

CifA Archaeological Archives Group Day Conference and AGM

Thursday 24 September 2026 – Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory St, York YO1 6ET

Abstract and Call for Papers

‘Beyond Deposition: Rethinking Archives in 2026 and Onwards’

Too often archaeological archive work has been treated as a relatively simple, end-stage project task, focused on the “deposition” of material and records once fieldwork and reporting are complete. This practice has reinforced a view of archives as static products passed on to receiving institutions and rarely visited thereafter.

Protection by record may be delivered in name but to what public benefit?

Current challenges - digital-first excavation, complex datasets, sustainable approaches, fragmented systems -and the need for inclusive and community-centred practice demand a fundamental rethink.

Is this a pivotal moment for archaeological archives: Can archaeological archives better capture the human experience in the archaeological endeavour? How can heritage archives more widely be made into more dynamic tools, capable of intersection with diverse but relatable information that opens out wider narratives and discourse? As interpreters of the past what do we need to know when we look outside the boundary of given professional heritage practice? Who can we learn from?

This call for papers invites contributors from all CifA SIGs and colleagues from across the heritage sector to explore the full lifecycle of archival heritage information, new collaborative models and the idea that deposition is not the endpoint of data creation.

By looking beyond deposition, this conference aims to reimagine archives as active, ethical and resilient systems that continue to generate research value, accountability and public benefit long after the project has closed.

Please send short (approximately 200 word) abstracts for papers via email to groups@archaeologists.net. This conference will be run in-person. Speakers will receive support with entry and travel costs.

The call for papers will close on Friday 24 July 2026.