



Chair's introduction

Gwyl Williams

By the time you read this the discussions on minima will be over and a decision will have been made. The small percentages proposed were often not enough to prevent people earning less in real terms than they did last year. Sitting on the fence is only going to convince people that the IfA doesn't care for any of their members except those who are already running the show, and consequently, that it is the self-righteous wing of FAME, which is perhaps not too far from how it is perceived by many people already. Minima are essential because they are the means of the discipline ensuring that there are future archaeologists by providing a living wage for those at the lower end of the pay-scale.

Bottling tackling the pay-crisis in archaeology is not going to make it go away.

There has been some noise, particularly on the BAJR Forum about this, with a number of people saying that it is not the IfA's role to set minima. We at Diggers' Forum dispute that. Indeed, I am amazed that it is a private individual's company which is setting the bar. It is only his own high ethical standards between Diggers and the utterly unregulated free-market. And as we know from the banks, the power industries, the transport companies – the list is endless – self-regulation is at best a sop, and more often than not merely a sham. Standard of work is inextricably linked to pay and conditions, lets not forget these are minima -the companies should be charging more!

Higher rates is what is needed, reflecting the professionalism we assume, making us an equal with the other special services in the building industry/development sector – not a squeeze on the least well-paid. Housing benefit and child tax credits are going to be cut in the coming year; wages are in real terms going to be worth less. The effects of these swingeing cuts are already being felt by under 35s and under 25s. Clearly this only affects a proportion of the archaeological profession, but if you are the breadwinner and are going to want to start a family, or set up in legally recognised relationship in the future, then GET OUT OF ARCHAEOLOGY!

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groups@archaeologists.net

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If you have access to an A3 printer then you can use booklet print: go to http://kb2.adobe.com/cps/897/cpsid_89736.html for details.



Diggers' Forum mission statement

The Diggers' Forum (DF) is committed to creating a positive, sustainable and financially viable career for all professional archaeologists at all points in their career. The DF is a Special Interest Group of the Institute for Archaeologists representing all archaeologists working out on site at whatever grade. Membership of the DF is open to all.

The DF was formed in 2004 to represent the views, aspirations and professional requirements of its members, in addition to campaigning for improvements in pay and conditions within the profession.

The views of those new to a career in archaeology, or who are employed at the lower rungs of the job, are under-represented in the industry. It is a key aim of the Diggers' Forum to redress this balance and keep the issues and welfare of its membership at the top of the IfA agenda and publicised to the world beyond.

The Diggers' Forum will serve as a platform to provide up to date news and information to its members, as well as actively encouraging debate and involvement within the DF and the IfA on the developing roles required of field-staff now and in the decades to come.

Join us in the Diggers' Forum and help make a positive difference to our profession: <http://www.archaeologists.net/groups/diggers>



Letter from the Chair

Continued from page 1

Those who feel that the IfA shouldn't be involved in pay are, frankly, doing alright. However, the temporary site assistant, the meek or shy individual, the person who is concerned that their job will be slashed if they make noise, the obsessive archaeologist who lives for archaeology and doesn't notice their poverty; these are not in a position, or do not have the inclination, to fight for a just reward for a job well-done. These practitioners are the ones who will be affected by the increase in real terms.

On BAJR I've noticed several contributors comment on that 'It's the unions' job': be that as it may, but in many firms, the unions are poorly if at all represented as the companies are small enough not to need to recognise them. Too many of the site staff who have passed through our doors, whom I have asked as to whether they are unionised have responded 'What's the point?' and following explanation why, still fail to join. Apathy or despair, I don't know. Furthermore, union representation is also spread over Prospect, Unison and Unite: and divided we are conquered.

If the IfA wants to be taken seriously by all archaeologists, and not just MIFAs, who form over 50% of its corporate membership, then the IfA must reach out to all archaeologists. I feel that there is a disconnect with the discourse in regard to outreach and Southport when one considers those who are already in the profession. The barriers to entry of which we hear so much seem to be a glass-ceiling on everyone except those for whom management is an end in itself. However, management needs projects and staff to manage.

When I started writing this at the beginning of September 2012, it felt a bit like September 2011: a rubbish summer, followed by an apparent pick-up in work. However, by November, the weather had failed to pick up and rumours of financial disaster were doing the rounds. Meanwhile over on BAJR the September threads on the sudden explosion in employment opportunities and the untrained workforce underpaid to work on sites which are under-budgeted were replaced by the discussion on BAJR minima, driven by the IfA's discussions on such. Some things, it feels, never change.

Nevertheless, there have been some changes this year: the results of last year's Away Survey have encouraged some employers to reconsider aspects of away-work; other employees are using the survey in discussion with management. I was cheered by the response to the Away Survey report by Rescue and the few employers who provided

comment, but disappointed that other bodies representing British archaeology and archaeologists failed to contribute to the discussion. It has to be said that sticking one's head in the sand will not make a problem disappear: the converse is that there are no problems in British archaeology. Allegedly.

During the summer, Chiz has been doing the conference rounds, talking on de-skilling at a joint DF/Finds Group session at the IfA conference, and on reskilling and re-engagement at the 21st Century Archaeology conference in Winchester and the FAME FORUM and the joint IfA/Prospect conference in York. One outcome of this is an awareness that we cannot fall into the trap of arguing for a profession while employing an unskilled labour force who hack out features for which they do not understand the taphonomic or formation processes that they subsequently record mechanistically on a *pro forma*.

Since my own full-time start in British commercial archaeology in the early 1990s, I have felt that there has been a lack of desire to train people, while complaining that they were insufficiently skilled – in contrast to my experiences, before and subsequently, working in other European countries – creating a Catch-22 situation for the early career archaeologist inducing many to leave the profession disenchanted, and those who remain to feel that if it were good enough for them, then, why change things.

In the next few weeks the DF will be launching a new survey on CPD, which forms part of all IfA members' PDP, to make an up-to-date assessment of the level of training people undertake and are given; furthermore we want to measure the support that people perceive they receive, during this difficult economic period. Anecdotally, reports suggest that people's training is insufficient, and where people already have skills for many there are infrequent opportunities to develop them, furthermore, some archaeologists feel that even where they carry out much in their own time, they are not given, or are given reluctantly, the holiday to go to conferences or workshops, for which they are paying themselves.

I'd ask everyone to please contribute.

On 17th December, the DF will be contributing a half-day session at TAG in Liverpool on the topic of *The application of method and theory in professional archaeology*. We hope to see some of you there!



Letter from the editor

Chiz Harward

This issue of the newsletter is a bit shorter than usual, that's a consequence of a busy time working out on site as we seem to have been experiencing a mini-boom in recent months. Companies have been finding it hard to recruit experienced Diggers and there is some evidence for advertised wages rising which is good news. Lets hope the work keeps going over the winter, and into the new year, and that wages also keep going up...

As well as being busy out on site, the DF have also been busy with the annual IfA minima debate, although that has ended in frustration and disappointment. There are reports on the arguments, and the debate, and the way forward, in the following pages. Its just really frustrating that it seems its never a good time to pay a decent wage for decent staff, and there's always a handy excuse to put it off. DF members have put a lot of unpaid time and effort into working with the IfA on the minima issue, and it is very disappointing to see all that hard work come to nothing, especially when the legal issues that have stalled the minima debate were apparently a known potential problem that membership were not informed of. The legal issues seem to have surfaced at a convenient moment for those opposed to minima.

In addition to all the usual DF news we have another article on an aspect of industrial archaeology by Gwyl Williams. Plus reviews of our joint day conference with Prospect. We also have a rather *different* article on how to survive sickness and injury; the attitude of the anonymous



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author appears to be tongue in cheek, but you never can tell.

As ever, if you have any news, photos, articles, opinions or site reports that you would like to share with the rest of the DF then please get in touch! Its your newsletter and its up to you what you end up getting to read. We'd like to run more news of sites and findings, member's news and opinions, end of site parties and reunions, as well as articles that may interest and or inform other members. But that all depends on you!

Cotswold Outdoor Discount

Did you know that IfA members can get a 15% discount at Cotswold Outdoors? If you are into the outdoors, or just need some new socks for site then you could start making back your IfA subs whilst shopping for anything from fleeces to sleeping bags, tents to torches.

Quote 'Institute for Archaeologists' at the till and show your IfA membership card. IfA members of the DF should have been sent a discount code by email they can use. If you didn't receive it, let us know. You may need to speak to the manager as staff may not be immediately aware of the discount. The discount code is also valid for phone and online orders.

Please note this discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. If you have any difficulty using this offer please contact the IfA office (and let us know as well!).

If you would like to contribute to the Diggers' Forum Newsletter, or have a suggestion on a subject we should cover, please contact the editor by email: chiz@urban-archaeology.com

Dates for the diary and details of events or news should be sent to Gwylm Williams by email: gwilymwilliams70@yahoo.co.uk



DF Roundup and news



DF Committee news

The committee has been busy individually, and in informal meetings, although hectic schedules mean we haven't had a formal face-to-face meeting for a while. We'll be getting together soon to discuss DF business and what our strategy should be for the future. As ever we'd be interested in your views on any issues affecting our membership.

Sadie Watson and Chiz Harward have been busy on the IfA pay minima working party, and it looks like there is more work ahead for them. Geoff Morley has been representing DF on the IfA Groups Forum.

DF membership

We now have 646 members, which is fantastic. The more members, the louder our voice.

Diggers' Forum on Facebook

We now have over 250 likes, which is also great! Please spread the word, and use the page to post items that will be of interest to members and let us know what you are thinking

on the issues that are affecting you.

