

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS

Since its inception in 1982 the Institute has

- Set out the expected standards of work for archaeologists and provided guidance and good practice advice
- Introduced a career structure for the archaeological professions identifying the skills professional archaeologist should have; training to achieve these skills; accredited grades which recognise these skills; and setting minimum levels of remuneration to accompany these grades
- Achieved recognition for archaeology as a profession through its Royal Charter and bringing us into step with other chartered professional institutes

### In the beginning.....

The idea of establishing an institute for archaeologists came about in 1973 when the Council for British Archaeology set up a working party on Professionalism in Archaeology. This was due to a rapid increase in the number of employed archaeologists and the need for a body to be responsible for the establishment and maintenance of professional standards in archaeology.

### 1970's

In 1979 an Association for the Promotion of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (APIFA) was established. This group determined that the objectives of the proposed Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) should include 'the definition and maintenance of appropriate standards of

- a. Training and education in field archaeology
- b. Responsible and ethical conduct in the execution and supervision of work
- c. Conservation of the archaeological heritage'

### Introducing of standards of practice

In May 1980 APIFA published a draft *Code of conduct*; the election of the Institute's founding Council was held on 21 December 1982 and by 1983 it had set up its first staffed office in Birmingham.

The need for a 'professional grievance' procedure was first raised in 1984 and rules were adopted at the 1986 AGM. This provided a mechanism for complaints to be made against individual members who were thought to not be complying with the *Code of conduct*, promoting the importance of accountability amongst professional archaeologists.

### 1980's

Low pay and poor job security in archaeology have been a major problem throughout the Institute's history. In 1985 a working party on archaeological contracts looked both at contracts for services to developers and of employment for archaeologists. This was in response to a growing sense of dissatisfaction from the junior ranks of fieldwork employees who perceived that there were fundamental problems with the structure and funding of archaeology.

In 1986 the Institute passed a resolution at AGM that the use of 'paid volunteers' was directly contrary to the 'highest standards of ethical and responsible behaviour' set by the Institute.

The next steps were to promote barriers of entry to professional practice ie encouraging clients and stakeholders to use accredited professionals, helping with self-regulation and raising standards of archaeological work to provide a better service to the public. With the publication of PPG 16 in 1990, developer funding for archaeology became the norm along with archaeological competition. In the 1980's and 90's competitive tendering was a hot topic of discussion along with a fear of 'cowboy archaeologists' and undercutting. This increased the demands for greater regulation and the Institute set up a *Standards in British Archaeology* working party in 1991. The first five standards and guidance documents – primarily relating to fieldwork – were adopted at AGMs in 1993 and 1994.

## 1990's

At a similar time, the Institute began to develop the outline of the Registered Organisations scheme, which came into being in 1996. Like with individual accreditation, in return for registration, the scheme requires organisations to comply with the *Code of conduct* and to work in accordance with defined policies and procedures, and current best practice.

In the same year IFA Council adopted the report of the *Archaeological employment in Britain* working party which recommended that the Institute should take an interest in employment matters and career structure. As a result, Principle 5 of the *Code of conduct* was introduced along with accompanying rules and a proposed set of minimum salary recommendations for archaeologists.

In 1999 IFA launched its training vision to set out the roles that archaeologists fulfil, and the skills required to meet these (National Occupational Standards), the training required to provide the skills and the qualifications to meet these criteria (NVQs and apprenticeships) and, a suite of grades of professional accreditation to demonstrate an individual's competence. This set out a plan for a professional career structure in archaeology and could link professional accreditation to remuneration with minimum salaries.

### **An Institute for all**

Recognising that archaeologists work in all aspects of the historic environment, a resolution to change the name from the Institute of Field Archaeologists to the Institute for Archaeologists was supported by the majority of members in 1999 but not the 75 per cent required to pass this at AGM. In 2002 a new Memorandum and Articles of association were adopted in which the word 'field' had been removed, and in 2008 members voted in favour of adopting a trading name of the Institute for Archaeologists along with a rebrand to reflect this.

## 2000's

At the 2013 AGM, members agreed that a formal petition for Royal Charter should be made to the Privy Council and on 9 December 2014 the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists was officially launched marking a significant step for the archaeological profession and bringing it in step with other chartered institutes.

*This is a summary of the more detailed article What the Dickens happened to the IFA? By Peter Hinton and included in Great Excavations Shaping the Archaeological Profession, edited by John Schofield, Oxbow Books 2011 ISBN 978-1-84217-409-8*