

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES FORUM ANNUAL MEETING
OCTOBER 2015 MINUTES
FORT CUMBERLAND, PORTSMOUTH
(26TH MEETING)

Present

Katie Green (ADS), Nicola Scott (SMA), Duncan Brown (HE), Helen Parslow (FAME), Caradoc Peters (SCFA), Elizabeth Walker (AC-NMW), Alice Forward (HE), Sarah Morton (ICON)

1. *Apologies*

Quinton Carroll (ALGAO), Scott Furlong (Arts Council), Mike Heyworth (CBA), Sinead McCartan (NMNI), Claire Tsang (HE), Kirsty Lingstadt (HES), Nancy Grace (NT), John Lord (CIFA), Ken Neill, Andrew Jones, Gareth Edwards

2. *Minutes of the last meeting*

Agreed

3. *News Update*

FAME

Nick Shepherd has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Fame. The Forum's membership is steadily growing and the annual FAME forum in York is providing an important opportunity for the membership to meet to address key commercial and practice issues facing the sector. This year's meeting included a paper by Rob Slater and Michael Court from HS2 who outlined the plans for the Stage 1 route, London to Birmingham. HS2 are advising FAME members to register on the website in order to join the prospective supply chain community via Compete4 website and access HS2's online Supply Chain resources www.gov.uk/hs2, and register with and correspond/question via scc@hs2.org.uk.

FAME sees making progress on the state of Archives as a major priority for their members. Because of the increasing volume of material held long term by contractors, in the absence of local museum provision, this is now transitioning from a chronic to a critical problem.

ICON

The AGM in 2015 was held at Fishbourne and the theme was looking at archiving and un-deposited archives. The minutes are still outstanding but will be made available. Both Duncan Brown and Gayle Boyle presented and although nothing was resolved there was a positive exchange of information.

The next event is a workshop looking at political conventions on archives such as the Localism Act and the MPPF Heritage Bill. The day will begin with introductions to the theme followed by discussions on how legislation is affecting practice. The workshop is being held at Uffington on the 10th November.

ADS

The ADS ran a training day for Albion archaeology on the use of ADS easy which Helen and her colleague attended. The feedback received from this day has been positive as it has helped to find particular problems encountered by those uploading data to the website and ADS have been able to respond to these, resolving a number of issues. Once happy with the system, ADS are considering approaching HERs in order to offer this as a possible service.

A lot of small archives are now being uploaded using ADS easy. This is most suitable for pre-planning archives so there are problems with larger archives.

Louisa Matthews has been in post now for 6 months and is carrying out costings for larger digital archiving projects.

SMA

The next SMA conference is titled 'Working Together' and is being held at the Great North Museum in Newcastle on the 11th and 12th November. As part of this there is a trip to Segedunum Roman Fort which can be booked through Eventbrite.

Collecting – there is anxiety with experiences on closures and losing staff. However, there are a few good news stories with Bedford Museum and Uttlesford Museum in Saffron Walden both re-opening and both accepting archives. No charges will be applied to collections that have been held by units for the last 10 years.

Some museums have changed the way in which they are collecting and are instead collecting with a thematic approach. For example, Manchester Museum is collecting under the theme *Water and Migration*.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is significantly reducing their collecting.

Charges – there is a lot of sympathy from the SMA committee for charging for research but they are also reluctant. There has been a suggestion that graded charges could be brought whereby students would be able to access collections for free but a commercial rate be charged to academics and commercial researchers.

Deep storage is an issue for museum officers who re-iterate that they don't think it is a good solution for the storage crisis. There are fears that a loss of control over collections might lead to the de-valuing of localised curatorial work and consequently viewed as a viable area for cuts.

There are strands in the SMA survey looking at the growth in projects using archaeological collections. They are looking to develop a pro-forma listing key performance indicators.

The SMA are keen for a policy statement on why archaeological archives are important and this to inform the SMA selection, retention and dispersal guidelines. It is generally considered that this needs to be re-visited and a discussion required on how much should be collected.

Duncan Brown and Gail Boyle are looking for alternative accredited storage facilities for collections.

Portable Antiquities Scheme is now within the learning and engagement team at the British Museum.

Nicky Scott has provided the ADS with updates for the Museums Collecting page on the ADS website but it is not a full representation as few responded to her call for information.