You can find the DF Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/DiggersForum>

and our Twitter feed at: <https://twitter.com/#!/DiggersForum>

Diggers' Forum AGM

We have decided to hold our Annual General Meeting at a fringe event during the IfA's Conference in Birmingham next April. We also hope to be able to have some kind of social event after the business is completed. Hope to see as many members there as possible, if you are unable to attend the Conference during the day then maybe you could come along for a drink in the evening? As always the DF will offer to cover travel costs, and Birmingham is within easy reach of the majority of the country!

Got a spare hour?

We are always looking for more active members to help share the load of running the DF. We would like to hear from anyone with a bit of time to spare, whether that is to distribute copies of the newsletter, pass on information, help organise conferences, write news, opinions or articles, or be on our committee. If you are interested in helping the Diggers' Forum directly then please get in touch.

Complaints? Over to you...

One possibility for the DF is taking a stronger and more pro-active line on employers who carry out poor quality work or treat staff badly, whether that be poor H&S, low pay, poor site accommodation, or lack of training. All of that though is dependant on members actually providing verifiable evidence of breaches. Its no good complaining to each other, the only way of stopping the bad apples from ruining it for all of us is to use the established mechanisms and to report bad practice.

Pay check

We haven't had much information in on pay rises -most pay consultations start shortly, although we did hear of a 2% pay rise at one of the 'Big Four'. If you got a pay rise, let us know as it is very useful information in our



campaigning on pay. Its quite interesting the different messages many employers send out to different audiences -one of very straitened circumstances when consulted on minima, but still affording a pay rise, albeit a small one.

As ever we URGENTLY need information from DF members whose wages are now below IfA minima -if you work for an IfA Registered Organisation and your wages are below the relevant minima then get in touch and we'll take up your case. In such cases there should be no need for any names or testimony -we can simply ask the IfA RO committee to look into wages.

If you work for a non-RO we also want to know what salary you get -do you get less than IfA minima. Non-RO employers are traditionally blamed for driving down wages, but we can't find evidence for this so we want you to tell us if your wages are below minima. Email us in confidence and we can strengthen our arguments on your behalf.

IfA Council elections

So the new members of IfA Council have been announced, we hope all the DF supporters used their votes to ensure that Diggers are represented and our opinions get a fair hearing.

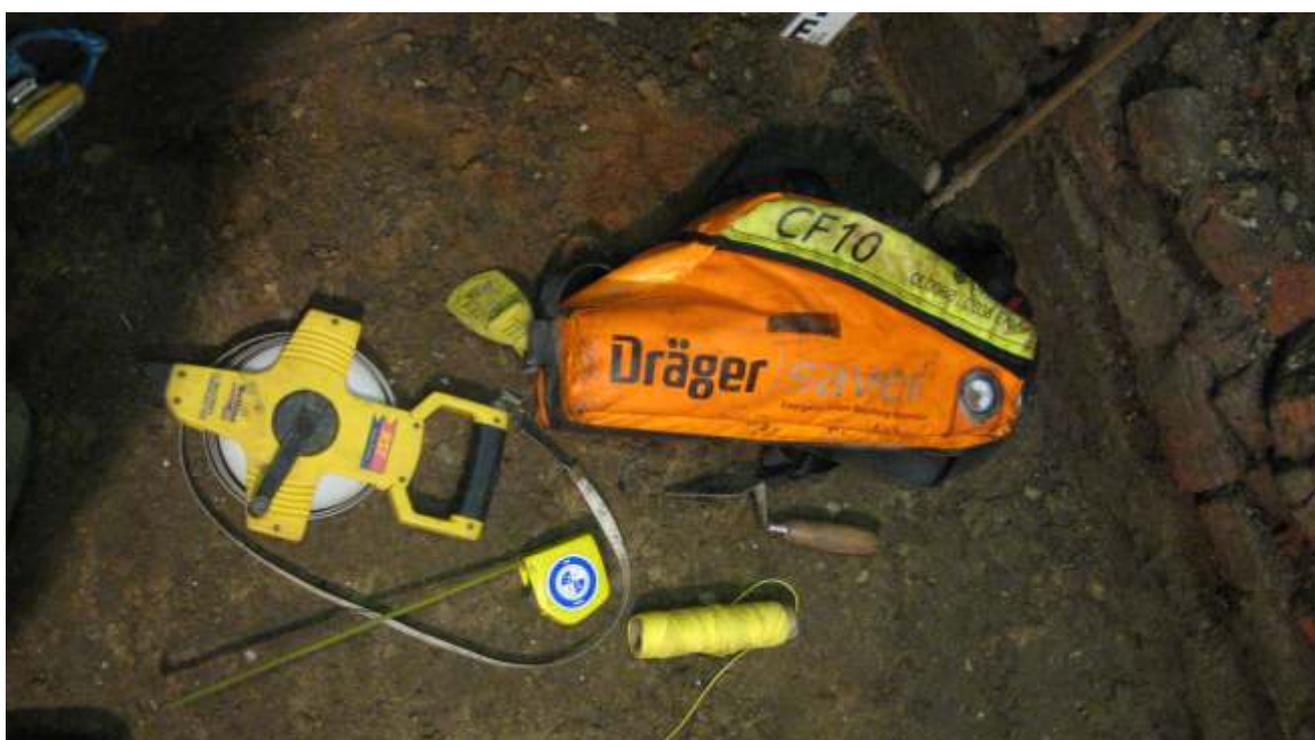
Needless to say we remain in the minority,

largely due to our working habits; site hours and responsibilities and short term contracts do not lend themselves easily to getting time off for IfA meetings etc. However those of us who are on Council hope that the new members will support those issues closest to our *raison d'etre*: namely the improvement of terms and conditions for field staff and development and maintenance of archaeological techniques. The classic criticism of Council in the past has been that it is made up of management grades and non-field staff and there is certainly some truth in that, due in part to the difficulty we face in attending meetings.

The next couple of years will see dramatic changes for the IfA, with the continuing process of Chartership and the re-organisation of the Institute's governing body into two parts: one will be a small Board of Governors type group who will manage the financial and governing issues, and a larger group to be a Representative Assembly, who would steer policy, strategy and modify standards. There is a call for consultation on both these major issues, available here:

<http://www.archaeologists.net/news/120913-consultation-ifa-and-royal-charter-incorporation>).

As always it is the members who should be steering the way forward for the IfA, so please do send in your comments if asked, however short they may be.



Inflation news

Latest inflation news (September) is that the CPI is now down to 2,2% and the RPI is at 2.6%. The drop is partially caused by gas and electricity prices falling out of the figures. Meanwhile the living wage is up to £8.55 an hour (London) and £7.45 an hour everywhere else (source: BBC news). That puts IfA minima for PIfA below the London Living Wage.

Jobscheck

As ever we check every edition of the **IfA Jobs Information Service** and the **BAJR** website for any job adverts which appear to pay below IfA minima or BAJR Grades, or equivalent freelance rates. Since your last newsletter the Diggers' Forum have complained about a small number of adverts on the JIS but are yet to receive a reply...

Earlier in the year David Connolly of BAJR announced he was implementing the DF recommendations on advertising jobs. After an initially good start things have slipped a bit, but we are still awaiting a response from the IfA JIS on our suggestions -we feel it is really important to DF members to have a transparent advert that tells you what you will be receiving. Good employers should be shouting that they pay travel time and enhanced subs, bad employers should be exposed. We will continue to push for transparent adverts and are hoping to launch an App that will help you calculate the real benefits of any job.

We'd like to know your opinions on this, especially if you feel that pay rates should be published online.

As ever if you hear of any job that pays below the IfA rates then let us know and we'll see if there is anything we can do about it.

DF Survey on training and CPD

The DF are putting the finishing touches to our new survey on training and CPD provision and experience in archaeology. The format will be similar to our Away work survey, and will be

available online. At the DF we believe access to training is a major issue within commercial archaeology, especially for site workers, but as ever we want hard evidence of what is and what isn't actually happening out there. We'll be launching the survey soon.

DF surveys -further research?

Following our Away work and travel survey report, and our imminent Training and CPD survey, we are talking to a leading archaeology university department about the possibility of carrying out further DF surveys, and collating the results of all our surveys. We'll let you know how it all pans out!

Walbrook blog

The River Walbrook is one of London's 'lost rivers', and was the main topographical feature of the Roman settlement, running through the centre of the town. MoLA are lucky enough to be excavating two big sites along the lower Walbrook near its confluence with the Thames, as well as several at its upper reaches, where Roman burials tumble into the stream waters. Roman Temples, industrial areas, early medieval turf-walled buildings and as much ritual activity as you could wish for have been encountered and there is much more to come.

If you dream of deep waterlogged stratigraphy, unrivalled preservation conditions for metalwork, timber, leather and writing tablets then you could check out the blog for the Walbrook Discovery Programme:

<http://walbrookdiscovery.wordpress.com/> .

It's not called the Pompeii of the North for nothing!



IfA statement on recommended minimum salaries and recommended starting salaries for 2013-14

At its meeting on 15 November 2012 Council carefully considered the report of its working party and the responses to IfA's consultation on some options for recommended minimum salaries for April 2013 to March 2014. Taking account of the range of viewpoints in the membership and a very wide variation in recommendations in the consultation responses, Council decided to accelerate its Strategic Plan commitment to a review of its strategic approach to encouraging increases in remuneration for archaeologists. This review will include inter alia consideration of approaches by other professional institutes and the potential legal constraints on its current and future courses of action. Pending the results of this review Council has decided to defer decisions both on its salary recommendations for 2013-14 and on the application of those recommendations using the mechanisms available to the Institute. The issues will be reconsidered by Council on 30 January **2013**.

Council wishes to reaffirm that it will maintain a firm and clear commitment to addressing remuneration issues in the profession, and to working with other sector partners that have responsibilities in this area.

