



BRIGHTON 2018

FRIDAY 27 APRIL

SESSION AND PAPER ABSTRACTS

9.30 – 13.00 ON HEALTH AND ARCHAEOLOGY: MIND AND BODY AS PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Organisers: Jaime Almansa Sánchez (INCIPIT-CSIC)
Guillermo Díaz de Liaño del Valle (University of Edinburgh)

Despite the health risks that relate to archaeology, some advances have been made: the professionalisation of archaeological fieldwork brings safety procedures to the field, and the rising concerns about mental health in academia are breaking taboos and bringing the issue to light. Fieldwork itself is being used as a therapy for different spectra, and an awareness of the interrelationship between health/archaeology has proved useful as a reflective tool that has helped us to deconstruct our own disciplinary practices.

This session proposes a panel on occupational health in archaeology, focusing both on how the physical and psychological effects of archaeology shape the discipline, and how these can be managed and improved. After a brief presentation, participants will be welcome to share their experiences in an open discussion, with the group working together to analyse these health-related problems and develop action plans to tackle these issues.

PAPER ABSTRACTS

We will not grow old healthy. On the hazards of being an archaeologist

Jaime Almansa, INCIPIT-CSIC

The popular perception of archaeology shows great dangers in our daily practice. We could die from a gunshot, be eaten by a crocodile or be doomed by the relic ghosts of an old temple. However, as cool as this may seem for a movie, our reality is quite different though no less dangerous. Pollution, radiation, or hundreds of unexpected accidents, could easily truncate our career and occupational hazards are more common than we usually perceive.

In 2014-2015, between CDL Madrid and ENMT, we designed a small project to define and act on occupational hazards in the context of archaeological work. This paper will show some of the preliminary ideas and results from the project.

Stress, depression and support for staff in a University setting

Christopher Chippindale, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge

Middle-ranking, and certainly senior, jobs in universities are stressful: but are they more stressful than they could and should be? It is not unusual for even the best-motivated and competent to be overwhelmed: does this happen more often than it could and should? When it does, is the university ready to provide the right kind of support? A report from personal experience

compares what actually happens with what could and should.

Medical archaeological teams and new inclusion methods: are they essential to each other?

Theresa O'Mahony, University College London

This paper will explore new suggested inclusion methods developed by Fraser (2008) Phillips and Gilchrist (2007) and myself (O'Mahony, 2015, 2016), by illustrating approaches such as satellite teams made up of both medical and archaeological professionals. It will also show how inclusion and equality, including both invisible and visible disabilities, can be developed and maintained. Becoming disabled because of archaeological work is an everyday occurrence (Cross 2007, Fraser 2008), which I suggest to an extent can be prevented if Occupational Therapists and Archaeologists work together to improve our methodological approaches. This suggestion will be overviewed by explaining various methods, for example how drawing could be achieved by blind participants at little cost. Finally, I will speak about the practical side of this as both the Enabled Archaeology Foundation and Enabled Archaeology Group have teamed up with Bamburgh Research Project and Breaking Ground Heritage to prove or disprove this and other questions in the forthcoming years.

Of suffering in the field: an ethnography of archaeological fieldwork

Nekhbet Corpas, Enrique Moral and Guillermo Diaz de Liano

Why do we suffer during archaeological fieldwork? To what extent are our disciplinary practices toxic? What is the relationship between suffering and gender? In this communication, we will explore how an ethnographic analysis can be productive to assess the key role that suffering has in fieldwork archaeology. This ethnographic analysis, based on interviews and participant observation, can allow us not only to characterize the main dynamics of suffering during fieldwork, but also to understand the importance of tackling suffering to create a healthier and more inclusive discipline.

One step at a time: archaeology for recovering military personnel

Richard Osgood, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)

Since 2011 a programme called Operation Nightingale has utilised the benefits of archaeology to assist with the recovery of military personnel after operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and older campaigns. Thus far the project has worked on sites of Neolithic to mid-20th-century date and has seen a number of participants moving on to higher education or indeed to work as professional archaeologists. On archaeological sites there is a job for everyone, with excavation only being one element. Operation Nightingale has seen communities created, friendships made, and good archaeology accomplished. It has also contributed to the improved well-being of a number of inspirational individuals.