WALES

The National Panel

The panel held a meeting in September during which they worked on standards in archaeological archives for Wales. They have decided to base this on the Arches standards, adapting the documenting by writing an introduction and appendix appropriate for Wales. The document should be completed by early December. It will be sent to the Heritage Team in Cadw and then it will be checked to see if it meets the requirements of the new Heritage Bill. The timescale is currently unclear on the consultation process. This will guarantee, however, that archives have a place in new legislation.

DB – this is timely as the arches framework is being translated into a number of languages and used across Europe, being made available through the EAC and Arches websites. The adoption of the standards by Wales would be a good addition and EW will keep in contact regarding the progress of this document.

The new Heritage Bill will be presented to the Assembly in May but currently there doesn't appear to be a completion date for this.

The results on the consultation of the survey conducted by Cymal into museums sees 10 dramatic recommendations for the future.

Three regional bodies will be created, taking funding and operational directional management for future sustainability

National Museum Council will be created to direct national activities. It is not clear from where the money for this will be provided but this will enable national co-ordination of museums.

In response to the archaeological archives survey conducted 18 months ago, the panel are beginning to take the recommendations forward. It has been decided that the priority for the group is to not deal with legacy but to get things right for the future, ensuring that current work and archive creation is dealt with appropriately now.

Digital archiving recommendations have been approved by the Royal Commission.

The panel have been looking at the issue of box charges. Currently there are no box charges in Wales. A Wales-wide solution is being researched and so far the idea of using a formula for box charging is being considered.

It is being proposed that deposition, selection and retention will be embedded in the process and so the archive and its contents will have been properly considered before deposition.

DB – this is timely as it is an issue being addressed in both England and Wales and consultation could happen with both in the decisions made.

The collecting areas for Wales have now been updated and more museums actually want to collect archaeological archives as this is one way they can justify their presence. This is in particular a common decision regarding industrial collections and Valleys museums. It may be possible to link the collecting areas in Wales to the English map. This is something that will also be illustrated through Coflein.

SCFA/UAUK

SCFA has now been re-named as University Archaeology UK.

The REF has been a main concern within universities and departments are trying to predict trends in study. As a result the Bristol Department no longer runs a single honours archaeology degree, instead an Archaeology and Anthropology degree is now offered.

Whilst undergraduate provisions are suffering, post-graduate provisions are going up.

Mike Heyworth has been promoting the use of digital archives to students through the Digital Data re-use award.

The archives questionnaire for universities has still not been edited and Carl Heron, Caradoc and Quinton have formed a working party and will be conduct a meeting through Skype to resolve this.

National Trust

The National Trust is moving forward with the task of recording all their archaeological archives on the National Trust CMS. The first task is a massive spread sheet using information from their sites and monuments record and archaeologists in all regions and countries. Hopefully by next March they will be progressing onto transferring the data into the CMS and then linked into the NT collections website.

HES

This is a period of considerable change in Scotland and the launch of a number of strategies has been leading to the launch from the 1st October 2015 of Historic Environment Scotland (HES). HES is the new lead body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment. Created by the HES Act 2014, HES incorporates and will build on the strengths and expertise of Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) who have been managing and recording the historic environment for over a century. Attached at the end of this report is further information on the new bodies responsibilities. Both the former bodies will end from 30th September 2015.

HES will lead and enable the delivery of *Our Place In Time*, Scotland's Historic Environment Strategy <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/03/8522>. Underneath this will sit a number of other Strategies one of which is the Archaeology Strategy. This Strategy was launched at the EAA Conference 2015 and a copy of the Strategy is attached. See also website <http://archaeologystategy.scot> for further information and participants.

In addition the Scottish Historic Environment Data (SHED) Strategy <http://smrforum-scotland.org.uk/shed> which was launched at the IfA conference in Glasgow 2014 is also progressing and is one of the elements that will deliver the Archaeology Strategy. The SHED Strategy is a collaboration between local and national bodies to share and link digital information. Organisations involved are Sites and Monuments Records, National Records of Scotland, Forestry Commission and Museums Galleries Scotland are now contributing to the discussions along with representatives from the NMS and Aberdeen University Museum Service.

In addition work has been on-going to set RCAHMS up as a digital archive and good progress is being made. We hope to finish the project at the end of this financial year and will then be communicating with archaeological units and others about our improved capacity in this area.

