

# Research in practice

IfA annual conference and training event

9 to 11 April 2014, Glasgow

[www.archaeologists.net/conference](http://www.archaeologists.net/conference)



## Call for papers

Research is at the core of all investigation: excavations as part of the planning process, historic building recording for private houses, community projects engaging a diverse audience or a million pound initiatives funded by research councils. Whoever is footing the bill, each time an archaeologist begins a new project the research design should outline how that investigation aims to answer specific questions, produce new knowledge or challenge old ideas. The pursuit of knowledge is central to our work – isn't it?

Our 2014 conference aims to examine the concept of research across current archaeological practice, as well as highlighting how archaeologists contribute new knowledge to a wider understanding of the human past. The conference hopes to question how research practice has developed and to face the challenges often posed to heritage professionals regarding value, quality, dissemination and accessibility. Why should all archaeological projects ensure the knowledge they create is accessible? How can academic research influence policy and practice? What can employers do to engage all their staff in best practice and guarantee the highest quality research? Why should developers and clients pay for archaeological research?

Conference organisation is really moving along fast now and we have an agreed session list for the three day programme. Our *Call for papers* is up and running, and potential speakers can now propose papers for sessions as outlined below. Conference runs from the Wednesday 9 to Friday 11 April 2014 and will take place at Glasgow Marriot. Sessions run from 9.30 through to 13.00 each day, and 14.00 through to 17.30 each day. Although the format of sessions is not fixed, papers tend to be 20 minutes in length and be part of a half day session.

### **The deadline for the *Call for papers* is Friday 1 November 2013**

**Submitting paper proposals:** Please contact session organisers directly to ask any questions about individual discussion sessions and make sure you provide a 200 word paper abstract with your proposed title. Contact details for organisers are given below. If your paper is accepted you will need to book a speakers place at conference using the normal booking form (which will be available on the website soon). You will not be charged a fee for the day you attend conference, but will need to pay for any social events on that day or to attend any other days. The conference timetable is not yet confirmed, but please let the session organisers know if there is a particular day you cannot attend. The final timetable will be confirmed by mid November and included in our Winter edition of *The Archaeologist*. Details are also included below for seminars and training workshops. Full abstracts for these will be available online soon.

**To submit a paper proposal, please email the session organisers directly with your title and 200 word abstract by Friday 1 November 2014. You will be contacted by the session organisers to confirm receipt of the proposal, and you be told if your paper has been accepted by the mid-December 2013.**

## Discussion sessions

### **D1 Seeing the wood for the trees: putting archaeological research at the heart of wider contemporary discourse**

Organisers: Paul Belford ([paul.belford@cpat.org.uk](mailto:paul.belford@cpat.org.uk)), Ben Morton ([benmorton@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:benmorton@warwickshire.gov.uk)), David Petts ([d.a.petts@durham.ac.uk](mailto:d.a.petts@durham.ac.uk)) and Gerry Waits ([gerry.wait@nexus-heritage.com](mailto:gerry.wait@nexus-heritage.com))

As archaeologists we have much to say about the world around us. However, all too often in our pursuit of understanding the past, we isolate ourselves from the present. Academic, commercial and community archaeologies all produce meaningful research of relevance for society at large. The problem lies in how we feed this into wider contemporary discourse. At the heart of this matter is the fact that approaches to archaeological theory, data collection, and public engagement are inconsistent. Consequently archaeology seems unable to make a significant impact on mainstream intellectual discourse, and therefore influence high-level policy and practice.

This session seeks to move beyond debates around the academic/commercial divide, the relative accessibility of 'grey literature' and academic publication, and the status of community archaeology. Instead we would like to consider practical mechanisms by which these divergences might be overcome, in order to enable all areas of archaeology to focus upon producing future-orientated research outputs, which not only seek to understand the past, but also engage with many of the issues facing society today and in the future. This session therefore invites contributors to consider the following issues:

- How do we successfully bridge the divergence between theory- and data-driven approaches to archaeological research?
- What can archaeologists do to enable their insights gleaned through understanding the past to have a real impact on policy-making for the future?
- To what extent can archaeological research contribute to addressing wider problems facing society now and in the future?