Jan Wills, Honorary Chair



IfA salary minima:

Diggers' Forum report from the IfA Council meeting November 2012

Sadie Watson

The IfA Council members trooped along to Waterloo for the annual meeting at which the salary minima are discussed and decided upon for the next year. This year it was hoped that some of the annual problems associated with this discussion could be minimised by the creation of a Working Party, two members of which were your DF reps Chiz and Sadie. We met Prospect, FAME, Nick Shepherd and Hester Cooper-Reade of Albion Archaeology in the summer of 2012 and thrashed out what we thought at the time was a working compromise. Then we went away and waited for the consultation documents to be circulated to members and ROs.

This was done, and due to a relatively small response the Executive Committee of the IfA (consisting of the Chair, Treasurer, CEO and a couple of others) decided to widen the options offered within the consultation and consult again. That was the email members should have received from Jan Wills (Hon Chair) back in October. This time there were more responses, which proved to be as diametrically opposed as ever.

There were also movements from a number of ROs to hijack the entire process by suggesting that the IfA should not be setting minima and that there may be legal arguments against a Chartered body (such as the IfA hopes to

become) setting pay levels at all. This hijacking proved successful as again Council were held to ransom by this opinion, frightened into postponing any decision regarding minima until the next meeting in January 2013, despite the fact that this will probably be too late for many employers to change their budgets and raise pay levels. Funny that this year the Chartership argument has entered the fray; in the past their threats to leave the RO scheme have relied upon the economic arguments against raising salaries, despite their being a boom in work for many of us. It now seems clear that FAME has no remit to speak on behalf of its members, and that certain ROs will ride roughshod over both FAME and the IfA whenever their business needs demand.

It now seems that the long-running struggle we have had to encourage the IfA to maintain the salary minima is a battle we are losing, as despite the widely held view that pay levels in our profession are woefully low, thinly veiled threats from some ROs to withdraw from the RO scheme has again scared some Council members into postponing the decision. The widely held view amongst our natural constituents (field teams and lower paid members of the profession) that the IfA exists only to further the aims of those running the profession rather than for all archaeologists is now becoming harder for us to argue against. The DF made huge strides forward in encouraging site staff to become accredited at MiFA level and be represented on Council and other Committees, but now we are beginning to wonder whether it was worth the hassle, quite frankly.

So what can we do about this? Well, nobody can accuse us of being quitters - we will go along to the re-convened Working Party, now tasked with the frankly impossible task of forming the future strategy of the IfA in relation to salary minima, and to present a new report to Council in January when further legal advice has been sought, which presumably will support the view held by ROs, that the IfA cannot set minima when a Chartered body.

With views this entrenched, and with a majority of unit bosses fundamentally opposed to the concept (let alone the reality) of salary minima, there seems to be very little room for manoeuvre. We remain determined though and will keep you posted.



Opinion: Should the IfA set pay minima?

Chiz Harward

Paul Belford has written a blog post on why the IfA shouldn't be putting up wages: <http://paulbelford.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/salaries-and-ifa.html>. Paul argues that it's not the role of the IfA to set wages, I'd like to set out some of the arguments against this position, many of which are at the heart of the current sorry situation.

We are told by Paul and by the IfA that Prospect (amongst others) and FAME should take up the wage debate, but FAME have consistently failed to engage on this issue (although they did join the working party) and Prospect don't have representation in most employers. The IfA is the only organisation able to implement a safety net for archaeologists, and that is what minima are. It is argued that as a professional institute the IfA has no role in setting wages. Well, in my opinion low wages are the partial cause and the symptom of lowered professional standards across the industry and are therefore directly in the IfA's sphere of interest as a professional body involved in setting professional standards.

Secondly low wages directly or indirectly affect nearly all members of the IfA, and as the IfA should represent the interests of its members it should therefore intervene until acceptable wage levels are reached. This is required in order to allow the fulfilment of member's professional aspirations and development, a situation that low pay (and the associated low standards) effectively prevents.

The argument that ROs/employers cannot afford an increase is also a fallacy: most ROs already pay BAJR rates which are still above IfA minima. This is the first year that the IfA minima will have impacted on wages (is this a good thing?), ROs have signed up to the increases, they knew about them, and should have planned for them. Why should those that have planned for their responsibilities be at a disadvantage to those that gambled on no increase?

Should the employee's wages be kept low so that individual employers can survive? In my opinion again, no. It is not the IfA's remit to protect failed business models, or to sacrifice its members so that

organisations survive. The same amount of actual work will need doing, some argue that there are already too many companies for the amount of work out there. There are apparently mechanisms for increasing pay for local authority employees (according to Prospect), and in my view the whole profession shouldn't be held back by the few remaining local authority employers, however good they are.

Responsible Post Holders of ROs were asked to give their views to the working party, most originally didn't bother until the second consultation, when a letter was circulated by the heads of several large employers who are opposed to minima in principle. Of those that did engage some called for no increase, whilst others called for increases. It's not as simple as employers versus employees. There are many employers who want increased wages for staff. Archaeology can't function with £30K Diggers, but a reasonable wage is possible and would improve standards and careers.

There is always the old chestnut that 'cowboy' units are undercutting the 'respectable' units and driving down prices. The DF challenged FAME to provide evidence for this but FAME could not furnish any evidence despite having many non RO members. How many one man bands put in for Crossrail or T5, or a 300 home development? In my experience it is usually established units, mostly ROs who are driving down prices, often bidding at a price which will lose money if anything is found. Indeed I have been repeatedly told of companies who are consistently bidding at 10-15% below their cost threshold in order to keep going. Where are these units that pay less than IfA minima? The DF have repeatedly asked Diggers to let us know so we can try and put in complaints, so far apart from repeated tip offs about one unit that is totally outside the IfA, we have had no verifiable evidence. The current system is clearly not working and the minima are one of a few levers to get employers out of the rut of undercharging we have got into over the last few years.

Finally, why should the effective wage levels for our profession be set by an advertising company (BAJR), rather than a democratically elected professional institute? BAJR is way more than a mere jobsite, but is it right that BAJR has to take on an issue repeatedly sidestepped by the IfA? We have had promise after promise that the issue of poor pay will be addressed, and time after time there is an excuse to kick the can down the road. All we need is a small increase each year, no-one is asking for unaffordable increases, all we ask for is a decent wage for a hard, skilled job. We have again been told that we must wait, because of apparent legal issues that were already known about by the IfA.



We are told that with a chartered IfA we would be able to charge more, and would therefore pay more, but we are offered little reason to believe this. The same companies will be bidding for the same jobs, and the same undercutting will occur as it does now. Barriers to entry are proposed to ensure professional quality -and thereby reward practitioners, however given the willingness to drop standards over the last few years can we believe this? Or should we believe those that say that it will benefit those at the top and do nothing for those at the bottom?

Worryingly we are now told that setting pay minima may be incompatible with Chartership, however although the IfA knew this was a possibility nothing was done to check it. We now have to get legal advice, and the unpaid Working Party (which I sit on) has two months to go through all of the issues and address all of the problems in order to allow a way forward to be found. All of these issues should have been addressed long before now: both the legal issues and the IfA's long-term position and strategy. I fear we will end up with the worst of both worlds, with the IfA's strategy in chaos at the moment that it applies for Chartership, and employers not knowing where they stand. And, stuck in the middle, will be all of us site staff: still out in the cold with no improvement in sight. Just keep kicking the can down the road.

Now we are in this mess the IfA must get legal advice asap, as well as urgently drafting the remit for the working party. This group has two months - including the xmas break, to cut through the Gordian Knot of issues that are contained within the minima 'debate'. That won't be easy and is a

thankless task.

I'd personally like to see the old agreed scheme re-started: an immediate small increase in the minima for 2013-2014, with a commitment that minima will be increased until the Recommended Starting Salaries are reached over a period of 5 years. Everyone knows where they stand. But I doubt that things will be so simple.

Archaeology is in a mess of our own making, and we need to act together to get out of it. We need to ensure there is a stricter implementation and enforcement of professional standards -by all of us. This means stricter monitoring by curators and by colleagues, and a change in culture within archaeology to where corner-cutting is not acceptable any longer. I'd argue that for junior site staff we also need to implement a simple system of structured accreditation and CPD/training for staff.

All of us need to work together to make a better profession, and get out of the cycle of underpricing and mutually assured destruction. If we want to be a profession, we need to start acting like one.

If the IfA wants to ever have any credibility amongst site staff -and beyond- and have any hope of selling Chartership to the wider profession, then it needs to grasp the nettle now. FAME and the employers need to stop complaining and work with IfA to forge a way forward that isn't based on cutting prices and screwing over Diggers and each other. If they don't do this, then I can't see the IfA getting or deserving a Charter, and I won't be supporting it in applying for a Charter, or for anything else.



Prospect – Working for a Better Future for Archaeologists



Archaeologists Branch Annual General Meeting Notification

The 2012 Archaeologists Branch Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 30th November at the MOLA Visitors Centre, Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, from 4pm.

Any nominations for the committee positions of Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, along with any motions for consideration, should be sent to the Acting Chair Chris Clarke at chrisclarke600@hotmail.co.uk by Friday 16th November.

Further details, including the AGM agenda will be sent out in the next few weeks. The Branch

will cover all reasonable travel expenses of those members attending.

If anyone has any questions related to the AGM, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Chris Clarke (Acting Branch Chair)

Join us and make your voice heard!

The Diggers' Forum is the IfA Special Interest Group for field workers, that includes EVERYONE who primarily works at the sharp end of archaeology out on site.

The DF is open to all and represents field archaeologists at all levels -from a student considering professional archaeology to Project Officers running major excavations. The Diggers' Forum

represents YOUR views on a wide variety of matters within and beyond the IfA, we are the second largest SIG within the IfA and the bigger we are the bigger our voice.