RCAHMS undertook a survey in 2012 to see what archive material was out in the units (see attached) reports and we will be making efforts to ensure that that material is deposited. While RCAHMS/HES has space for archive material we are aware that there are issues around the archaeological finds that need to be addressed.

OASIS is being redeveloped and RCAHMS/HS have been in discussions with how this project will be developed in Scotland. The aspiration continues to be for OASIS to be UK wide and talks have been held with us, Treasure Trove and Archaeology Scotland who report work through Discovery and Excavation Scotland as to how things might move forward in the future.

Within HES there are discussions about how the different aspects of the collections work together. We are currently developing a series of policy documents together eg Collections Development Policy, Collections Care and Conservation Policy, etc. and using this suite of policies and procedures will be applying for both Museums Accreditation (HS already is accredited) and also Archives Accreditation to ensure that the new body works to the appropriate standards.

A review of the archaeology collections is also planned looking at how these can be brought together as well as considering what happens to unclaimed archaeological archives – finds where the archive is deposited with ourselves.

HES take up its full statutory role from 1st October 2015 and this very brief summary provides an introduction to our role and activities, to what is immediately different and to what lies in the future.

What We Do

HES will lead and enable delivery of Our Place in Time, Scotland's first ever strategy for the historic environment, which sets out how our historic environment will be carefully managed to deliver real and increasing benefits to Scotland's people. The success of this strategy will ensure our diverse historic environment is cared for and protected, understood, valued, enjoyed and enhanced now and for future generations.

HES is responsible for management of over 300 properties of national importance, or "properties in care", under a formal Scheme of Delegation from Scottish Ministers. Under the title of Historic Scotland we are one of the largest operators of paid-for visitor attractions in Scotland and a major contributor to Scotland's economy. Buildings and monuments of national significance include Edinburgh Castle – Scotland's number one visitor attraction – Neolithic Orkney, Fort George and Melrose Abbey and numerous small local sites, attracting more than 3 million visitors a year.

We are also responsible for the internationally significant collections transferred from RCAHMS including over five million drawings, photographs, negatives and manuscripts and over 20 million aerial images of locations around the world. Improved accessibility to these world class resources for reference, study and research ensure that our historic environment is more widely appreciated, understood and celebrated.

We retain a significant role as a grant provider, the second largest in Scotland, and will continue to invest grants of approximately £14 million a year to national and local organisations, supporting building repairs, ancient monuments, archaeological excavations and surveys, the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, and the voluntary sector.

Our conservation specialists will continue to provide guidance and technical research into the built environment, along with programmes for training and skills development. We will continue to survey and record Scotland's historic environment, while our extensive outreach programme will provide educational activities and resources for learners of all ages to discover and explore our historic environment, and for communities and individuals to be actively

engaged with their heritage. We will continue to contribute to the Scottish Government's strategy to tackle climate change and reduce Scotland's carbon footprint.

What's Different?

HES is established as a Non Departmental Public Body with a Board of Trustees, appointed by Ministers. Staff are employed by HES and are no longer (as was the case for Historic Scotland) civil servants. This provides some operating independence, combined with transparency and public facing accountability as well as formal accountability to Ministers. HES has also been awarded charitable status, and all of this brings it into line with other national cultural institutions such as the National Galleries of Scotland, National Library of Scotland, National Museums Scotland and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

There are some significant changes in the area of regulation. We continue to have an important role as a regulator and as the statutory adviser to Scottish Ministers, but will now carry out decision making functions in our own name, rather than on behalf of Scottish Ministers. We have introduced greater transparency in the decision making process, as all decisions taken by us in relation to scheduling monuments, listing buildings, and handling scheduled monument consent will now be published through our new online planning portal. Meanwhile, there is a new right of appeal to challenge our decisions regarding scheduling, listing and scheduled monument consent, and new procedures are in place to allow appeals to Scottish Ministers

The new Schemes of Delegation from Scottish Ministers outline how we will manage, conserve and monitor the properties in care and the associated collections. They provide improved transparency in our working practices. This will lead to new systems for inspection and recording, more formal technical standards and specification frameworks, and external peer review, which will set new standards of best practice. Over time we will be looking at further improvements in terms of piloting new and innovative initiatives and approaches.

