



Joint DF/Prospect Conference Summary

Antony Francis, Prospect

Antony discussed the direct relationship between low pay and achieving the lowest common denominator in terms of cost, in order to compete in the free-market economy. He expressed views that competitive tendering for work is wasteful and that there are more rational options including having archaeology funded by taxation. Antony's message is that "we are stronger together" – this is demonstrated in the discussions around a pension specifically for archaeologists.

Kate Geary, IfA

As a profession we have come a long way and we have more work to do in mapping career paths. Kate emphasised the link between standards and pay and showed a graph of the salaries over 10 years, tracking minima in comparison to it. It is recognised that minima have acted as a 'back-stop' to a fall in wages. She also emphasised that pay is one reward for learning and improvement and that we all need to pay attention to the way Chartership is structured as it will alter the structure of the profession and progression through the profession.

Dominic Perring, UCL

Dominic encouraged the profession to place more emphasis on archaeological products as a measure of success rather than doing a job as cheaply as possible. It is by concentrating on the product rather than just on the service that the profession can provide more public benefit. From this Cultural Resource Management approach there would be a need for a greater emphasis on assessing significance, providing professionals with a greater career satisfaction.

Chiz Harward, DF

Chiz presented the initial findings of the CPD Survey, which inevitably at such early stages of assessing the results have raised more questions than answers. There were a series of graphs that illustrated the apparently startling differences between men's and women's experiences within the profession. Further analysis will be needed to seek answers as to why this might be and to compare the remainder of the data and analyse the detailed answers provided.

David Connolly, BAJR

David presented his Skills Passport that will aid those in the profession to identify their current skills level, skills gaps and career pathways. There are 28 main skills groups with each group broken down into step by step skills that are categorised as novice, competent or proficient. Each skill has to be signed off by the employee's supervisor, who is responsible for making the recommendation and dating it. Each passport belongs to an individual based on their logged in details and there is space to add additional skills not already listed.

The discussion sessions were lively and well-informed – they focused around:

- **Free market economics vs competition/regulation**

There is a broad recognition that commercial archaeology undercuts its ability to fund training and production of products that provide direct public benefit. We are seeing the disadvantages of keeping cost as the lowest common denominator – alternative models were discussed and research options into alternative models were raised. There was a general agreement that debate is needed.

- **Pay-quality-standards/skills**

There was agreement that there is a direct relationship between pay and standards (quality derived from skills related to reward). In line with this is the acknowledgement of the number of archaeologists leaving the profession, the need to retain skills and expertise, winning loyalty and providing opportunities. We need to support fellow professionals through networking and training.

- **Product-value-customer**

The product is often undervalued. What the profession needs is a set of outcomes that becomes typical rather than exceptional – as they now are. There is a perception that this would lead to a broader and deeper appreciation of the profession as well as a greater appreciation of the collective value of archaeology.

- **The question was asked: what's in it for the clients/developers – how do we keep them engaged?**

One of many suggestions was whether the profession could facilitate developers so that they receive tax credits for work done. Products for the public benefit were again discussed as something that developers can offer local residents, and we reminded ourselves not to undervalue public 'goodwill' towards private sector corporations. Above all we should not forget the shared benefit of archaeological discovery for all parties.

One of the main aims of the day conference was to develop a series of key aims and agendas on the issues of pay and training that Prospect and DF will concentrate on over the next couple of years. Papers will become available online in the near future. Our thanks to the speakers and those who attended for helping to make this such a successful event.