### **D2 What's new in British archaeology 2014**

Organisers: Duncan H Brown ([Duncan.brown2@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:Duncan.brown2@english-heritage.org.uk)) and Jeff Sanders ([jeff@socantscot.org](mailto:jeff@socantscot.org))  
*What's new in British archaeology* was last run when the IfA conference was in Glasgow, when it was co-organised by Sara Champion with Duncan Brown. Our aim in 2014 is to provide a period-by-period overview of the latest developments in British Archaeology, from the Palaeolithic through to the 20th century. This extended session will run over three half-day sessions providing a backdrop to the overall conference theme of *Research in practice*. It is some

time since such a session was presented and the return to Glasgow is a good opportunity to repeat that while also paying our respects to Sara and the contribution she made to archaeology. Please contact us if you are interested in making a contribution to the session.

### **D3 Politics and archaeological research**

Organisers: Ronan Toolis ([ronan.toolis@guard-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:ronan.toolis@guard-archaeology.co.uk)), John Atkinson ([john.atkinson@guard-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:john.atkinson@guard-archaeology.co.uk)), Warren Bailie ([warren.bailie@guard-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:warren.bailie@guard-archaeology.co.uk)) and Iain Banks ([Iain.Banks@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Iain.Banks@glasgow.ac.uk))

2014 is a year when the past and the present will have special political resonance in Scotland and the UK as a whole. Along with the referendum on Scottish Independence, there will be events in 2014 focusing on the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn and the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. Both of these historical events have been subject to intensive archaeological research in recent years, within an increasingly charged political atmosphere. Can such archaeological research be undertaken entirely removed from the political context of the present, especially given the high profile of such projects? Given the heavy community involvement in such research, do politics play a part in motivating participation? What part does the modern political context of a country or region play in funding archaeological research? And how influential is present-day politics in directing the questions such research seeks to answer? Speakers will explore the links between politics and archaeological research within European, British and local political contexts. The session seeks to provoke discussion on what can be drawn from past and ongoing projects where politics and archaeology collide. How should researchers approach such projects? What lessons can be learnt from previous experience? What are the pitfalls to avoid? Indeed should archaeologists be merely bystanders when archaeology is appropriated by opposing political perspectives?

### **D4 Research without boundaries: the challenges and opportunities of international cultural heritage projects**

Organisers: Leonora O'Brien ([leonora.obrien@urs.com](mailto:leonora.obrien@urs.com)), Gerry Wait ([gerry.wait@nexus-heritage.com](mailto:gerry.wait@nexus-heritage.com)) and Alice Hobson ([alhobson@golder.com](mailto:alhobson@golder.com))

The *Research without Boundaries* session will explore the challenges and benefits of archaeological and cultural heritage research aspects of international projects, including academic, commercial, independent and government initiatives. Discussions will be placed within the wider context of increasing supra-national leadership in setting research agendas and growing

interdisciplinary collaboration on international projects. The session will consider key human, ethical and cognitive aspects of working on international heritage projects, focussing on the research dividends and contemporary social relevance of committed engagement. We will discuss practical experiences of assembling teams, building capacity, assuring expertise and monitoring research quality. The session will look at the need to balance 'freedom of research' with the welfare of living populations, and will explore the relevance of community-based and interdisciplinary approaches to research on international projects. The session will also consider the issues involved in developing and achieving appropriate dissemination strategies.

#### ***D5 Assessing research frameworks and planning for the future***

Organisers: Daniel Miles ([Daniel.Miles@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:Daniel.Miles@english-heritage.org.uk))

This session aims to examine the role and impact of research frameworks in Britain and to discuss whether the present model is meeting user needs within the new planning framework and economic climate. The session will also examine possible new ways of developing research frameworks that meet the user needs of the historic environment research and development management communities. It is nearly 20 years since the publication of Adrian Oliver's *Frameworks of our past* which laid the foundations for the current Research Framework model. The development of these frameworks was in response to the extensive increase in archaeological investigations as a result of the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance 16 (PPG-16) and the aim was to provide a research focus to this development-led work and to aid local government archaeological curators in making decisions. Nearly all regions in England have a regional research framework and both Scotland and Wales have created national archaeological research frameworks. A number of other thematic, period and site based frameworks have also been developed.

Presentations will include a report back on a survey commissioned by English Heritage to evaluate current research frameworks in England, including a user-analysis study, and case studies of current research frameworks in Britain, including regional research frameworks and the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework. Other themes to be covered could cover accessing data and developing and managing new ways to develop research frameworks.