Historic England

In April 2015 English Heritage underwent a change in organisation with a split. There are now two bodies within England: English Heritage is a charitable trust managing the state owned historic properties and Historic England is now wholly funded by DCMS and is the advisory body for Heritage. What is now Excavation and Analysis at Fort Cumberland is now in the Research Department. Research is now prominent in Historic England literature and Duncan Wilson, the new Chief Executive, is very positive in terms of what Historic England can do.

More locally, the Archaeological Archives team has been developing a digital archiving protocol and since the last meeting it has moved on. A series of toolkits have been developed to support the Investigation and Analysis team in one-touch archiving. A new Folder structure for project work, file naming system, team Data Management Plans and metadata forms have been developed. Training has been delivered to the Environmental Team and Project Archaeologists during which these tools were discussed and developed to meet their needs. Over the next few months other teams will also receive the training and it is hoped that digital archiving and best practice will become very much part of daily work routines.

4. Membership

DB asked John Lord from Cifa to join in place of Amanda Forster.

DB asked Mike Heyworth about the CBA representation and it should be Mike but his schedule has been very busy.

There is still no reply from the Historic Royal Palaces but the general consensus is that they should be on the forum.

5. ***Born Digital Updates***

The draft for the project proposal is still with the ClfA. Amanda has produced an updated proposal and it is currently waiting to be signed off and sent to Historic England.

6. ***New Historic England archives projects***

When the HE action plan was being developed DB suggested three projects.

- **See through a policy statement on archaeological archives**

This has been an on-going priority and is the first recommendation (R1) that came out of the work for the Archives Forum by Rachel Edwards. Now that it is a formal HE project this will lead to an official position, which has to date not happened.

- **To fund research on which museums are collecting and which museums have a curator**

This project will receive £25,000 over the next three years. A brief will be prepared for this work and put out to tender.

NS has been dealing with this issue for the SMA and feeding back to the ADS. The possibility of shifting the frame of reference was suggested to include gathering information on what archaeological collections are there and how are they being collected and curated? Some archaeology curators are not given time to manage their archaeological collections and therefore this information should also be noted.

- **Investigate the potential for rationalisation of museum stores**

5 pilot studies would be developed in order to carry out this project. The project brief is currently being developed and interest from 5 museums will be required.

All three of these projects have been given funding and additionally a fourth project, **to resolve the un-deposited archives issue**, has been handed to DB to manage which has less than £50,000 of funding attached to it. Feedback on what the project should entail was asked for.

Discussion notes:

NS – museums really don't want to collect because of space issues but they are against deep storage.

SM – outsourcing is a repeated suggestion but museum are really concerned about this.

A project looking at the potential for and current models of off-site storage and sharing large storage centres could be beneficial. Using the experience of other bodies' use of off-site storage would be helpful. Cambridgeshire doesn't have a museum and as a result are currently using the Cheshire Salt Mine deep storage facility.

CP One problem is that storage could be used as an excuse to reducing the number of museums. Examples where this has happened is Gloucester and in Cornwall Camborne went to Helstone Museum.

SM Oxfordshire threatened to close the Stanlake Stores.

There is no example of a museum exclusively using off-site storage for archaeological archives. The Bodleian is used as an example to guide forward proposals.

There was a huge outcry when Colchester took over the Ipswich archives and peoples were unhappy with the archives moving.

Looking to the SMA project outcomes from their regional stores survey in 2005 would be useful.

Bearing in mind curatorial fears on off-site storage, the project should address this. In Wales the off-site storage idea was proposed to Cymal but wasn't approved as it was considered too risky.

It was also advised that whoever carries out the project should go directly to the museums rather than sending out surveys. People don't usually participate in these surveys and it would actually be more useful to talk face-to-face to the museum staff.

CP suggested that the un-deposited archives resolution and the rationalisation projects should possibly be dealt with as one with the archives resolution project over-seeing the co-ordination of 5 museums and rationalisation work.

Another suggestion was that the projects could possibly be tied onto the back of HS2.

Duncan has requested for agreement on this.

