

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES FORUM

Annual Meeting Minutes

(30th Meeting)

Historic Environment Scotland, Edinburgh
11:00 – 16:00, 25th September 2017

Claire Tsang (Historic England) (Sec.), Duncan Brown (Historic England) (Chair), Elizabeth Walker (Museum Wales/National Panel for Wales), Helen Parslow (FAME), Iain Fraser (HES), Katie Green (ADS), Nicky Scott (SMA), Rhonda Robinson (NI Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities), Sam Paul (ClfA/ClfA Archives Group)

Apologies

Caradoc Peters (University Archaeology UK), John Lewis (Society of Antiquaries: London), Matt Thompson (English Heritage), Mike Evans (Historic England), Mike Heyworth (CBA), Nancy Grace (National Trust), Quinton Carroll (ALGAO), Sarah Morton (ICON/AG), Scott Furlong (Arts Council), Sinead McCartan (National Museums : Northern Ireland)

Minutes of last meeting

Actions:

DB to discuss accession registers as a resource for developing national archive register with the SMA

Action: DB to discuss with SMA the inclusion of accession registers as part of the HAIS project

Actions related to other agenda items below:

UAUK: no response to the archive questionnaire: CP will chase for the next meeting

See news updates, below

The SMA Archives Report: It was agreed that the AAF will send comment on the report to the SMA : QC to draft and circulate to the AAF

With QC not at the meeting it was unclear if this had happened

Action CT to raise this with QC

Negative Archives: NS to take the lead on this

This is a separate item on the agenda, see below

A final action was noticed from the previous minutes: DB and EW were to discuss EAC acknowledgement in the Welsh National guidance. This has been completed, with the exception that the logos need to be forwarded for the document.

Action: DB to chase

Membership

William Kilbride was welcomed onto the Forum, representing the DPC. The Society of Antiquaries: London membership was questioned. RR reported that she is unclear if Sinead McCartan was still in a relevant post.

Action CT to contact JL and SM

News updates

University Archaeology UK

Ahead of the meeting CP circulated a summary of results so far, ahead of the meeting, and is planning on chasing departments and will produce a summary report.

National Trust

Ahead of the meeting NG reported the NT are still working on a project plan for a regional resource centre for archaeology collections and archives.

SMA

The SMA are currently involved in two projects;

Archaeology Collecting Survey: The second year of this three-year project is in progress. Surveys have been sent out with closing date of 3rd September and as of August 17th 122 responses had been received which is similar to last year. Some of the responses were from museums who didn't respond last year. The SMA have also presented the survey and results from last at the EAA 2017 conference in Maastricht. Results from this year's survey will hopefully be ready for the SMA conference in November.

It is expected that the summary of this year's survey will be ready for the November conference. Last year's results showed some difficulties surrounding how museums approach digital curation. Feedback this year suggests that museums would welcome a standard paragraph explaining ADS submission that they could add to their own guidelines and SMA would be grateful if ADS would consider helping with this. NS asked KG (ADS) if they could provide ADS submission guidance for museums to assist with this.

Action: KG to provide text and CT to [Circulate report](#)

Rationalisation Project: As part of the HE funded SMA project on rationalising collections, there had been a meeting to discuss results the overall conclusion so far is that selection is resource heavy and requires expertise, which makes it an expensive project, and thus it is cheaper to develop further storage. However all participants identified that undertaking the audit ahead of selection was invaluable in itself, leading to greater understanding of the collections leaving them in a greater position to promote the value of the collections. Because of this is it likely that guidance for undertaking scoping exercises will also be produced.

Communications: Gail Boyle attended 21st Century Archive Group meeting and museums have expressed concern regarding a lack of information over how the forthcoming HS2 archives will be deposited. Gail is communicating with Helen Glass and Nick Shepherd but there is not yet a final answer.

SMA have been interested in the CIFA chartered members status above Member status but are asking for clarity to define the parameters especially as to what their museum archaeology members would need in terms of CPD to be able to qualify.