#### ***D6 Innovation, research and best practice: the contribution of the new generation***

Organisers: IfA New Generation Special Interest Group (NGSIG) ([ben.jervis@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:ben.jervis@english-heritage.org.uk))

This session seeks to highlight the contribution of the new generation of heritage professionals in promoting best practice and developing innovative approaches to researching and understanding the past. In particular, it might be considered how early career professionals are well placed to exploit new technologies and media in research, build bridges between academia and the profession at large and how, through initiatives such as the CBA Community Archaeology Bursary Placements scheme, they have been central to engaging with new stakeholders through involvement in community archaeology projects. The session is open to all and it is anticipated that speakers may include past and present holders of IfA and CBA placements, postgraduate students and early career professionals who feel they have made an impact in any of these areas. Papers are also welcome from established professionals, which reflect upon the contributions that NGSIG members have made in the advancement of best practice or innovation in research.

#### ***D7 Research in landscape archaeology: the way forward***

Organisers: Mark Bowden ([mark.bowden@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:mark.bowden@english-heritage.org.uk)), Angela Gannon ([angela.gannon@rcahms.gov.uk](mailto:angela.gannon@rcahms.gov.uk)), Graeme Cavers ([Graeme.Cavers@aocarchaeology.com](mailto:Graeme.Cavers@aocarchaeology.com)) and Bob Johnston ([r.johnston@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:r.johnston@sheffield.ac.uk))

Landscape survey is a broad-based research tool for furthering the understanding of the historic environment, relying on the principles of careful observation and analysis of field evidence of all types and periods. It draws upon a range of research specialisms including ground prospection, aerial survey and photography, and embraces new technologies such as lidar and 3D landscape modelling. Landscape is a concept often used in British archaeology but in practice it rarely lives up to the promise of a truly holistic 'landscape' approach. With current organisational changes affecting the provision of archaeological research and investigation in England, Scotland and Wales, there is a need to ensure that a landscape approach is embedded nationally within archaeological practice at all levels and across all parts of the sector – academic, curatorial, commercial and community engagement. This discussion session will examine the present situation, the impact the proposed changes may have, and explore strategies for disseminating best practice in landscape archaeology

through experience, education, training, guidance and mentoring.

### ***D8 The use of research for the validation of search techniques and interpretation in forensic archaeology and taphonomy***

Organisers: Rob Janaway (FASIG, [r.c.janaway@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:r.c.janaway@bradford.ac.uk)) and Jimmy Adcock (GeoSIG, [Jimmy.adcock@gsbprospection.com](mailto:Jimmy.adcock@gsbprospection.com))

Forensic archaeology has a role to play in both the investigative and evaluative phase of the forensic process. This session will examine how forensic archaeology and its sister discipline forensic geophysics fits into this process. It will investigate how research can be used to qualify and inform the advice given in formulating search strategies. The aim should be to apply research outputs and case work experience to formulate a robust, efficient and cost effective investigation specific strategies. A key issue in forensic search is how experiment assists in the evaluation of potential false positives (which apart from consuming resources are of lesser concern) and false negatives (which are of far greater concern). During the investigative phase of clandestine graves etc. archaeologists will conduct excavation and gather evidence that is subject to archaeological interpretation. Expert opinion must be evaluated and to be of evidential value to the court. This session will consider the role of validation in archaeological interpretation, and will critically consider if accepted archaeological theory and practice is sufficient for court purposes. The understanding of the biology and chemistry of cadaveric decomposition is critical to the selection of suitable search strategies as well as having an evidential bearing of differential recovery and time since death estimations. Traditionally forensic taphonomy has relied on the combination of analysis of case data and specifically constructed experiments, this session will discuss issues concerned with experimental design, controls and replication. Specifically this session will aim to examine the following topics:

- Forensic archaeology and the forensic process
- The role of validation in forensic science
- Offender behaviour and search data bases
- Technique validation and research in forensic geophysics
- Theory versus practice in forensic geophysics – the miss-match between expectation and reality
- Archaeological theory, practice and knowledge – the validation of archaeological evidence in court
- Use of experiments in forensic taphonomy - issues of experimental design, validity and replication?

