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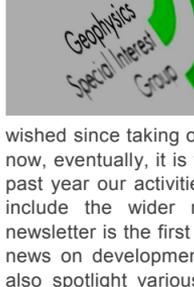
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## Chairman's Note - Starting Afresh

Having sat as a co-opted member of the GeoSIG committee since 2009 (acting as Liaison Officer with the European GPR Association) in March of this year I finally took the plunge - I joined the IfA and took over the reins from Peter Barker. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter for his sterling work over the last few years with the group - he kindly offered to remain a member of the committee and therefore help with the transition.

It is fair to say that I have not made the progress I had wished since taking over the Chairman's role (with no-one to blame but myself) but now, eventually, it is time to get the ball rolling and try to "reboot" the group. In the past year our activities have slowed and I am keen to get it moving again and to include the wider membership, creating more interaction between us. The newsletter is the first step along that road and with each issue we intend to include news on developments within our industry, information on upcoming events and also spotlight various aspects of our sector; this will be through publishing the results of brief surveys from each edition (building an ongoing profile of the industry) and also by interviewing individuals directly involved with geophysics from equipment manufacturers to curators and everyone in between. In this edition we start with me, so that you can learn a little more about GeoSIG's current chair.

If you have subscribed to the group, these newsletters will be emailed directly to your inbox and a copy will also be archived on the GeoSIG page of the IfA website - a resource we hope to make more of. I will be looking for suggestions from the membership for content of both this newsletter and the webpages as well as activities and events that you would like to see GeoSIG get involved with or organise.

More immediately, you may have seen from the recent call for papers, that GeoSIG will be co-chairing a session at next year's [IfA conference](#) with FASIG ([Forensic Archaeology Special Interest Group](#)) so I look forward to meeting some of the membership there.

In addition, GeoSIG are jointly organising a conference dedicated to commercial archaeological geophysics with B-CAP (Bradford Centre for Archaeological Prospection), also set for the spring of next year. This meeting is an attempt to look at the practices, processes and issues unique to commercial survey, including the views of the end-users and those responsible for monitoring, rather than just the surveyors - details can be found in the events section, below.

And, finally, if ANYONE has a better suggestion for the name of this newsletter then *please* let us have it...

Jimmy.

## Events and News

- **GeoSIG AGM - 29th November 2013 from 11.00AM**  
RSK Offices, 18 Frogmore Lane, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9RT  
Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/XDD5Y>
- **B-CAP/GeoSIG Commercial Archaeological Geophysics Seminar**  
Bradford, 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
[Call for papers deadline - 23/12/13: [www.B-CAP.co.uk](http://www.B-CAP.co.uk)]
- **Digital Domains: Remote Sensing of Past Human Landscapes**  
Dartmouth College, USA 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2014  
<http://sites.dartmouth.edu/digital-domains>
- **IfA Conference**  
Glasgow, 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> April 2014  
[www.archaeologists.net/conference/2014info](http://www.archaeologists.net/conference/2014info)
- **CAA2014 Computer Applications & Quantitative Methods in Archaeology**  
Paris, 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014  
<http://caa2014.sciencesconf.org>
- **EAGE Environmental and Engineering Geophysics Meeting**  
Athens, 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
[Call for papers deadline - 15/04/14: [www.eage.org](http://www.eage.org)]



### News from the IfA

This section will highlight any developments at the IfA which may impact upon the geophysics sector or which might benefit from contributions by the members of our group. The IfA is reviewing all their currently available Technical Papers, including No.6 which covers geophysics survey. For more information, see the [Industry Snapshot](#) section, below.

### New Community Archaeology Journal

In January 2014 Maney Publishing launches the Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage. The journal, which will be published three times a year, recognises the increasing role of the general public in archaeological research, providing a dedicated outlet for papers on all aspects of "community archaeology". With local groups both commissioning and carrying out geophysical surveys on their projects, we look forward to seeing some good results published and would encourage those involved with such projects to consider drafting submissions for this new publication:

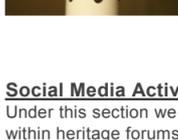
[www.maneypublishing.com/index.php/journals/cah](http://www.maneypublishing.com/index.php/journals/cah)

### DART Heritage Remote Sensing Workshop Summary

Presentations as well as audio and video from the workshop (held in mid-September) have now been uploaded to the DART (Detection of Archaeological Residues using remote sensing Techniques) project website and are publicly accessible. Links to a full transcript of the sessions and an archive of tweets from the day have also been posted on the ISAP mailing list amongst other outlets.