'Gathering Information on Deep Storage Archive Facilities in England' report was read with interest by SMA. The table of museum charges is seen as very helpful. SMA have feedback relating to questions of how staff time, accessibility and also future expansion were costed in the comparisons, which presumably is built into the business models for Deepstore and Restore.

SMA conference titled *It's not just about the archaeology – or is it?* will take place at Millennium Gallery, Sheffield Thursday 2nd – Friday 3rd Nov 2017. Tickets are now available through Eventbrite.

Members of the SMA and several members of the AAF went to the CIFA 21st-century Challenges in Archaeology [workshop](#) in April, entitled: 'Archaeological archives: new models for archive creation, deposition, storage, access and research; what can the sector do to redefine the archaeological archive and realise its public value?'

Action: CT to circulate link to draft minutes

CIfA

Chartership was discussed, it was recognised that work on developing chartership for 'non-fieldwork' archaeologists was on-going. CIfA's [AGM](#) and workshop is 'Working together: how effective collaboration between universities and the commercial sector benefits us all' and builds upon '[Reflections in Archaeology](#)' a British Academy report on university archaeology.

The archives group committee has new members. Currently the committee are working on the development of a toolkit for selection, however progress had been slow. KG asked CT to circulate the HE Data management toolkit as an example of toolkit; CT noted that it did include our own policy that may be useful.

Action: CT to circulate the toolkit.

DB raised that working with the CIFA finds group would be useful and that to enable the project it might be worth the group seeking funding from the national organisations. IF and EW noted that both their organisations were very much interested in the success of the project.

Action: DB to raise at the CIfA Finds group on the 10th October

FAME

No news to report

ADS

The ADS is about to announce its first [Open access archaeology award](#). Access to the BIAB back end is about to go live to enable external updating. This has led to the ADS slim lining the registration system for the various ADS resources and may lead to a need to reregister for some areas. KG is currently re-designing the ADS website. The ADS are also involved in HE funded project; [DEBS](#) which is enabling volunteer recording of graveyards as well as being involved with the EU project; [ArchAIDE](#), a project developing applications for the auto-recognition of Roman Pottery in the field, archiving the dataset behind it. The ADS are providing ADS Easy Training courses next year and are looking for hosts; several members noted they would be willing to.

Wales

Due to political reviews progress has slowed. The national panel is continuing to look at box charges, storage costs, and selection and retention, but recent meetings have had to be postponed. Simon Thurley's report on national museum storage is still forthcoming.

Northern Ireland

Due to the political climate progress has been slow. Selection is a topic of interest to NI. Work has begun on developing excavation licences to provide requirements for archives, currently stakeholders have been identified and a timetable has been developed for later November and will discuss developments changes with commercial and academic sector.

There was discussion on the storage situation in Northern Ireland with lack of cover from local museums and NI Historic Environment; this led to discussion on resources centres

Action: CT to recirculate [AAF guidance](#)

HES

IF reported HES has Archives Accreditation as well as Museums Accreditation, and noted that attaining this was in itself a useful process.

HES photographic archive 'Green Boxes' is subject to a mass digitization project of 600,000 prints. Work is on-going to rationalise the number of HES stores and this is a joint project with National Galleries Scotland. The testing of Preservica is now complete and the next stage is to ingest backlog archives onto the system. The system will go live in October.

HES too are interested in developing selection criteria, so also interested in the ClfA archives group selection toolkit.

The AAF thanked HES for hosting the day's meeting.

Historic England

Historic England's new headquarters are at Cannon Street. Mike Evans head of the Historic England Archive is retiring and with that he wishes to sort out the issue of microfiche; to be discussed as part of AOB.

DB also attended the C21st Archaeology workshop on archives and noted that what the meeting had established is the raising of issues that have been discussed at the level of the AAF, to the agenda of more senior levels. Discussion covered establishing a National store.

Action: CT [Recirculate report](#)

Work had progressed since CT published her report on 'Gathering Information on Deep Storage Archive Facilities in England', with a further more comprehensive view of storage charges to be commissioned, this will hopefully lead to discussion on universal charging structures.

