



# CIFA2021 ONLINE: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ONLINE 2021

21 - 23 APRIL 2021

## SESSION TITLE

Journeys into an archaeological career

## SESSION ABSTRACT

Journeys into an archaeological career will cover a variety of roles that a career in archaeology can lead to and highlight the skills early career archaeologists should consider developing in their interested area or related field.

This session will be chaired by Cifa's Early Careers Group and sponsored by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). With the support from a host of professionals from across the historic environment sector we will explore their journeys into the profession. Presenters will give advice based on their own careers about the skills and behaviours attendees might need to travel further, choose new directions and reach their desired destination - whatever twists and turns that occur along the way. There will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions and discuss what your next steps might be.

## SESSION PROGRAMME

9:00 – 9:15	<b>Session Introduction</b> <i>Cifa Early Careers group</i>
9:15 – 9:30	<b>The Portable Antiquities Scheme and Treasure Registrars</b> <i>Ayla Karaman, Treasure Registrar, Portable Antiquities Scheme and British Museum</i> <i>Lauren Speed, Outreach Officer, Portable Antiquities Scheme and British Museum</i>
9:30 – 9:45	<b>Public/Community Archaeology</b> <i>Claire Corkill, Development Manager, Council for British Archaeology, CBA</i> <i>Jo Kirton, Youth Engagement Manager and Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) Coordinator, Council for British Archaeology, CBA</i>
9:45 – 10:00	<b>Field Archaeologist and TV Presenter</b> <i>Natasha Billson, Commercial Archaeologist, Content Creator and Presenter of The Great British Dig, Channel 4</i>

10:00 – 10:15	<b>Geophysics</b> <i>Will Rigby, Junior Project Officer, Magnitude Surveys</i>
10:15 – 10:30	<b>Osteoarchaeology</b> <i>Kirsty Squires, Osteoarchaeologist and Senior Lecturer in Forensic Anthropology, Staffordshire University</i>
10:30 – 10:45	<b>Break</b>
10:45 – 11:00	<b>Historic Environment Record</b> <i>Nick Boldrini, Historic Environment Record Officer, Durham County Council</i>
11:00 – 11:15	<b>Experimental Archaeology</b> <i>James Dilley, Experimental Archaeologist</i>
11:15 – 11:30	<b>Heritage Outreach and Interpretation</b> <i>Dominique Bouchard, Head of Learning and Interpretation, English Heritage</i>
11:30 – 11:45	<b>Museum Curation</b> <i>Jeannette Plummer Sires, Project Curator, Archaeological Assemblages, British Museum</i> <i>Amal Khreishah, Curator of Archaeology, South West Heritage Trust</i>
11:45 – 12:30	<b>Panel discussion and Q&amp;A</b> <i>Led by the ClfA Early Careers group</i>

## SPEAKER ABSTRACTS

### **The Portable Antiquities Scheme and Treasure Registrars**

The PAS, run by The British Museum and Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museums Wales, encourages the recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public. Every year many thousands of objects are discovered, many by metal detectorists, but also by people out walking, gardening or going about their daily lives. The information about these objects is recorded onto our online database where it is made available for all to research and is helping to advance our knowledge and understanding of the past.

*Ayla Karaman, Treasure Registrar, Portable Antiquities Scheme and British Museum*

Ayla Karaman has been working at the British Museum as a Treasure Registrar for over four years. She helps process Treasure found in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in accordance of the Treasure Act 1996. Prior to this Ayla studied at UCL and obtained a BA in Archaeology and later on a MA in Public Archaeology which focused on archaeology and nationalism in Turkey and also antiquities and the law. During her time at UCL, she excavated in Kazakhstan and Turkey, and whilst undertaking her MA volunteered as an administrative assistant at the Ashmolean Museum in the Eastern Art Department.

*Lauren Speed, Outreach Officer, Portable Antiquities Scheme and British Museum*

Lauren Speed has been Outreach Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme for the last four years, working on The National Lottery Heritage Fund supported PAST Explorers project. She studied Archaeology at Durham University, followed by an MA in Museum Studies via distance learning from Leicester University. Lauren's career path has been quite varied! Her first role was as an assistant curator at the Royal Air Force Museum. She then moved to the Royal Academy of Music Museum where she was Records and Information Manager for a short-term project, before heading to MOLA to become a Community Archaeologist. In between, Lauren has worked as a freelance Archaeological Illustrator, and has taken a couple of jobs outside the sector, as well as volunteering for various museums and projects.