If you are a member of the IfA membership of the Diggers' Forum is FREE, for non-members there is a subscription of £10 a year. To join email: groups@archaeologists.net





TAG 2012

The DF are presenting a session at TAG this December:

'The application of method and theory in professional archaeology'

'To many of its practitioners, practical professional archaeology appears to be rather divorced from higher discussions of archaeological theory; many methodological developments appear to be based on expediency and cost rather than derive from a strict theoretical basis. Yet within professional 'field' archaeology there is a strong tradition of self-examination and a constant revision of methodologies and a consequent evolution in the application and understanding of how we dig, and how we understand, our sites.

Many of these issues have been explored in arenas such as TAG and the Interpreting Stratigraphy conferences, this session will build on these foundations and explore the theory, methodology and application of professional archaeology: who we are, what we do, and what we produce.

Speakers will employ case studies, reviews and syntheses to examine and demonstrate new thinking, developments and applications in archaeological practice, and how these may be implemented within a professional framework, as well as examining how we currently work.

The session will address all aspects of professional archaeological fieldwork, from pre-excavation research and planning, through excavation itself, to post-excavation analysis and dissemination. The session will address issues relating to excavation methodology, and to 'specialisms' such as stratigraphy, finds and environmental work.'

The session is being held on the afternoon of Monday 17th December from 2pm, so if you are at TAG, please come along, listen to the papers and join the debate. The papers will be published in the Forum Dispatch so everyone will be able to read them.

Session timetable:

http://www.liv.ac.uk/sace/livetag/TAG_Full_Timetable.pdf



Diggers' Forum and Prospect Archaeologist Branch Joint Day Conference:

Archaeology as a Career: The Way Forward

We have two notes on the recent Diggers' Forum and Prospect day conference, first a run-through by organiser Chris Clarke, and then the view from Chris Chinnock, who attended the conference.

Chris Clarke

With the issue of skills and training a hot topic within the industry at the moment, the Prospect/Diggers' Forum Joint Conference 'A Career in Archaeology: The Way Forward' held in July, was well placed to wade into the current debate and provide new perspectives. Over 40 delegates, ranging from students through to unit managers, attended the conference at the beautiful and historic venue of Mansion House, located in central York. Many thanks have to be extended to Professor John Walker and York Archaeological Trust for allowing Prospect and the Diggers' Forum to use such a fantastic location.

The day was broken down into four main sessions with ample time provided for questions and discussion. Amanda Forster from the IfA opened the day by describing models for structured workplace learning, using the EPPIC and HLF placements, as well as the NVQ in Archaeological Practice, being developed by the IfA as examples. Amanda concluded that schemes such as these can offer both employers and archaeologists alike, opportunities to advance training and CPD opportunities and improve access to important skills required in a rapidly developing industry.

Next up was Chiz Harward from the IfA's Diggers' Forum, who not only described the results from the DF's survey on away work and travel within the industry, and the recommendations leading from the survey, but also talked through his paper on training,



Diggers' Forum

re-skilling and professional development. This latter paper highlighted the deskilling and disengagement of commercial fieldworkers, and covered simple approaches that could be taken by units to re-engage diggers with the more interpretive and methodological aspects of excavation.

After a delicious buffet lunch Chris Clarke of Prospect's Archaeologists Branch presented his paper '10 Key Ways To Get Ahead In Your Career', covering topics such putting together the ideal CV and weighing up your various job options. A full list of these ten points can be found online at http://www.prospect.org.uk/members_areas/branch/181/public/p3.



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Speakers (left to right): Dave Allen, Chiz Harward, Geoff Morley, Michael Marshall, Manda Forster and Chris Clarke

The last paper of the day was delivered by Geoff Morley of Nexus Heritage/Moles Archaeology, and Michael Marshall of Museum of London Archaeology, together looking at the various career paths open to professional archaeologists. Both gave practical views and advice from their respective areas within



the industry, discussing the various levels of experience, training and qualifications required to work in different fields. A summary of each paper will soon be available on the prospect website.

The conference was concluded by an hour long lively discussion session contributed to by a wide range of delegates. The crux of the discussion focused on the limited availability of training available to temporary site staff, resulting in a significant proportion of archaeological staff available having restricted skills sets. Due to the inability of university courses or employers to be able to provide the levels of training required, the discussion concluded that vocational courses such as archaeological NVQ's and the initiation of a skills passport scheme should be supported by the industry as a means improving training and the awareness of the skills required. These are now issues that Prospect and the DF hope to champion in the near future.

With the success of the July Joint Conference, it is strongly hoped that Prospect and the DF will be able to follow on from this achievement by looking towards 2013 and the potential for organising another joint conference. It has been successfully proved that conferences such as this are an ideal opportunity to develop and discuss significant issues affecting archaeologists and the profession as a whole.

Chris Chinnock

Having worked in commercial archaeology for a little over a year with Northamptonshire Archaeology, I find myself increasingly thinking about my future career. Discussions with my colleagues often revolve around the same questions. Firstly, how do I progress to the next level? And secondly, how do I acquire the training and skills I need to become a better archaeologist? In July, with the help of my employer, I was able to attend a joint conference by Prospect and the Diggers Forum entitled Archaeology as a Career: The Way Forward. Here was the opportunity to discuss these issues in an open forum and draw from a wealth of experience in the archaeological community.

Topics and speakers were as follows:

1. Learning on the Job: IfA Training Toolkit and Funding Opportunities for Workplace Learning. (Amanda Forster, Standards Promotion Manager IfA)
2. Diggers' Forum Survey on Away Work and

Travel in UK Commercial Archaeology, 2011. (Chiz Harward, Diggers' Forum)

3. Training, Re-Skilling and Professional Development: Developing Practical Methodologies for Better Archaeological Careers. (Chiz Harward, Diggers' Forum)
4. 10 Ways to get Ahead in Your Career: The Prospect Guide. (Dave Allen, Prospect Negotiations Officer and Chris Clarke, Prospect Archaeologists Branch)
5. Some Different Career Paths in Archaeology and Different Ways to Follow Them. (Geoff Morley, Nexus Heritage/Moles Archaeology and Michael Marshall, MoLA)

Abstracts for all of the speakers can be seen at: http://www.prospect.org.uk/members_areas/branch/181/public/p4

I feel the main issue that repeatedly came into question was the role of training within the workplace. How can archaeological units implement cost effective ways to give both entry level and established archaeologists opportunities to acquire and present a suite of skills on an industry wide level which would be accepted by IfA Registered Organisations? Possible solutions included a passport system whereby individuals would gain acknowledgment and accreditation in particular aspects of their role upon demonstrating their ability to perform a task to a good standard on a regular basis. It was agreed that what clearly does not work is the 'box ticking' system, evidenced most notably on some university training digs and to a certain extent, within the commercial sector.

Another main topic was the disparity between skills required by archaeological employers and the skills possessed by prospective archaeologists, be they students or otherwise. It is clear that this separation exists and is a major obstacle when discussing the next generation of archaeologist. I feel particularly strongly about this issue as I am a graduate working through my first year in a commercial role and have found it a steep learning curve.

Further integration between the commercial and academic sectors would be an elegant solution to this problem. However, the question of who, how and where this integration would take place remains



unclear. One suggestion presented at the conference was a greater presence by the IfA, especially at an undergraduate level, and greater awareness of peer groups such as the Diggers' Forum and BAJR forums. This approach would enforce the idea that an archaeological degree is not a vocational course and further practical skills are required to make the step into commercial archaeology. Arming students with accurate and realistic information at key points in their education would give them the opportunity to build these practical qualities concurrently with their studies. Initiatives such as the NVQ in Archaeological Practice or the HLF placements for structured workplace learning are good examples of how this can be achieved. Further information on these and other resources can be found on the IfA website at <http://www.archaeologists.net/>.

On the whole, I viewed the conference as a great success and hope to see others like it in the future. An open discussion on a professional platform between archaeologists at all levels is essential when addressing the current issues affecting our industry. Whilst I personally took a great deal from the conference, I believe that the discussions undertaken in York need to reach the higher tiers of archaeological management. Directors of

commercial units in particular are in a position to implement many of the ideas circulated, and it was heartening to see some of these individuals greatly engaged at July's conference; my hope is that we can bring many more into the dialogue in the future.

Taking everything into consideration, if we start to implement some of the ideas aforementioned we can begin to build an integrated system for producing enthusiastic, well trained, high quality archaeologists capable of doing what we all want to see: great archaeology!

Prospect and the Diggers' Forum are looking at holding a further day conference in 2013....details to follow, please get in touch if you are interested in contributing in any way



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Review: Excavations at 1 Poultry and vicinity, City of London:

Roman London and the Walbrook Stream crossing

The development of early medieval and later Poultry

Chiz Harward

The publication of the final three monographs from No 1 Poultry marks the end of a protracted process –the excavations took place between 1994 and 1996 with post-excavation work continuing for many more years. The publication includes a number of other excavations in the immediate area, and so has more of a study area approach than a classic 'red line' site report. This is befitting such an important report on such a major series of excavations, probably the largest ever within the Roman and medieval walls. The study area lies on the western bank of the Walbrook Stream, at the point where the main east–west Roman road (the Via Decumana) crossed the stream, and bifurcated into two roads –one leading to Newgate, and one to Ludgate. Poultry occupied a key position within the Roman town, and for many years after its excavation the post-excavation and publication process seemed to occupy a similar pivotal role, looming over other sites within London.

From the outset the excavations were always going to be a landmark project, the Victorian Mappin and Webb buildings had not removed all archaeological deposits, and evaluation showed that the Roman –and much of the medieval- sequence should lie relatively untruncated beneath the basements. Planning permission had been granted before PPG16, and the costs of the excavation were borne by the developer Lord Palumbo with English Heritage carrying the PX costs.