Action CT to [recirculate](#)

HE has funded a report reviewing the standards of finds recording, which was completed in the summer. This set out 40 criteria by which 1000 reports were reviewed and this identified differences in quality by material, but that majority of reports only meet 50-60% of the criteria. This has a knock on affect to the ability to apply selection criteria, as it identifies that not all material is satisfactorily published.

Action: CT to [circulate link](#)

The student for the Doctoral Partnership on Palaeo-environmental archives has been selected, and work is beginning.

SMA Archives Report

See above

Updates from the South West Projects

There a further [workshops](#) on the 12th October (Salisbury), 9th November (Exeter) and 14th November (Bristol)

Negative Archives

There was only one response to the call for information and what was provided was contradictory to their institution's policy. It was agreed that an AAF guidance note of the definition and expectation of archiving negative archives (whether they be archives with physical finds or archives of negative results) is required. This should be completed for the ClfA Archives group in March.

Action: NS to take the lead on this with HP and IF

OASIS

The development of BIAB has delayed progress on this, but currently the Herald back end is being built and currently 3000 Oasis reports are being added to the site a month. The expected expanse of this number from HS2 projects will be an issue for HE and this should be raised to the Archaeology Forum.

Action Plan Updates

1 Produce a policy statement on the significance of archaeological archives nationally, and their importance as a key resource in the future: *Historic England, Arts Council England, Archaeological Archives Forum*

The delay in publishing this is an issue as the statement underpins all other activity.

Action: To be discussed at the HE archives meeting DB/QC

2 Promote the potential of archaeological archives as a resource for engaging all communities: *The Archaeological Archives Forum, the Society of Museum Archaeologists, and the Institute for Archaeologists*

This is done through the existence of the CIFA AAG

3 Establish a national strategy for archive completion as a means of providing easy access to the archaeological record: *The Archaeological Archives Forum*

This is being taken forward through the development of OASIS

4 Develop a national strategy for the storage and curation of archaeological archives: *Arts Council England, Historic England, Archaeological Archives Forum*

Issues are being highlighted by the SMA reports that highlight a need for a national strategy.

Action DB to discuss this with the SF and CT raise it to the Archaeology Forum

5 Ensure that the significance of archives is fully recognised at all stages of planning-led archaeological work: *Archaeological Archives Forum, Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers, Society of Museum Archaeologists, Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers*

There is no report on this as QC is at the ClfA 21st Archaeology workshop today. However members noted that since the East Anglian Archaeology report there had been a noted change in when work is being signed off.

6 Seek solutions for archive material that currently cannot be transferred to a repository: *Archaeological Archives Forum, Historic England, Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers, Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers*

See R4

7 Develop a framework for the provision of archaeological archive advice to practitioners in planning authorities, contracting organisations, museums, and community groups: *Archaeological Archives Forum, Institute for Archaeologists*

Now a CIFA only task

8 Promote and publicise the collecting areas map: *Society of Museum Archaeologists, Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers*

Action NS to chase SMA for report on situation

A.O.B.

CT asked for updates to the news section of our website these will include CIDOC, and a link to C21st Archaeology workshop, and the accreditation of Scotland and Wales

Action: CT to phrase and circulate

The effectiveness and membership of this forum was discussed, as well as enabling it is important that we have an output and negative archives guidance and assistance with the ClfA selection toolkit our important current projects.

Mike Evans (HEA) has raised that the HEA wish to stop collecting microfiche. It was agreed that this was acceptable as it is an outdated form of security copying, although remains cost effective in some situations. It is important that a policy is put in place to replace this, which will be relevant to repositories and data creators.

Action CT to take the lead on this with NS and KG

CT to add to management the rota for hosting the meeting.

Date & location of next meeting (Edinburgh)

Next meeting will be in Birmingham 13th March (the day before CIFA AG AGM).

Action: HS to investigate FAME hosting and CT will book HE office room as a back-up.