**Public/Community Archaeology**

*Claire Corkill, Development Manager, Council for British Archaeology (CBA)*

Claire Corkill has worked as the CBA's Development Manager for the last 2 years. Claire's first experience of archaeology was as a volunteer with the University of Liverpool's Centre for Manx Studies and Bournemouth University. She then went on to do a degree in Archaeology at the University of York before returning home to the Isle of Man to do a part-time MA in Manx Studies. After a period of temping in offices and continuing to volunteer on excavations, Claire started working at the Centre for Manx Studies as a researcher and archaeologist. Her role included excavation, finds processing, desk-based assessments and coordinating and teaching on one of the University of Liverpool's annual teaching excavations. In 2009 Claire returned to the University of York to do a PhD looking at First World War internment while working part-time in a health food shop and teaching at the university. After completing her PhD Claire worked part-time as a researcher and volunteered with the CBA. In 2016 she began working for the CBA, initially providing administrative support before going on to provide project and event support. In 2019 Claire took on the role of Development Manager and now project manages the Festival of Archaeology, fundraises, and supports the network of CBA groups and affiliate members.

*Jo Kirton, Youth Engagement Manager and Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) Coordinator, Council for British Archaeology (CBA)*

Jo Kirton has worked as the CBA's Youth Engagement Manager for nearly three years. She undertook her undergrad degree at Durham University, worked in a jewellers for a year, and returned to university to undertake her MA in Archaeology (whilst working in a shoe shop to make ends meet). She graduated into the 2008 recession and decided to undertake a funded PhD instead of working as a field archaeologist (no jobs). Throughout her studies she was involved in numerous community and research excavations across the UK and Europe, eventually becoming co-Director of the Bamburgh Research Project. She worked part-time throughout her PhD as a visiting lecturer, librarian and Corp Comms Assistant. Towards the end of her PhD she began working full-time as a Project Manager, delivering community archaeology and heritage projects across Cheshire, NE Wales and the Wirral with a small CIC start-up. This included project development, creating funding

bids, delivery (including excavation and post-ex for each project), evaluation, reporting and mentoring. She joined the CBA in autumn 2018 and is responsible for all elements of youth engagement (8-25) at the CBA.

### **Field Archaeologist and TV Presenter**

*Natasha Billson, Commercial Archaeologist, Content Creator and Presenter of The Great British Dig, Channel 4*

Natasha Billson has worked as a commercial field archaeologist for the past 8 years throughout the UK and overseas. Within the first year of graduating from Bournemouth University in 2013, Natasha had worked in Barbados, Cyprus, Germany, Russia and Scotland. Finding a secure job in the UK commercial sector was not easy. After a year of short-term contracts with archaeological units across England, she landed her dream job at an urban-based archaeological unit in London. Working in the city has been mentally and physically challenging but every day is a learning day. From 2014 to present, whilst working in England, Natasha would use up her annual leave to participate in expeditions in Egypt, Russia and Ukraine. During this time, Natasha found a love for communicating the past. She has a YouTube channel Behind the Trowel which was created during a 2013 excavation in Germany. The channel was inactive until inspiration from current world events, helped shape her YouTube Livestream Show, 'Archaeologists in Quarantine.' Here, Natasha has interviewed archaeologists across the world, hosted webinars and lectures. Additionally, Natasha is a Presenter and has featured on The Discovery / Science Channel's Unexplained and Unexplored, Secrets in the Ice, Ancient Unexplained Files and most recently on The Great British Dig, Channel 4. Natasha's passion for communication and storytelling inspired her to create Heritage Media Group. Providing a way to bridge the gap between heritage organisations and individuals with social media management, production and training.

### **Geophysics**

*Will Rigby, Junior Project Officer, Magnitude Surveys*

After leaving high school, Will Rigby worked on his family's mixed agriculture and livestock farm for ten years. Farming is not a job, but a way of life and after this time period, although Will loved being on the farm, he decided that he needed a fresh challenge.

Will has always had an interest in history and decided to go back into education to follow this as a career. He went to night school to study an Access to Higher Education Diploma in Archaeology and Ancient History. This enabled him to gain a place at The University of Manchester, where he studied a BA in Archaeology and Ancient History, doing twelve weeks on a research dig in Cyprus during his degree. After completing his BA, Will continued his studies and completed an MA in Classics and Ancient History at The University of Manchester during which he was fortunate to be able to study for two months at the British School of Rome on their City of Rome course.

Upon completing his studies, Will got a job as a trainee for a commercial archaeological unit. He worked on 21 different sites in 2 years, gaining experience on a variety of sites from different time periods, and managed to progress to assistant supervisor. During this time, one of his most

memorable experiences was supervising an evaluation where the team discovered a Bronze Age burnt mound. They took samples to be radiocarbon dated which gave a range that averaged out to 1160BC. Will wrote the evaluation report for this project and was provided with geophysical data that had recorded an anomaly on which they based the location of the evaluation trench. This gave Will an important insight into the dark arts of archaeological geophysics.