The excavation strategy saw the initial post-medieval and medieval deposits (including the medieval church and burial ground of St Benet Sherehog) being excavated in open air, before a concrete slab was laid down to allow construction work to continue, whilst the archaeologists worked beneath the slab. Initially headroom was limited, although by the end of the excavation a 5m levelling staff could be used across the site, with excavation to c10m below modern street level. Over 3500m³ of stratigraphy was excavated within the controlled excavation areas.

A team of over 55 archaeologists –acknowledged by name in the monographs- worked on the site. For some Diggers the site was their first taste of urban excavation, the experience of working on such a large site can be overwhelming and disorientating, especially working underground, under artificial lights and on a site of such scale and complexity. The position of the site on the banks of the Walbrook stream meant that there was excellent preservation of organic materials, with many timber structures surviving intact and the untruncated nature of the site meant that many building plans were recovered in full. Metal artefacts were also preserved in excellent condition in the anaerobic conditions, with copper alloy emerging shining like gold. Many of the team still work together at MoLA, with others scattered across the country in a variety of archaeological jobs.

The monographs are not cheap, and it is unlikely that many Diggers will buy a set, although there is a more affordable 'popular' book available as well. The books are however definitely worth a read for anyone interested in urban archaeology, and especially the development of Roman and Medieval London. They are well presented, with many stunning photographs and reconstruction drawings and consist of three volumes: Roman parts 1 and 2, and medieval.

The study area approach means that the Roman remains in particular are tied in to a wider study of the development of Londinium which provides a context to the excavations and which provides a long-awaited update on current thoughts on the foundation and development of Londinium. The wider study runs through the Roman volumes, the first of which gives the stratigraphic sequence, whilst the second volume deals in chronological order with the wider issues raised by the excavated evidence. These thematic sections are generally short and easy to read, with a further set of conclusions that draw the evidence together in a series of short essays. Finally the specialist appendices complete the evidence, with tabular data held on a CD-ROM. The structure can occasionally seem a bit confusing: information on the quernstone assemblage is shared between the



strat sequence, a thematic section, and the specialist appendix, but generally it does work –either as a read at a single sitting, or to dip into via the index, or the table of contents, or just at random.

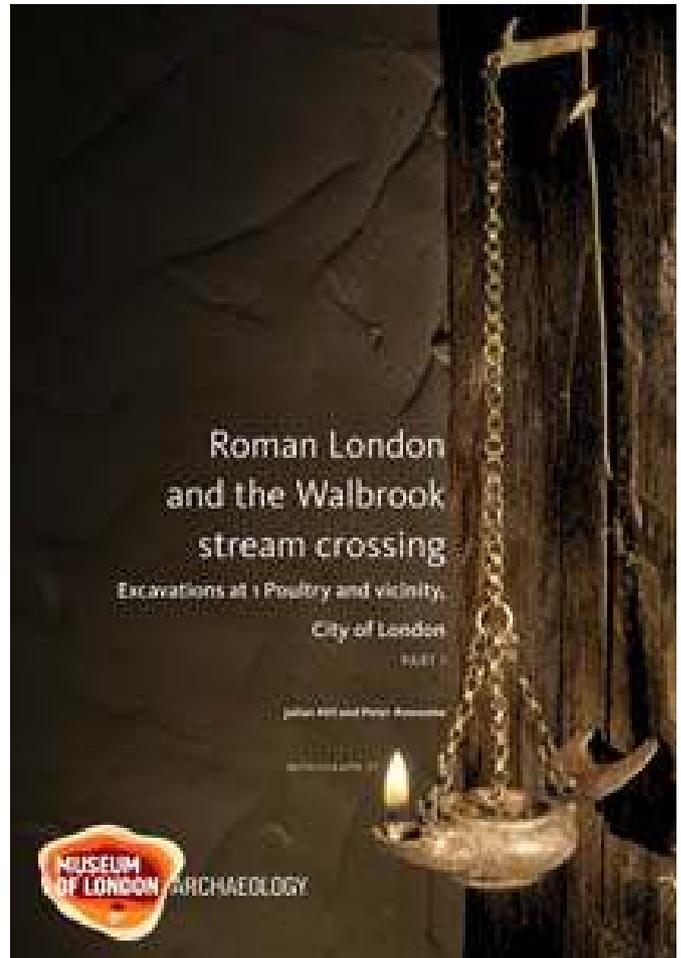
The medieval periods get a further volume, it starts with the evidence for the end of the Roman period and the post-Roman abandonment, before moving through the evidence for the Saxon and medieval periods, followed by a series of thematic sections on a myriad of subjects and specialist appendices, many of which are highly readable and contain many interesting snippets of information on finds and medieval technologies whilst the inevitable tables are largely relegated to a CD ROM. There is a lot more documentary evidence for the later medieval periods, which can prove impenetrable to the casual reader, although it is largely kept separate from the stratigraphy until the thematic sections draw it all together. The 'other' excavation sites sit rather incongruously in the medieval volume, and for some periods seem to add little, in contrast to the Roman period.

The thematic sections for both periods are very good for dipping into, and provide a succinct summary of both the excavated evidence, and the wider state of understanding of the subject. Each short piece seems the tip of an iceberg of further research, and it would be good to see more papers come out of the work that has obviously been carried out. The thematics are a mine of information that will be of direct use on site in providing parallels and information on construction methods, materials and techniques.

Each building or structure was originally recorded in far more detail than is outlined in the publication –and some buildings would be worth many pages of descriptive and discussive text, however a broad brush has clearly had to be taken given the size of the site. The minutiae of the sequence is therefore not published, and the work of maybe weeks on one building is reduced to a few lines, but this allows a landscape picture to be built up, with the thematics adding flesh to the bones of the strat sequence. Overall the volumes work well, despite the daunting scale a sense of the landscape emerges, especially for the Roman period, and we come away with a far better picture of Roman and medieval London, and how its inhabitants lived and worked.

As the Poultry sites were finally published work had already begun on the Bucklersbury House site immediately downstream of Poultry, which straddles both banks of the Walbrook. The Poultry books are already in use as references at Buck House, as another team of MoLA archaeologists, including some Poultry veterans, excavates some of the

deepest, and most impressive, Roman archaeology in Britain. I would hope that it would not take 15 years to produce the publications for Bucklersbury House, however given the size and complexity it is perhaps understandable that Poultry took so long.



Roman London and the Walbrook stream crossing: excavations at 1 Poultry and vicinity, City of London by Julian Hill and Peter Rowsome
MoLA Monograph Series 37
ISBN 978-1-907586-04-0 (two volumes)

The development of early medieval and later Poultry and Cheapside: excavations at 1 Poultry and vicinity, City of London by Mark Burch, Phil Treveil, with Derek Keene
MoLA Monograph Series 38
ISBN 978-1-901992-95-3

Poultry 'Popular Series' book:

Heart of the city: Roman, medieval and modern London revealed by archaeology at 1 Poultry by Peter Rowsome
ISBN 1-901992-14-4.



Where are all the smiths?

Some reflections on the excavation of rural blacksmithing

Gwilym Williams

There is an assumption – common to archaeologists, historians and the general public – that every village had its smithy, from the industrialised Victorian period back through post-medieval and medieval England to the Saxons and, no doubt, even before (i.e. Gies 1990, 3, 150-1; Astill 1995, 183). As Grenville Astill stated when he considered an apparent need for smiths in the majority of villages: 'The information is there if only we would go out and find it' (Astill *ibid*). Smithies, along with mills and kilns, were an integral part of the medieval manorial economy nevertheless, the role of the rural manor as anything but an agricultural economic unit is rarely considered; their potential for analysis as industrial economic units is, I feel, frequently underestimated. This note will look at blacksmithing rather than iron production.

Rural blacksmithing is poorly represented in the archaeological literature, and is usually overshadowed by the more obvious ore-smelting operations in places such as the Weald and the Forest of Dean. Further attention has focussed on monastic smithing operations where both smelting and larger scale smithing activities were carried out. The floor and roof tile industries, both of which were frequently set up under the aegis of either the Crown or the Church, cannot be said to provide necessarily the same economic model as one for smithing.

Rural blacksmithing responded to a specific need, the details of which are, as with much of the structure of medieval industry, not always as clear as one might want them to be. Indeed, it is not only the documentary details which are in short supply: too often the archaeological data for smithing are nearly invisible. The extent of this is such that small blacksmithing workshops are not even considered in the class descriptions for the Monument Protection Programme.

The most common visible waste-product from metalworking – both smelting and smithing – is slag, and it is found on most post-Roman archaeological sites. Too often it is assumed that if there is slag, clearly, they were smelting or smithing, and if they were smithing there was undoubtedly a smithy, somewhere in the vicinity. This assumption still stands despite Philip Barker's excavations at Braggington (Barker 1966), yielding dumps of slag at some distance from the site of the proposed smithy, similarly Nicholas Palmer's excavations at Burton Dassett (McDonnell 1992), found slag spread around the surrounding fields.

Despite the increase in investigative work in the past quarter century as archaeology has become professionalised and a part of the planning process, very few smithies have been investigated. One should expect that the quantity of interventions since the introduction of PPG 16 might have revealed more examples than have been (Table 1). There has been a distinct lack of smithies identified, which should be treated perhaps as evidence of absence, rather than absence of evidence.

