on its development

Herald forms the core of what EH wants to do with the Information and Access strategy

10. Scottish and Welsh Heritage Bills updates

Covered in RCAHMS update.

Wales update was to be from Gareth Edwards who has sent in apologies.

11. The European ARCHES Standard

The UK has signed up to this and Duncan Brown was representing all of UK.

DB proposed that the Arches standard should supersede the AAF guidance – decision needs to be taken.

Distinction between the two are in the definition of what constitutes the archive. Arches definition is more comprehensive. There is a little bit more detail on curation within AAF guidance.

IFA and FAME have both offered to promote the new standard

IFA standards and guidance next committee meeting to discuss IFA ratifying

ACTION: Everyone to look at the standard and get back to QC to say whether they are happy to endorse the standard or not by 19th December.

12. Action Plan Updates

Plan from the recommendations from the Edwards /SMA report

R1 DB has met with Scott Furlang and DB is to write something that should be UK wide.

R2 SMA grant application submitted– awaiting a response.

R3 OASIS redevelopment (the project to redevelop it is called Herald) Is hoped to meet this requirement.

R4 SMA (NS and HF) are collating museum standards and using that to derive common elements, and differences. This could be put forward as an EH project. FAME and SMA going to be contacted again seeking additional responses.

R5 it is now on ALGAO agenda and NPPG

R6 it is an issues that ALGAO, FAME and SMA need to address. There is no progress to report. The consensus from the group was that this needs to be a collective response from the whole sector. EH volunteered to broker that discussion. ALGAO are discussing it at the next meeting.

R7 IFA archives group have been working on this, in the update – see above. Discussion on the need for a ‘ask the curator’ type support network

R8 The map still has some significant issues, but it is still there and the mechanism to update it. NS has not had enough responses in order to provide an update to ADS

13. A.O.B.

FAME question re Transfer of title issue – is there any way to be done not from the units but somehow done as part of the planning condition

QC suggests this is raised through ALGAO to discuss

QC thanked RCAHMS for hosting

14. Date & location of next meeting

11 March 2015. Cradoc offered Truro College to host.