[www.dartproject.info](http://www.dartproject.info)

### Bartington Instruments 3-Axis Gradiometers Available



Bartington Instruments have now made their new 3-axis gradiometer units, the Grad-13, available to the general public with the first few out on evaluation. We look forward to seeing results from these trials in due course.

LEFT: Grad-13 serial number 0001 heading out for evaluation.

## Social Media Activity Round-up

Under this section we 'signpost' any notable discussions that have a relevance to geophysics within heritage forums across the social media platforms:

- **IfA LinkedIn Group:**
  - Discussions over the content of the IfA conference (instigated by John Wood) - are the sessions good enough and/or relevant enough?
  - The gradual release of rates (instigated by Michael Heaton) - will we be able to maintain rates during and beyond this upturn?
- **ISAP Mailing List:**
  - A brief discussion on the concept of "product placement" of equipment in geophysical publications.
- **Twitter:**
  - A good flurry of activity around the DART workshop - search for #DART2013.



## Industry Interview - Jimmy Adcock

**Current occupation?** Senior Geophysicist at GSB Prospection.

**Why archaeological geophysics?** I didn't set out to work in archaeology; my only exposure to it, like many people my age, had been a few episodes of Time Team with my parents on a Sunday afternoon. My undergraduate degree in straight Geophysics (Southampton University) made me realise that I preferred the near-surface techniques - you were recording things that were far more tangible than some deeply buried fault or ore body. In the last few days of that degree I read about the Archaeological Prospection course at Bradford University which sounded like it would be very interesting; when I found out that there were NERC funded places available, my mind was made-up. I thought it would just scratch the itch I had to learn more about shallow geophysics and assumed I would go into the oil & gas industry upon finishing the course. That never happened: GSB were recruiting just as I finished the Masters program and now I've been there 11 years. And 2 months. And 11 days. Not that I'm counting.

**If you weren't following this career path where might you be now?** Either in mineral exploration or possibly on something of a career tangent... Because I found out about the Bradford course very late in my final year at Southampton, I couldn't start immediately and so spent the intervening year temping. Well, due to a bit of a mix-up, I ended up working in the DNA laboratories of the Forensic Science Services in London. I was in one of the support teams operating alongside the DNA analysts. I loved the job, relishing the challenge of working with chemistry rather than my native physics and was offered a contract with training to work up to eventually be an analyst. The offer was made in the same week that I had finished confirmed for the Masters; it was a close-run thing but I decided to head north.

**Made the right decision?** Undoubtedly, yes. I still get a kick out of finding stuff - and because it's more about the geophysics for me, I don't get quite as disheartened when we're only finding pipes and field drains as some of my more archaeologically-minded colleagues! I love the mix of field and office work, the variety of locations and the uncertainty of what a parcel of land might hold. But I am writing this from a warm, dry, office with the sun shining outside. Ask me again next week when I'm in a wet, cold, boggy turnip field.

**What would you like to see change in the profession?** That could be a long answer! I'll distill it into two key ideals. I'd like to see the sector regain some 'value' - I fear that geophysics is rapidly being seen less and less as a specialism because of its widespread use and increasingly user-friendly equipment. I realise that such a statement probably comes across as somewhere between "arrogant so-and-so" and "geophysics snob" but bear with me. I have been involved with a lot of community projects where we give volunteers a brief overview of geophysics and let them have a go on the equipment - inside an hour people can be collecting useable data. However, this presents an unbalanced view of geophysics to those looking in. Just because data are easy to collect, it does not make it good quality; and just because interpreting means it's easier to make nice images, this does not make interpretation any easier. And it is the latter element where us, as a sector, add value - interpretation and experience is key and as an industry we need to be championing this facet of our service far more. Granted, this will be an uphill struggle, in the commercial world at least, when time and money are king - the who's cheapest, who can start first, who can get it finished quickest?" The second thing I'd love to see is much more feedback - the good, the bad, AND the ugly: it is only with feedback from trenching that we can improve our interpretations and confidence levels on subsequent reports. This is obviously in our clients' interests so maybe we should start sneaking a requirement to supply even a basic level of feedback into our contracts?

