

Archaeological Archives Forum : Interim meeting 2012

Minutes of Meeting: Wednesday 14 March 2012 English Heritage, Waterhouse Square, London

In attendance: Quinton Carroll: ALGAO (QC) [Chair], Amanda Forster (AF): IFA Archives group, Iain Fraser (IF) RCAHMS, Rachel Edwards (RE): Arboretum Archaeological Consultancy, Duncan Brown: IfA Finds Group/EH (DB), Catherine Hardman: ADS (CH), Nicky Scott: SMA (NS), Karla Graham (KG): ICON and Claire Tsang (CT): EH (Sec).

1. Apologies

Roland Smith: FAME (RS), Jesse Ransley: IfA MAG (JR)

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from 12th October 2011 were agreed.

3. Actions from last meeting (October 2011)

Item 5C PW not identified. **Action CT**

Item 4.6 Catherine Hardman reported back on a meeting taking place with the two Royal Commissions and EH to discuss digital archiving. This was led by William Kilbride (DPC). It mainly looked at deposition requirements to ensure they are a standardised procedure and this is being taken forward.

DB stated that the Linked data project being under taken by Keith May (EH) will provide other ways of reaching the same goal.

CH stated that the project will also assist organisations to maintain their accreditation because if others are working on behalf the lead organisation they will meet the same standards.

NPPF QC reported back he did produce a paragraph commenting on the relevant section and circulated it. The Telegraph paper wrote an article stating that the heritage and environment sections of the document had been bolstered. We now await its launch.

NHPP No new developments, but RE's project: 'Evaluating the Resource in Store' is driven by NHPP 2E2 Capacity loss in Local Authorities.

Arts Council a draft policy statement has been produced by EH and the MLA and altered to take into account current projects and agendas such as the Southport report. We are awaiting EH management to sign it off. **Action** DB to see if it can be circulated to the forum out of interest. The statement should assist people applying funding for projects.

Membership: Welsh membership to be decided. **Action** To be chased QC SCUFA. Mike Heyworth is a possible candidate to represent this body as he already sits on the AAF. **Action** QC to contact Mike.

Selection and Retention Dr Alasdair Brooks, Leicester University, has been contacted about the production of detailed notes on the Selection and Retention of 20th Century material and we are awaiting his response. DB is awaiting meeting.

No comments or ideas have been sent to Duncan Brown about the required approach to developing detailed guidance. It was discussed that the way forward would be to start with the 20th C material.

The IfA are carrying out regional training workshops, the first of which is to be held at Reading in May. This, as well as providing training, should allow people from curatorial and archaeological backgrounds to network.

It was discussed that the development of Regional Stores will enable the development of Selection and Retention policies

IFA conference the archive group will be having a stall at the conference. AAF forum leaflet to be produced and sponsor the archives session. **Action** CH to produce leaflet on what the AAF is. The leaflet should also be sent out in the IFA ebulletin. **Action** QC to tell DB what his ALGAO talk is on.

Relations Outside the UK: The EH bid with Culture2000 has been successful. This will produce a European version of the archive guide. Kathy Perrin is the consultant producing it. Many different countries are feeding in. It is EH responsibility to produce the draft version. The project starts in June and runs for 18 months.

Membership: The IfA archives group were formally made members of the AAF. It is seen as a very good thing as we have more membership from those who create archives. **Action** CT to check email list and whether CD updated it.

Northern Ireland: we have had attendance before, it is difficult to gauge who would be relevant representatives as the NI infrastructure is unclear to those outside it. NI representatives could potentially be corresponding members because of travel times. The IfA archives group is carrying out work in NI soon and when they meet with NI curatorial staff they may be able to gauge who would be relevant members. **Action** AF

EH/SMA project update

A synopsis of the project was given by RE (see PD). The project is currently in Stage 2; data collection. The survey's have gone out, one to museums asking about their current situation re storage and one from FAME to a wide selection of archaeological units. There will be possibility to extend the survey to Wales and Scotland (and some of the units FAME are contacting excavate in these areas), but currently no monies. The project started on 23rd January 2012. There are currently 45/150 response from the museum curators with SMA members responding faster and 7/102 from the units. There will be time to chase responses. The surveys have been kept as short a possible, there is no specific focus on digital archives as the aim is to find out about the lack of physical storage in England.

It was asked whether universities and societies were included. Roland Smith (FAME) is attempting to keep it simple, but after the initial survey we could target specific bodies to estimate the average of number of projects undertaken since 1960's.

Completion date for this project is June 2012. The group agreed it would be useful for Rachel Edwards the project manager to attend the next AAF meeting.

The results of the consultation should be ready in May.

DB stated we also need to investigate how to follow up the results of the project.

The AAF could work with the SMA to organise a meeting, this would be identified in the UPD, and could be funded through project planning. **Action** AAF to volunteer to host a workshop to discuss the next steps. DB to coordinate as project assurance officer and work with CT to organise.

4. Member Issues

IfA archives group are holding regional workshop to discuss regional archives problems. This also provides opportunity for museums and archaeologists to network. 12 month role out.

RCAHMS: Scottish government has recognised importance of the body and has charged Historic Scotland to undertake an options paper for its sustainability. Options have been given and a decision will be made later end of May/June.

There is a reorganised storage no problem with storage of documentary archives, and they are sharing new storage with Edinburgh City Council

English Heritage: NHPP is picking up pace. Activity 2E2 is funding Rachel's project. KG added that guidance of waterlogged archives has been released and is on the EH website.

ADS: The SWORDARM project (a JISC project linked to OASIS which enables a means of metadata collection to produce an online ingest tool) is being trialled with Oxford. It will make archiving with the ADS cheaper, particularly for small to medium archives.

There is a new ISO for digital archives

SMA: The effects on museums post Arts Council changing in funding is to be discussed in this year's conference.

ICON: Jim Williams undertook an East Midlands survey for archaeological conservation skills coverage, which will now spread to all regions

ALGAO is undertaking a planning survey each year for EH. This year added archiving queries. 82% response. 6 counties are now not covered by museums collecting which equals 1/3 country.

IfA project underway to develop standard and guidance for curators..

Sussex Letter (SMA - attachment "burial costs")

The AAF is wondering what the methodology for selection is. The SMA to ask Winchester MS; what they did and how did they do it? And if it worked is it a model that would help us?

IfA MAG

Jesse Ransley is no longer part of the IfA MAG, but may continue on the AAF if the IfA committee is happy.

5. AOB

None

6. DONM

17th October. Cheshire salt mines, nr Wilmslow. QC to arrange. **ACTION** DB to find EH place local to have meeting.