Site name	Date (approximate)
<i>Boston, Lincs</i>	10 th -13 th
Lyveden, Northants	11 th /12 th
<i>Newington, Oxon</i>	12 th -13 th C
Waltham Abbey, Middx	12 th -14 th C
Bordesley Abbey, Worcs	12 th -15 th C
Godmanchester, Cambs	13 th C
<i>Newington, Oxon</i>	13 th -14 th C
Wharram Percy, N Yorks	L13 th to 14 th C
Alsted, Surrey	14 th C
Chingley, Kent	14 th C
Goltho, Lincs	14 th /15 th C
<i>London Rd, Crawley, Sussex</i>	14 th /15 th
Burton Dassett, Warks	14 th -15 th C
<i>Towton, East Yorks</i>	15 th C
Braggington, Salop	15 th C
Fountains Abbey	15 th C
Tintern Abbey	15 th C
Somerby, Lincs	15 th - 16 th C
Kirkstall Abbey	15 th - 16 th C
<i>Thornton, Cleveland</i>	16 th C

Table 1. Ironworking sites mentioned in the text (italicised sites found under PPG 16 conditions)

There are only about four metalworking sites with associated structures – a group that includes smelting sites as well as smithing – which have been recognised and dug as such since the advent of PPG 16; to which can be added just over twice that number pre-PPG16, many of which were research excavations. Those dug since PPG 16 have included planned excavation and watching brief recording exercises

In 2006 John Moore Heritage Services excavated a pair of medieval smithies at Newington, Oxfordshire, kindly funded by English Heritage. This discussion deals largely with the 13th-century smithy at Newington, however some of the lessons learnt will be raised in respect of an earlier 12th-century smithy only recognised during post-excavation assessment, where no associated smithing structures were capable of being investigated.

Although it's not a prerequisite, several of the excavated examples of smithies have been interpreted as the opportunistic re-use of buildings, rather purpose-built. This presents the excavator with their first problem: identifying the structure as a smithy. At Newington, the building revealed during the watching brief was initially believed to have been a two-storied cottage, with the anvil-setting representing the newel of a circular staircase; only on reflection was it thought unlikely to have a pair of hearths immediately adjacent to a staircase – circular or otherwise... A second problem is that failing to identify the nature and function of the structure might then lead to a minimised sampling strategy.

A solution to this problem of identification might, in some cases, be the standardised use of magnetic susceptibility (MagSus), to measure significant magnetic anomalies, in the case of smithies indicative of areas where smithing activities were carried out. Such a technique is preferably combined with sampling as at Burton Dassett (Mills and McDonnell 1992, Figs 3 & 4) or Viborg Søndersø (Jouttevarii 2010). While sampling can replace MagSus, the quality of data is, clearly, never going to be as good, as one has only a partial data-set.

At Newington, the almost rectangular building was open-fronted, although in the first instance this was not very clear as there was metalling almost entirely around the structure, with the result that the walls could not be easily distinguished from external surfaces. It was only apparent after cleaning that the north frontage was supported by postholes whereas the west, south and east sides were undoubtedly timber-framed and stood on stone cills (Fig. 1) In places the cill was absent and only indicated by the metalling running up to the line of the timber-frame and stopping. Occasionally the location of a cill-stone, which had been pulled out of the ground subsequently, undoubtedly by a plough, could be

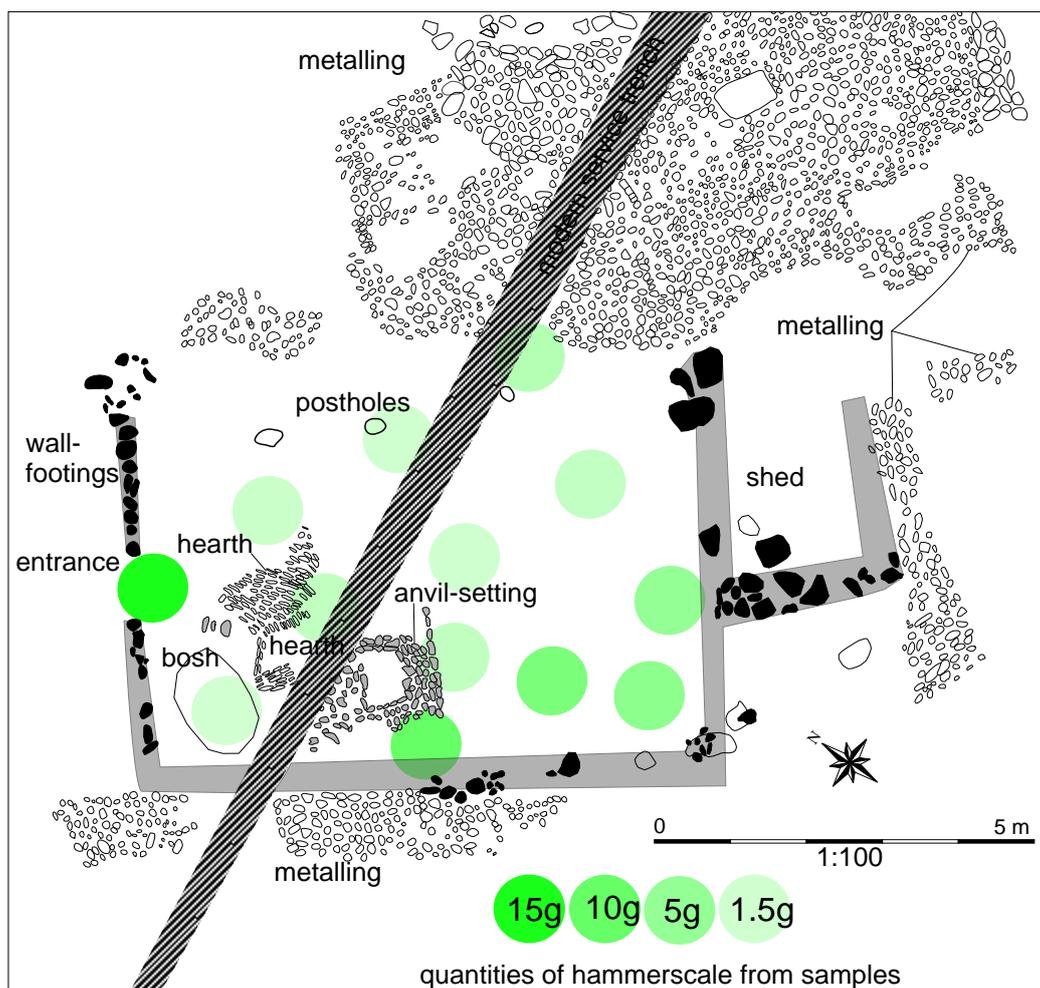


Fig 1. Plan of Newington Phase 4 smithy



Structure 4 smithy looking southwest



Structure 4 smithy: anvil-setting; looking west



Structure 4 smithy: hearth; looking southwest

Fig. 2. Photographs of smithy under excavation

identified. There was a lean-to on the east side, probably for charcoal storage. And so, the ghost of a building was teased from the rubble: not only the walls but the hearth and anvil, too (Fig. 2). The excavated workshop building can itself be argued to represent a corroboration of Christopher Dyer's observation (1983) that the 13th century saw a change from post-fast structures to timber-framed buildings on stone-cills.

Surely, however, the presence of slag would have indicated that there had been a smithy here? In total only less than 25% of the slag recovered from the site came from the phase associated with the smithy. Much of that being recovered from an adjacent plot, and from a range of feature types (pits, postholes, gullies and ditches). Included in this total were also quantities of fuel-ash and non-diagnostic lumps of slag as well as furnace lining. Although this is clear evidence of smithing in the vicinity, it cannot be considered particularly diagnostic for the location of the smithy. In fact, slag is almost the poorest indicator for a smithy, and on consideration this is logical as it hardly makes sense to leave a load of rubbish underfoot when working. Elsewhere during similar excavations of industrial sites, such as the iron-mill at Bordesley Abbey (Astill 1993), or the manorial smithies at Goltho (Beresford 1975) or Bragginton (Barker 1968) it was clear that the slag had been used as hardcore or to raise the ground-level in other parts of the site; and not always on the smithy plot.

In fact, what might be called the clinching evidence for smithing at Newington was the presence of hammerscale, which was recovered from the floor of the smithy, and which rarely travels very far from where it was produced. Eleven small samples of approximately 1l were taken at 1m equally spaced intervals (except where samples would have come from the anvil/hearths or later truncation) across the smithy. This revealed concentrations of hammerscale in the vicinity of the anvil, with greater amounts between the smithy wall and the anvil (Fig. 1). The hammerscale comprised spheroids of magnetic iron and waste material in the bar iron – the sparks seen when hot iron is struck during smithing – and platelets, also of magnetized iron, which flake off when the iron is slightly cooler.

Work by Arne Jouttevarii at the water-logged Viking smithy at Viborg Sønder sø showed how the distribution of this material could show how the smithy was used as a workplace over so short a period as five years (Jouttevarii 2010). Similarly, work by Alice Mills and Gerry McDonnell at Burton Dassett (Mills & McDonnell 1992) with magnetic susceptibility also revealed distributions of high magnetic activity, associated with smithing and the location of the anvil. Excavations on the 16th-century smithy at the priory of Lavinadière (Dieudonné-Glad & Conte 2011) also demonstrated both how the heated iron was taken from the fire with his left hand and worked with his right and the 'ghost' of the anvil, where there was an absence of both charcoal and hammerscale. As hammerscale measures at most a couple of millimetres across, it rarely travels far from its source, although the high density observed at the west door of the smithy at Newington may well be due both to

passage through the door with hammer scale being dragged on customer's shoes as much as the smith himself wiping down his leather apron as he approached the door.

Although the excavations at Newington could not demonstrate such a deep body of information as those at Burton Dassett, the residues from the environmental samples threw up an interesting surprise. One of the other buildings on site was quite probably an earlier smithy. The structure was only partially examined, as only some of it was visible during the excavation; the rest being a duck island for the client. A number of environmental samples taken from pits and gullies associated with the earlier structure yielded hammerscale during routine checking of the heavier residues. Nevertheless, the implications for other investigations are significant, as there was no particular concentration of smithing hearth bottoms, formed during the heating of the bloom, or lump of iron, to be worked into an object. Furthermore, small fragments of hearth-lining, which scientific analysis later showed incorporated small amounts of crushed slag and hammerscale, were also found during the excavation of pits and gullies associated with the earlier smithy (Gilmour 2012). Such scraps of evidence of the smith working in the early smithy unintentionally recycling rubbish that was around the workshop are indicative that the building was undoubtedly a smithy.