7. OASIS - aka the New Herald

Stage 1 the users needs survey has been completed. The full final report on stage 1 is available here: http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/attach/PROJECT%20HISTORY/HERALD_final_report_v1.4.1.pdf

The report recommends the following for Stage 2:

- **Increase communication, promotion and training.** The responses throughout the survey highlighted the need for more communication, publicity and training on the OASIS system for all areas of the sector. Identified groups include Historic England staff, academics, community groups, and in particular those working in the built historic environment. This will require a post to provide on-going and consistent support for the training and promotion of OASIS and the development of a communication strategy.
- **Design of OASIS to include grey literature only options and backlog upload options.** The OASIS survey responses support the development of different levels of interaction with OASIS by contractors and HERs. To this end, a mechanism that allows OASIS to collect enough data to accompany a grey literature report, whilst not duplicating the whole HER event record, would be welcomed for situations where the HER does not want to participate in OASIS but the contractor would like their report to be archived and online.
- **Importance of import / export / synchronisation functions.** HERs need to be able to transfer data automatically between the HER and OASIS. This would allow for HERs to contribute to, or benefit from, the data in OASIS at a point in the workflow that fits with them. HERs will need to tailor their different systems to interact with the OASIS Application Program Interface (API). It is recommended that a funding source available to help HERs develop the necessary systems to do this. Stage 2 of the HERALD project would need to form partnerships with a number of HERs (both HBSMR users and non-users) willing to pilot the development of import / export functionality between the systems.
- **The inclusion of the museums community.** The project should develop a 'museums view' in the new OASIS allowing museums to access OASIS records which fall within their collections area. This will enable them to see expected depositions and communicate with contractors during the deposition process.

- **Redevelopment of the system to widen scope of recording.** As well as the form being designed to allow for the inclusion of additional modules to accommodate event specific recording (as with the current geophysics module) the main section of the new OASIS form should incorporate a new section for recording the research outcomes of projects in order to inform Research Frameworks and additions to aid recording of specialist techniques. The redevelopment should also enhance the current facility to record building survey work to include better links to terminology and a more detailed metadata schema. The further development of this section needs to be informed by more consultation with the sector.

We are now currently in the process of writing the PD for stage 2 which is the final design and building stage. The actual redevelopment will start next year (if funded by Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland). The requirements identified in Stage 1 were many and varied and so we have tried to make the new OASIS system more flexible so it will meet more people's needs.

The headlines of possible changes include:

BIAB and the Grey Literature Library will be combined with other bibliographic and textual resources from the ADS and made into the ADS Library

Museums will be included in the OASIS workflow and will be able to download information about the archive details from OASIS

HERs will be able to start records in OASIS from their HER software (with the necessary technical enhancements) and contractors will then be able to add to these stem-records. This is only if the HER prefers this workflow and it removes duplication of effort.

The draft project design for stage 2 is available here:

http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/attach/PROJECT%20HISTORY/HERALD_stage_2_project_design_MB_v0.3.pdf

We welcome comments on this!

8. Update on CIDOC

CIDOC is the Committee for International Documentation and DB is on the Archaeological Archives working committee. CIDOC is a little different as it is representative of museum practice in non-first world environments.

The working group have been producing a document that can be more universally applicable. Simply: how to manage a museum. The committee is nearly the end of a first draft and the next meeting for the group is on the 5th November. Once the draft is complete it will be circulated and this should be soon.

Currently there aren't any specific case studies but this is something that will come out of consultation.

9. Action plan updates

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

Now officially an HE project

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

CIfA archives group has taken that on with AGMs and training. No overall piece of work but people are in a day to day context doing this. Also, the Data awards have been bringing further awareness.

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

HERALD is starting to do this.

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

The solving the archives issue HE project will lead towards this. The Arts Council needs to be approached.

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

FAME archives meeting with Adrian Tinder, Duncan Brown, Steve Trow, Barney Sloane, and Quinton Carroll highlights the awareness of archives to archaeological contractors. It was resolved that another meeting was required to further discuss the issue.

The presence of archives on HS2 agenda also indicated the awareness of the issue within and beyond the sector.

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

HE projects are working towards this.

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

It was considered that this could be done through CIfA Archives Group. Subject Specialist Network (SSN).

Born digital project helps with this and there is a possibility of training at a lower level – talking but no action.

R8 – Promote and publicise the collecting areas map.

NS is doing work on that and HE projects will contribute to this.

10. A.O.B

Museum guidelines – HP started this and these are going to go to Duncan and the committee.

NS contacted by a colleague within a museum and they will no longer accept negative project archives. There are new guidelines for Oxfordshire and they are not particularly clear regarding this.

There are issues regarding the AAF website and the ability to make updates. It was suggested that alternative ways of running the website should be looked into.