**You mentioned your university courses, do you think universities do a good job of training students for archaeological geophysics? If not what could be improved?** I think they do a pretty good job, yes. A solid understanding of the physics behind a given technique is fundamental to making a sound and justifiable interpretation. Likewise, that interpretation also requires a reasonable understanding of archaeological and site-formation processes to be of any use - simply describing the physical properties of an anomaly won't help the client. Obviously, archaeological geophysics courses attract both archaeologists and geophysicists, each looking to specialise in the other's field, which means you have a divided group whose learning needs differ vastly, yet somehow you must bring them both along together throughout the course. Trying to strike the right balance must be something of a tight-rope act but we continue to get very good young employees straight from higher education. With such a large commercial archaeological geophysics sector a lot more graduates are likely to find employment pretty quickly so it might be good to have more vocational units on a course, giving students a fuller appreciation of commercial issues and practices (e.g. strategies for large evaluations) and / or get some of them attempting dissertations that might offer a solution to commonly encountered commercial issues. I've seen some very good theorists turn up in my time who were not really prepared for the reality of week upon week of evaluation work or the compromises often necessitated by commercial projects over research work.

**What made you join the IfA after so long?** Quite simply, GeoSIG. Being co-opted on the committee meant that I was party to the IfA machine up close and I could see that there were a lot of people throughout the Institute striving to improve quality, standards and the wider understanding of their sectors. When the opportunity arose to take on the Chair of GeoSIG I felt that it was time to put my money where my mouth was as opposed to just the usual post-survey "pub discussions" of how to make things better.

**So what have been your career highs and lows, so far?** Anywhere with a nice view and blue skies generally counts as a high. I'm also incredibly proud to have been involved with Time Team for the best part of ten years - it may not have gained universal approval within the profession but I worked with an amazing team of archaeologists and was privileged to survey many fantastic sites; finding Edward III's 14th century Round Table at Windsor Castle still stands out in my mind. It was also a great opportunity to get some of that much needed feedback I spoke of earlier, and get it immediately, albeit usually delivered either begrudgingly or in taunts depending upon our relative level of success. I think working on a project with the School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine out in Tanzania, which largely involved sticking a geophysical probe into actively used latrine pits, was probably the one job I've done that ranked as both a career high and career low simultaneously...

## Industry Snapshots

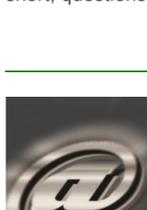
Every edition we will be asking you help us by completing a very short questionnaire on some aspect of archaeological geophysics - anything from archiving to survey equipment and IfA activities to wellingtons. All of your answers can be submitted completely anonymously.

The aim is to build a profile of the sector which will evolve with time as we periodically go back and update the answers. With this information the IfA can strive to serve those using geophysics better and use the data to inform upon policy decisions, as a basis for advice, and to identify potentially useful themes for conference sessions, workshops and such like.



The first survey is very short and slightly different from what will be the norm - the Admin team at the IfA have asked us our opinion on whether the current Technical Paper no.6 ("The use of geophysical techniques in archaeological evaluations") is still relevant, despite now being over 10 years old, or whether it requires updating. The committee have started to look at this but we would love to know what the membership think, so please head to our survey page and answer the few, very short, questions there:

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/GeoSIG-TP6](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GeoSIG-TP6)



## Inbox

Please get in touch if you have any suggestions of activities and events that you would like to see IfA GeoSIG get involved with or organise.

Similarly, any concerns you may have about any aspect of geophysics can be sent to the group for consideration and comment.