This discovery has led us to ensure that other environmental samples are routinely checked for hammerscale, where the site has a potentially industrial character this is crucial. One outcome of this has been to identify a possible Roman smithing operation in the outskirts of Oxford, where a hearth was first believed to be a kiln. The absence of any pottery-making debris was problematic, until the examination of the residue yielded both spheroid and platelet hammerscale, indicating the probable existence of a smithy here.

The medieval smithy was undoubtedly a manorial possession, leased out to a smith and used as a public space. Although there are no records available for the lease of the smithy at Newington from the lord of the manor, Canterbury Cathedral, other documented smithies – such as at Elton (Gies 1990, 39) – indicate clearly that smithies, where they existed, formed part of the private demesne holdings. As a consequence, their socio-economic role is probably equivalent to that of mills and other industrial processes, which were also located between the public and private spheres. Privately owned, and part of the stewardship of the lord of the manor, these

buildings functioned as public spaces to which people from the manor and also neighbouring manors would bring their horses to be shod, their tools to be repaired, and old iron to be worked into nails, bolts and new tools. The need for such smithies is due to an increase in commerce, credit and industry tied to a general population increase from the 12th century onwards. Such a population increase, it is argued, inevitably led to an emergent specialised workforce offering their services, in a similar fashion to the peasantry who obtained cash through the sale of their surplus.

The outcome of my work on smithies (Williams 2012) has been to realise that the evidence for smithing is in the detail: it is not necessarily the large lumps of slag, but rather the near-microscopic hammerscale which reveals the story. Routine examination of residues is important, and this should be done by someone who has been on an EH metallurgy course or similar. Natural iron will also be present in some samples, and it is important to recognize the difference between spheroid and flat hammerscale and naturally formed iron pan.

Furthermore, an awareness that not all smithing operations are going to generate an easily recognisable fingerprint imposes upon us a degree of caution during excavation to make no *a priori* assumptions regarding the function of a kiln, oven or hearth.

Smithies were like mills in the medieval landscape. Built and rented out to craftsmen and women by landlords who saw that there was a niche in the market, which the lord of the manor had the means to fill, these industries formed the economic bases which would culminate in the Industrial Revolution. The field identification of the location, the investigation of the processes and the analysis of the economic and social capital of small industries, such as rural smithies, is as an important aspect of our industrial heritage as the major industries. Medieval ironworks with all the attendant evidence of heavy industry such as mills, races, ponds and so forth are comparatively easily recognised; local, part-time, family industry is far less well-represented, and yet was perhaps more typical of much of medieval industry.

Acknowledgements

English Heritage supported the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis of the excavation at Newington; Paddy O'Connell has been particularly supportive throughout the long and drawn-out process. John Moore has managed the project since 2006 and has also provided insight and support. Brian Gilmour has



constantly provided technical input. I'd also like to express my thanks to all the other specialists involved. Thanks are also due to the members of South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group for their work and assistance in making the archive of the SOAG interventions in the 1980s take shape.

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Knackered knees and bad backs:

A Diggers' guide to sickness

Anon

Back in 2010 a report by Tim Phillips and John Creighton was published on employing people with disabilities in archaeology (Phillips and Creighton 2010). The report was partially based on a series of phone interviews with archaeologists who had responded to an initial request to participate. The report is an important one, and well worth a read, however to any Digger it is immediately obvious that the report doesn't really include the type of recurrent injuries, muscular conditions and psychological traumas that affect most of us working on site. This is probably down to two factors: first that us Diggers can't be bothered to reply to pointless surveys that won't ever change anything, and second that we just don't consider the long term medical problems we have as being 'disabilities', they are just facts of life.

Working on site can be a hard life, and there are a host of injuries and conditions that we may pick up after a relatively short time in the trenches. Many of us just put up with the pain and niggles, but should we do more to avoid these injuries? After all, most of us only spend a few years working out in the rain and cold before we run off to a nice job in the civil service, but those injuries can stay with you for life, affecting your quality of life long after the mud and cold are forgotten.

The winter is a prime time for picking up injuries and sickness on site, the cold and wet means we can all get run down and it is harder to warm up and move in bulky clothes and all that PPE. So to

complement the [DF Winter Survival Guide](#), here's a run down of common ailments and injuries, with hopefully a few ways of avoiding them.

Feet

Rotting feet seem to be less common these days, with more drying rooms and better boots (as if). But taking care of your feet is important, not just to avoid trench foot, but to make sure you can stand up all day. Insist on wellies –they are PPE- and keep your feet dry, and try and change wet socks and boots at the end of the day.

Knees

Diggers' knees are usually in a poor state after a few years of digging, some advise using a kneeler however this makes you look like a bit wet. Cold ground and stones don't do knees any good, and even if you can avoid arthritis and rheumatism, your knees can still creak from all that trowelling. So just don't bother doing any. After all the supervisor just wants the ditch dug, he doesn't want it cleaned up first or he'd have given you enough time to do that as well. You could *at a pinch* trowel in a squatting position, but its not really as effective as just not bothering. Of course if you carry a huge toolbox about then you can sit on that, plus it means you can't carry any other kit to and from the trench. Job done.

Bad backs

A bad back, like dodgy knees, will last a lifetime and once you've got one, it probably won't go away just because you've got a swanky job outside archaeology. Think about how you lift buckets and barrows, and always try to get someone else to do this for you. Smart diggers move to London where they have labourers to shift the spoil, but if you are in the sticks just make sure you have some paperwork to do every time the barrow gets nearly full.

Stretching and warming up does help you avoid a bad back, plus it wastes a precious few minutes at the start of the day. If your colleagues suggest alternating tasks then say you just had a hernia, and look a bit greenish. They will hopefully have a better attitude than you so will take up your slack.

Shoulders, muscle strains and sprains

Like backs, the rest of your muscular-skeletal system can take a proper battering. Warm up properly, do some stretches, don't overload buckets, barrows or shovels, and make sure clothing isn't restrictive. If the site is a bit sticky then its obviously not safe to walk about on, so get someone else to point this out and look like a



whinger. Of course *you* will offer to work, then slide dangerously and pretend you've sprained an ankle to get an afternoon in the cabin reading Chat magazine with your feet up.

Colds and flu

Stick a group of Diggers out in the cold and wet, sharing a stuffy cabin, and colds and flu will spread like wildfire. We all know of times when colds have spread across site like a modern-day plague; add in a lack of sick pay for those on short contracts and you have sick colleagues staying at, or returning to, work when they should be laid up in bed. But being off sick is not easy when you are staying in a B&B! So make sure that even if you feel like death warmed up, that you still come in to work -such admirable commitment! After all, being at home with no pay is boring, and by making the whole workforce sick you can make sure the site doesn't finish on time and you can get a week or two's contract extension. Avoiding the colds isn't easy, but regular doses of tonics like Jägermeister and Buckfast is a great idea, as is all that salad you get in kebabs -plus the chilli sauce is packed full of Vitamin C!

Depression

Not talked about a lot, but the constant grind of digging, the low pay, lack of a stable life and the short contracts affect some of us more than others. Luckily when staying away and sharing rooms there is always someone just two foot away who will be only too happy to listen to all your problems. Drinking helps of course, especially if you are the designated driver. After all, you aren't being paid to drive the minibus to site so why should you be sober?

Accident books

Of course, being human, sometimes you will have an accident: you do need to write it up in the accident book, remember to include EVERYTHING including broken fingernails, stubbed toes and falling down the cabin stairs when texting.

I sincerely hope that these tips will let you get through your archaeological 'career' in one piece so you can devote the rest of your life to something more financially productive. If you are lucky enough to be working this winter then please do look after yourself, because after all, no-one else is going to.

References:

Phillips, T and Creighton, J 2010 *Employing people with disabilities: good practice guidance for archaeologists*, IfA professional practice paper no 9

Also see the Diggers' Forum survival guide for winter:

<http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/ColdWeather.pdf>



Diggersaurus

(with apologies to Viz)

A dictionary of colloquial archaeological terms. Part 1.

Block lift:

Stripped of all the niceties, this fundamentally consists of sticking a sharpened hand shovel under an object in a *Conservation Emergency* (qv.) and sticking it in a bit of tupperware with some acid-free tissue: *'We were having a bit of a Conservation Emergency, but we stuck a spade under the pot and block-lifted it in one piece'*.

Brickearth tan:

The tanned appearance of excavators created by wind blown brickearth or other *substrate* (qv.). Favoured by Diggers unable to afford a fortnight on the Costas: *'I thought he'd been on holiday but when it rained I clocked it was a brickearth tan'*.

Conservation Emergency:

Any situation where specialist conservation advice should be sought. For example when finding complete pots or fragile metal artefacts. These will always require a specialist in a white lab coat with lovely hair to stick a sharpened hand shovel underneath the object (*block lift*, qv.) and then to do all the fun stuff in the lab without passing on details of the finds to the Diggers who found the object in the first place.

Early swerve:

Similar to *POETS' Day* (qv.), but applicable to any day of the week. Leaving site early for whatever reason: *'We were heading for an early swerve and then Bob found another skeleton and we had to stay til he'd lifted it'*

Kettle detector:

Colloquial name for the type of sub-Fisher Price metal detectors given out to site staff, usually named the 'Nighthawk 12000', 'Site Raider' or similar. Utterly useless, but only ever employed to meet the WSI requirement for 'trenches and spoil heaps to be scanned with a metal detector': *'I thought I'd dropped the HiLux*

keys in The Swamp (qv.), and couldn't find them anywhere, it was desperate as it was *POETS' Day*. I even got the kettle detector out but eventually we found them in Geoff's pocket'.