Will applied to be an assistant archaeological geophysicist with Magnitude Surveys, starting at the bottom, progressively working his way up to his current role as a Junior Project Officer. During this time, he has worked on a wide variety of jobs, ranging from small one-day projects to multiple-week national infrastructure projects. He has been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to work in a variety of roles from surveying, working in the workshop to produce their bespoke surveying equipment and writing technical reports. These experiences have enabled him to become a valuable, well-rounded member of a team, where he now manages his own projects.

### **Osteoarchaeology**

*Kirsty Squires, Osteoarchaeologist and Senior Lecturer in Forensic Anthropology, Staffordshire University, UK*

Kirsty Squires is an Osteoarchaeologist and a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Anthropology at Staffordshire University. Kirsty completed her BSc (Hons) Archaeology award at the University of Nottingham. During this time, she volunteered at Grantham Museum and attended field schools and excavations in the UK, Greece, and Poland. She became interested in funerary archaeology during her undergraduate degree, and subsequently pursued an MSc in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology at the University of Sheffield. It was during the course of this award that she became interested in cremated bone and what these remains can tell us about past societies. Her doctoral research, also conducted at the University of Sheffield, focused upon demography, identity, and cremation technologies in early medieval Lincolnshire. Before entering academia as a lecturer, Kirsty worked in commercial archaeology and acted as a Field Director for an osteoarchaeology field school in Romania. Her research primarily focuses upon early medieval osteoarchaeology, the archaeology of childhood in the past, ethics in bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology, and the analysis and interpretation of cremated human bone and mummified remains from archaeological and forensic contexts. She is the Student Development and Outreach Officer for the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past, and a Research Associate of the Observatory for the Mummified Heritage of Sicily.

### **Historic Environment Record**

Historic Environment Records or HERs are sources of information about the archaeology, built heritage and landscapes of a particular geographic area, and are managed and maintained by local authorities such as county councils or national parks. HERs are maintained within a database linked to a Geographical Information System (GIS) and supported by reference material such as maps, antiquarian reports and aerial photographs. Local authorities have a statutory role to maintain and update these records and also use them to inform planning, development and land management work. The records are also publicly accessible and are used by a wide audience including heritage

organisations, students and researchers and individuals interested in discovering more about the archaeology of their local area.

*Nick Boldrini, Historic Environment Record Officer Durham County Council*

Nick Boldrini has worked as Durham County Council's Historic Environment Officer for almost 11 years. Nick's first degree was in History and Independent Studies at Lancaster University, where he first became interested in archaeology as part of one of his history modules. He explored this interest by doing an adult education course whilst working in odd jobs, before going back to University to do a part-time Masters in Archaeology and Prehistory at Sheffield University from 1995-1997. Before going to, and whilst at, Sheffield, Nick took part in various volunteers digs, from the Mesolithic to the Roman period, as well as volunteering at a museum and a Sites and Monuments record. Whilst at Sheffield, Nick also got his first professional job, working on excavations as a site assistant. He continued in fieldwork, taking part in various evaluations, excavations and some geophysical survey, interspersed with the odd other job, for the next few years. His first curatorial job was as an SMR assistant in Worcestershire in 2000. SMR/HER work is the management of a digital database of known archaeology for an area, linked to a digital map, and based on hard copy collections of reports, aerial photographs, maps, books, articles etc. The SMR/HER is then mainly used to help manage archaeology through the planning system, but also for land management (forestry, farming etc) and for research. Nick first worked in Durham for about 8 months in 2001, where he also undertook development management (giving archaeological advice on planning applications). He returned to SMR/HER work in North Yorkshire for 8 ½ years, during which time he completed an MSc in Archaeological Information Systems at York, part-time. He re-joined Durham County Council in 2010. Originally the role at Durham was just HER related, but it has evolved to include development management and land management advice, as well as a small element of outreach.

### **Experimental Archaeology**

*James Dilley, Experimental Archaeologist*

Growing up in an area with plenty of flint, James started experimenting with the prehistoric craft of flintknapping after watching it demonstrated on TV. At the age of 10 James started to attempt to make replica stone tools, with limited success for the first few years! He joined the Young Archaeologist Club (YAC) in Cambridge, who helped nurture his passion and led him to meet the inspirational Tony Blackman on a YAC 'holiday' in Cornwall. That summer James was first introduced to a live demonstration of flintknapping, bronze casting, bone working and other forms of experimental archaeology.