### ***D9 Research beyond mitigation and universities – maximising the impact of community involvement***

Organisers: Murray Cook ([murraycook35@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:murraycook35@hotmail.co.uk)), David Connolly ([info@bajr.org](mailto:info@bajr.org)), Cara Jones ([c.jones@archaeologyscotland.org.uk](mailto:c.jones@archaeologyscotland.org.uk)), Phil Richardson ([p.richardson@archaeologyscotland.org.uk](mailto:p.richardson@archaeologyscotland.org.uk)) and Doug Rocks-Macqueen ([drocksmacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:drocksmacqueen@gmail.com))

This extended session (including traditional papers and seminar discussion) will take a closer look at the role of citizen science in archaeology and the contribution that community involvement can make to wider research understanding. Session organisers cover the question from two main angles; firstly, discussing whether community archaeology will be accepted as research and thus have a positive impact on our understanding of the past and, secondly, exploring and debating the likely mechanisms, costs and problems associated with increasing the contribution of citizen science and open access archaeology to wider archaeological research.

In recent years Scotland has seen some successful examples of how community engagement can result in clear gains for the professional sector and we feel the conference in Glasgow provides an opportunity to try and answer some of the more difficult questions surrounding community involvement and to ask whether we – as professionals – are on the right track. Initiatives like Scotland's Rural Past, Shorewatch and the Adopt-a-Monument scheme have contributed to the enhancement of local HER records and to the conservation and preservation of individual monuments. Despite this, practitioners (arguably) remain wary of expanding the ideas of citizen science beyond non-intrusive techniques: is there more we can be doing to make sure both the archaeology and the participants are benefitting? How can we ensure that professional archaeologists are not isolated from real stakeholders and supporters of heritage? Do we need to have more confidence in community-based activities in order to maximise their contribution to our understanding of the past?

With historic environment policy across the UK protecting archaeological sites from the impact of development, it could be argued that one detrimental effect of that protection may be a reduction of new archaeological data from well-preserved or sites protected by law. While there remains new archaeological data resulting from developer-funded archaeology and from an active University-based sector, a decrease in larger data sets means that research paradigms and models rely

on increasingly sparse or partial evidence. With a growth in community based archaeological projects, should the professional sector be more proactive in ensuring the results of such engagements are not only fulfilling and fun for participants but are of genuine national significance? Are we as professions utilising this valuable resource to its full potential?

The aim of the session is not to showcase previously successful projects, but rather to isolate and discuss the issues we as professionals must consider to ensure that archaeological research agendas and participants benefit from all projects.

## **Seminar sessions**

### ***S1 Improving the ways we govern and develop our landscapes: heritage research and practice in collaboration***

Chris Dalglish ([chris.dalglish@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:chris.dalglish@glasgow.ac.uk)), Alan Leslie ([aleslie@yorkat.co.uk](mailto:aleslie@yorkat.co.uk)), Kenny Brophy ([kenny.brophy@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:kenny.brophy@glasgow.ac.uk)), Gavin MacGregor ([gmacgregor@yorkat.co.uk](mailto:gmacgregor@yorkat.co.uk); 0845 901 1142)

Landscape is a concept which helps to translate sustainable development into action in particular localities and regions. Here, sustainable development – often a poorly defined problematic concept – is taken to denote a long-term and integrated approach to the maintenance and generation of social, cultural, economic and environmental gains. Landscape – a network of interactions involving people and their environment – bonds sustainable development to particular places and links it to planning, land management, conservation and other practices.

This session is founded on the idea that engagement with the landscape's past is a crucial part of a long-term, integrated approach to landscape governance and development. It can generate a critical understanding of the landscape's present character, values and needs. It can inform the production of visions and actions for the future. The past has bequeathed particular affordances, constraints and opportunities, and it takes on particular meanings in the present; working with the landscape's past can help us to achieve integrated and collaborative governance and development. And historic landscape and other heritage work can help to deliver concrete social, cultural, economic and environmental gains.

Realising these gains requires practice- and policy-relevant research – undertaken by universities, research institutes, professional practitioners, NGOs and public bodies, often in collaboration – which:

- analyses current policies, practices and processes;
- develops ethical and conceptual principles and frameworks;
- designs, pilots and evaluates new methods and practices.

This session will open with presentations which describe concrete case studies, ongoing research & development projects and emerging and future directions in research and practice. A workshop discussion will then allow the exchange of knowledge, information and ideas.