Pile-wrestling:

Advanced technique for removing timber piles from clay *substrate* (qv.). Basically you envelop the pile with as much of your body as possible and wriggle and wrestle until you collapse exhausted in a muddy heap. You then get the Big Yellow Trowel to pull the damn thing out with some chains.

POETS' Day:

Piss Off Early Tomorrows Saturday. Damn straight.

Puddle-sucker:

Small portable pump use to spray muddy water over Diggers who think they are mechanically minded. Slightly preferable to using a straw.

Stakehole fever:

An epidemic occurring periodically on excavations: the symptoms start with a single stakehole being found by one Digger, this leads to other excavators finding further 'stakeholes'; the epidemic of stakeholes follows a classic exponential curve, followed by a sudden crash when everyone realises that each stakehole needs recording. There follows a period of up to 3 months when the disease stays dormant before the next epidemic strikes. There is no known cure. *'We were going to finish on Friday, but then we came down with a bad case of stakehole fever and blew the budget digging cockchafer burrows'*.

The Swamp:

The lowest part of the site.

Substrate:

Natural, virgin ground: *'We simply machined the trenches straight down to the substrate, and drew the section'*.

Tiger stripes:

Pattern of brown stripes left on freshly stripped orange clay by rutting caused by dumper trucks 'punching through' when driving over the site 'by accident': *'The southern half of the site was covered in Tiger Stripes, but we dug a 20% sample of them anyway'*.



Bookmarks

Tom Elliot

This newsletter's bookmarks are focussed on your employment problems and health this winter. Without dwelling on the doom and gloom in the profession's news at the moment discussed elsewhere in the newsletter, have you considered your individual or group situation (other than the standard expletives!)? Does your employer even know they're doing something wrong? Here are some links to help.

GOV.UK

Unsure of whether your company is acting legally, or just want to know what you're entitled to as an employee or worker? Check out the basic employment rights and laws and make sure your employer is informed as well!

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/employing-people>

ACAS

Not sure who to turn to if you do have a problem? Are you an employer struggling to understand how to resolve problems before they occur? Acas may be the answer:

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461>

Remember, you can also send an email to us at the DF to take your complaint to the IfA.

Citizen's Advice

Again, if you'd just like some impartial advice from someone outside the archaeology bubble or any problems relating to employment:

<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Remember, Unions like Prospect, Unite and Unison etc. provide advice (both legal and other) to their members, consider talking to them if you have issues at work.

It's that time of year again...

Colds and flu

Colds and flu will be spreading round the site hut like...colds and flu round a site hut. Read up on how to avoid missing work and for employers - losing site staff to sickness:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/Winterhealthhome.aspx>

HSE Cold Stress

Another year, another winter out in the cold? Does your employer know these details? Print them off and post them up!

Remember to drink more if you're out in the cold (no not alcohol!!!). The effect of the cold will lower your levels of fluid intake, which could lead to heat exhaustion even in winter, and can also accelerate the effects of hypothermia. Have you been provided with water?

Feeling SAD?

Feeling particularly sad at this time of year? Are your mates out on site feeling particularly glum at the moment? Could you help your site staff? **Have you considered the mental health of your employees?** Look out for each other and recognise the signs before fights and arguments hold up a site. SAD is just one of a number of conditions to look out for:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seasonal_affective_disorder

Investment is at your feet!

Keep warm in your wellies and boots this winter, protect your feet and use your IfA 15% Cotswold Outdoor discount!

<http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/index.cfm/dep/browse-by-activity/cat/walking/subcat/walking-socks/fuseaction/products.list/group/312/level/3>

Remember employers, you have a Duty of Care to your staff, (both employees and 'workers').

Employees and 'workers', ACT if you are being failed by your employer.

Finally don't forget the Diggers' Forum survival guide for winter:

<http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/nod-e-files/ColdWeather.pdf>

Got useful links or websites you'd like to share? Send them to us by email or on Facebook. Go on, we're only a few clicks away!



Tools of the trade:

Electronic registers

Chiz Harward

For many years context sheets and registers have been written on paper, whilst the databases containing the context information have been held on computer. Many early context sheets were designed for computer entry, and the standardised format, definitions and controlled vocabulary of a processual recording system lends itself perfectly to computer entry. The level of actual computer entry of context data varies massively across the country, with some units inputting all context data, whilst others select certain key details, and most of this data entry takes place off-site and in post-ex.

On site the paper record remains practically universal despite the rise of electronic recording in other aspects of site work and the pronouncement and subsequent expectation that we would 'go digital' sooner rather than later. Still, even when English Heritage trialled Intrasis, an electronic GIS based recording system, they used paper forms on-site, followed by data entry in the dry of the cabins (it was trialled in Cumbria in October!)

The difficulties of using computer data-entry on site appear to be many and appear to be obvious: equipment costs, mud, rain, battery life, mud, rain, internet signal, IT support issues and the fact that you need to be able to do sketches on the back of the context sheet. Several projects have however successfully used electronic data-loggers in adverse conditions, including all the human bone assessment data for the Spitalfields project which was inputted into hand-held dataloggers despite conditions of high humidity in the on-

site processing area. With the increased use of digital cameras and GPS we are now used to looking after electronic equipment on site, and dealing with all the issues of rain, mud, damp and battery charging.

Although context sheets may be with us for some years yet, there is one facet of site recording that can be very simply transferred to electronic data-logger: the site registers. Despite a reputation as a bit of a Luddite I have felt we should adopt digital registers for some years, and recently I had a second chance to try them out again whilst working with [LP Archaeology](#) on an urban [evaluation in London](#). The recording system was the standard urban single-context system, but with one minor tweek: all the registers were inputted direct into iPads linked via wi-fi to an online [Ark database](#). All the registers were entered straight into the database: context register, plan register, section register and enviro sample register. Photographic registers were also entered online. Two iPads were used, one by each team.

iPads aren't cheap, however we were using them on site anyway for email and admin, so there was no extra cost. We could have used a laptop, notepad or even a smart-phone. The iPads were kept in ruggedised cases (like you get for smart-phones) which kept them dry and working well despite a lot of breaker dust and some mud and rain. We obviously looked after the iPads and tried to keep them clean, but no more care was needed than for a digital or manual camera. Battery life was good, although we did have electricity on-site, but even if you have no generator a simple power inverter can charge an appliance from a van.

One difficulty was that internet signal could be temperamental, especially several metres down a shaft, however the iPads did function well, even inside concrete buildings; in an open-field situation the iPads should function as well as any 3G based internet signal (compare with GPS working on poor mobile signals). Each iPad could be used simultaneously, although there were issues if two colleagues saved a record at exactly the same moment, backing up registers was done automatically. Our system could not work off-line, however it is very simple to create a system that works off pre-



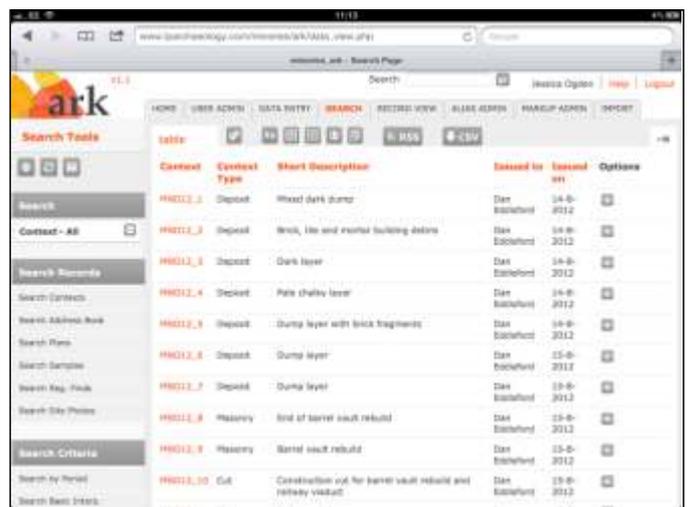
allocated number sequences and is uploaded daily to the master database.

The integral camera is not good enough for detailed record shots, however it was used to take non-archive progress shots, and these could be registered immediately and tagged; ideally one could link a photo from a digital camera via Bluetooth and tag that image via the database.

There are some dangers inherent in recording using computerised 'drop-down' options that may be restrictive and not allow flexibility in some circumstances, but by using the technology purely for registers these are nearly all avoided. There are however distinct advantages in electronic data-entry: not least ensuring that the correct fields are entered in each register, and the automatic cross-referencing of photo, plan, section and sample numbers. This saves time for both the excavator and the supervisor, meaning that more time can be spent on writing and checking discussion and interpretation rather than endless cross-referencing. It also saves time later on in Post-Ex, meaning less mindless grind doing basic data entry, and more time spent on higher level checking and interpretation.

As the data is entered direct into the database the records can be instantly linked to a GIS project and interrogated, especially if plans are digitised on-site or GPS is used. You can then look at sample locations, distribution of particular spot dates, and even the number of contexts dug by a particular excavator...

Is this the future of recording? Well it seems to work within an urban context with a mix of techno-savvy Diggers, and one die-hard Luddite. We already keep expensive kit dry and mud-free, and with ruggedised cases there is less danger of damage –after all, paper is often unworkable when wet. Whether digital registers could pass the slime-test of a Wealden clay site in February is yet to be seen, cheaper data-loggers can be used instead of iPads, and better applications to link digital photos to the databases can be written, but as far as this Luddite is concerned electronic recording is part of the future, albeit with the usual caveats!



Screenshots of the context register screen, with a combination of pre-set drop-down options for some fields, and free text for other fields.



The work environment: an urban site may not have as much mud as some rural sites, but it's still a tough environment and the iPads coped well.

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