By the time James was in secondary school, ready to sit his GCSE's, he had already gained an A-Level in Archaeology and the website AncientCraft was founded in 2009 to showcase his skills and document the sites he had visited. As AncientCraft grew, so did his expertise and it wasn't long before museums and schools began to contact James, requesting demonstrations and replica objects.

James went on to complete a BSc in Archaeology, with a dissertation exploring the manufacturing process and use of Neolithic polished stone axes in Britain using experimental archaeology. This was followed by an MA, exploring experimental methods to investigate bone flintknapping hammers and hunting spears from the Lower Palaeolithic site of Schoningen (Germany). In 2020, he completed his PhD in Archaeology at the University of Southampton exploring Upper Palaeolithic hunting technology.

Throughout his time at University, James has made hundreds of replica prehistoric objects for museums around the world. You can see his work displayed at the British Museum and Stonehenge. He also regularly appears on TV demonstrating prehistoric skills for the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Channel 5 to name a few. James strongly believes the most effective way to engage individuals and communities in prehistory is through the creation and delivery of interactive experiences, using quality replicas and experienced specialists.

### **Heritage Outreach and Interpretation**

*Dominique Bouchard, Head of Learning and Interpretation, English Heritage*

Dr Dominique Bouchard is Head of Learning and Interpretation at English Heritage where she oversees exhibitions, digital interpretation, publications, and learning across the national portfolio of 400+ sites and is a 2021 Clore Duffield Fellow. She holds a BS in Applied Physics and BA in Mathematics from Columbia University in New York and received her DPhil at the University of Oxford in Classical Archaeology. Dominique has participated in excavations in Italy (Pompeii), Greece (Pella & Alonissos) and Hong Kong (Town Island, Basalt Island). Her doctoral research explored the relationship between public art, identity and power in Medieval and Renaissance south Italy. Dominique has fifteen years' experience leading exhibitions, public programmes and learning in museums and heritage organisations. She has worked as expert consultant on Northern Ireland for the European Commission, Council of Europe and UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the area of museums, heritage and divided societies.

### **Museum Curation**

*Jeannette Plummer Sires, Project Curator: Archaeological Assemblages, British Museum*

Jeannette is currently a Project Curator of Archaeological Assemblages at the British Museum. Her archaeological journey began as an undergraduate student in CUNY – Hunter in New York City where she double majored in Classical Archaeology and Anthropology and completed a two-year internship in the Vertebrate Palaeontology department at the American Museum of Natural History. Through the Anthropology department of her university, she took part in archaeological excavations in Orkney, Antigua and Barbuda, and recurring seasons in various sites across Iceland. It was through these excavations that she discovered a passion for bioarchaeology, but more specifically human osteoarchaeology.

The next step of Jeannette's journey brought her to the UK to earn a MSc Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology from the University of Sheffield. Upon completion, she entered the commercial archaeology sector where over the course of 5 years working across England and Wales,

she gained a broad set of skills within the industry. She capitalized on every opportunity to learn everything from archive deposition, geophysics, environmental sampling, to report writing.

After a brief period as an Assistant Heritage and Archaeology Consultant, her professional journey brought her to her current role. As a curator, where she improves the documentation and organization of archaeological assemblages by undertaking post-excavation archiving and site assessment. She rationalizes archaeological collections and site archives and builds an understanding of the research potential of the collection.

She is also a founding member of the European Society for Black and Allied Archaeologists and a member of Museum Detox.

*Amal Khreishah, Curator of Archaeology, South West Heritage Trust*

As Curator of Archaeology Amal looks after archaeology and natural sciences collections from Somerset and North Somerset and makes them accessible to members of the public and researchers. She is currently based at the Somerset Heritage Centre and at The Museum of Somerset in Taunton. Before this she worked as an Assistant Curator and was responsible for caring for the North Somerset museum collection and providing curatorial advice and support to Weston Museum in Weston-super-Mare.

Amal started working in museums on a casual basis when she was sixteen after completing a week of work experience at my local museum. This role involved co-ordinating children's activities at the weekends and in school holidays. After completing an undergraduate degree in Classics, she began a two-year positive action traineeship organised through the Museum Association's Diversify scheme. As part of this she completed a master's degree in Museum Studies by distance learning.

Amal then worked in a variety of documentation and collection-based roles in museums across the South West, including at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery and the Porthcurno Telegraph Museum in Penzance.

Amal is currently the Training Officer for the Society for Museum Archaeology, a founder member of the European Society for Black and Allied Archaeologists and a member of Museum Detox.