### ***S2 The graphic image in current archaeological research***

Organisers: Steve Allen ([sallen@yorkat.co.uk](mailto:sallen@yorkat.co.uk)), Graphics Archaeology Group

Archaeological research draws on many different resources during the course of a project and not all of these resources are text-based. Images are used in the course of a project to record data, to try out alternative ideas and to analyse the information we collect. Similarly, the output, the end result of the research, is expressed in visual as well as verbal terms. Graphical images are powerful tools which are often treated by the unenlightened as absolute statements- and sometimes even as nothing more than the product of the imagination of the artist. We intend to show that this is not the case. Any archaeological image is the result of the research and experience carried out by the practitioner and their interaction with their colleagues. The work is as capable of interrogation as any other form of archaeological research. The presentations in this session will show this process and emphasise how important it is to follow best practice in the collection, preparation and utilisation of images of whatever type. We aim to show how images are (i) the product of research and interpretation and (ii) help to drive and define future research and interpretation.

### ***S3 Creating research communities; bridging the gap between sectors***

Organisers: Katy Bell ([katy.bell@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:katy.bell@winchester.ac.uk)), Cait McCullagh ([Cait.McCullagh@highlifehighland.com](mailto:Cait.McCullagh@highlifehighland.com)), Ian Scrivener-Lindley ([Ian.Scrivener-Lindley@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Scrivener-Lindley@highland.gov.uk)) and Hanna Steyne ([hanna\\_steyne@hotmail.com](mailto:hanna_steyne@hotmail.com))

This session explores a common problem in archaeological research from two distinct areas. As practitioners working across a diverse sector, archaeologists can work in many places – commercial companies, universities, local government, museums and third sector organisations. Even within well-defined areas of specialism – such as maritime archaeology or artefact studies – practitioners find

there are still hurdles to providing accessible results, synthetic analysis and in finding opportunities (and support) for collaboration.

Session organisers will provide case studies from the seemingly divergent disciplines of maritime archaeology and artefact studies. In doing so we hope to bring together archaeologists working in all settings to examine ways in which research is integrated into the work they do. We seek to open discussion of how different strands of the profession approach and undertake research, publish and disseminate results and seek opportunities to collaborate and add texture to archaeological research. Contributions which explore these threads from other areas are also welcome.

Through evaluating approaches in different areas, we hope to highlight examples of good practice in information sharing about archaeological discoveries, especially where diverse data has been synthesised into an accessible portal for all who wish to research an integrated record. The session offers a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences, talking through the challenges of working with multiple agencies' and communities' interests, voicing concerns of sharing data and contributions and providing examples of how these have been considered and met.

#### ***S4 Foresight: researching the future of the past***

Organisers: Dave Batchelor (dave.batchelor@english-heritage.org.uk) and Pete Wilson (pete.wilson@english-heritage.org.uk)

Policy, practice and priorities for those engaged with the protection of our collective past are informed by many things. As a Sector we are well-versed in utilising the results of past investigations, not only to weave complex and multi-layered understandings of aspects of our past on national, regional and more local scales, but also as tools for informing the curation of the historic environment. However we are less well-versed in the skills and tools that might allow us to get 'upstream' of issues that may impact on the historic environment in the medium to long term, despite a widespread recognition of many potentially devastating issues such as climate change, the austerity agenda and population change; equally we are not well-placed to anticipate potential opportunities for the historic environment – as a

profession we are generally tied into a reactive mode of operation whether as curators, consultants or contractors. The establishment by English Heritage of a Historic Environment Intelligence Team specifically tasked with leading on the development of horizon scanning and the assessment of threats and opportunities, working with Sectoral partners, government departments and agencies and commercial organisations, represents the first coherent attempt to address this area of research in the historic environment sector. This seminar will seek to introduce the concept of 'futures research' and its relevance and potential for the historic environment sector, as well as seeking to establish what may already be being done less formally, and the potential for such research to influence future funding priorities and possible responses to emerging issues.

### ***Workshops***

**Delegates will need to book places on workshops when they book and further details on each will be available soon on our conference webpages.**

**CPD training workshops will include:**

- W1 Getting published in archaeology
- W2 Scanning environments, sediments and archaeology
- W3 Developing strategies for social media in business
- W4 A rough guide to scientific techniques and sampling strategies in field archaeology

#### ***W2 Scanning environments, sediments and archaeology***

Tony Brown (Tony.Brown@soton.ac.uk), Laura Basell (lbasell@bournemouth.ac.uk) and Michael Lobb (ml6g12@soton.ac.uk )

This workshop will assemble a number of TLS users from different research areas in archaeology who will share their experiences and practices and communicate the direction of travel of TLS in archaeology. **We would be interested to hear from those with good case studies which could be included as an example for workshop attendees, please get in touch with the organisers**

**For more details see our conference pages at [www.archaeologists.net/conference](http://www.archaeologists.net/conference)**