



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP – FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

LAKESIDE CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

17TH APRIL 2013

Present:

Liz Cornell; Charlie Enright; Barrie Simpson; Claire Graham; Mike Groen; Andy Holland; Tim Howard; John Hunter; Rob Janaway; Steve Litherland; Gaille MacKinnon; Peter Masters; Niamh McCullagh; Jemma Mitchell; Natasha Powers; Caroline Sims; Barrie Simpson; Wiebke Starke; Andrew Wilson; Alexandria Young.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Rob Janaway welcomed the attendees to the third AGM of this growing Special Interest Group noting that the attendance today continued to reflect the interest in forensic archaeology within the IfA.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Paul Cheetham; Cec Cropper; Nicolas Marquez-Grant; Ian Hanson; Karl Harrison; Roosje De Leuwe; Jennifer Miller; Lucy Sibun; Jon Sterenberg; Caroline Sturdy-Colls; David Turley; Anne Welsh

3. Minutes of the second Annual General Meeting held at the Oxford Town Hall on Thursday 19th April 2012.

These had been circulated by Secretary and he had received no amendments. They were proposed for acceptance by John Hunter and seconded by Andy Holland and passed unanimously as a true record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes.

5. Chair's Report

The Chair of the group gave a summary of the activities of the group over the year and highlighted some challenges the executive faced over the year, in particular, accommodating the diverse time commitment patterns of members of the group when planning the timing of meetings to best suit as many members as possible.

To address this issue, the Chair expressed the executive's hope of getting dates set further in advance to give members more notice. The committee would also be having a separate meeting to specifically look into the contact methods we use with a view to effective communication with our members.

6. Secretary's Report

The Secretary had prepared synopsis for Chair on the Group:

i) Membership was made up of:

242 IfA members and 5 non-IfA members – a total membership at end our second year in existence of: 247 members.

ii) Meetings:

The Group has established a target meeting pattern of:

- One meeting, the AGM, at the IfA Conference
- One meeting in North/Midland area; and,
- One meeting in South/Midlands area.

This target of three meetings is dependent on a variety factors: availability of suitable and affordable venues; and speakers.

a) The SIG Meeting at IfA Conference on 17th April 2013 had a double theme:

- The effect of high profile cases and media interest on the standing and practice of forensic archaeology; and,
- Co-operation in Europe – report back on the 1st European Forensic Archaeology meeting held in the Hague August 2012.

Management of Expectations

It is essential that police investigation contains a press strategy that includes the fact that the use of forensic archaeology and geophysics as part of a search strategy is not only to find buried objects or remains, but also to eliminate areas from the investigation with high degree of confidence. A negative result may be viewed as a positive – recently this has been successfully demonstrated by UK investigators where the emphasis was on 'the elimination' factor and managing the public, and media, expectations.

Using 'approved' Experts and/or expertise

From the high profile cases the public now expect the involvement of a forensic archaeologist in any case where the target is buried. In conjunction with the Forensic Science Regulator the IfA has established an Expert Panel List which now forms a list held by the National Policing Improvement Agency. The session updated participants of developments within forensic regulation, the evolving role of the NPIA and the newly formed National Crime Agency and the IfA Expert Panel.

Developments within Europe

On the 22 August 2012, 46 attendees from 16 countries met at the Netherlands Forensic Institute at The Hague. This was a meeting jointly hosted by the Dutch NFI and the IfA

Expert Panel for European Forensic Archaeologists or other forensic practitioners who apply forensic archaeological principles in their casework.

The meeting reviewed a variety of casework and practice from different European countries.

The IfA Expert Panel and SIG in Forensic Archaeology Committee has taken lead role in developing in European connections.

b) The Second Meeting was a Joint Meeting of the Forensic Archaeology SIG and the Geophysics SIG held at Staffordshire University, Stoke Campus on 20th March 2013

The two Chairs of the respective SIGs considered it useful experiment to hold a joint meeting since we work on Crime Scenes together.

By the use of case studies involving both forensic application of geophysical and archaeology sciences and techniques we were able to gain a better perspective on our roles as aid to investigation of the crime scene and importantly the limitations of various techniques.

More joint ventures are planned for the SIGs.

iii) Communications

In effort to promote communication with wider membership of SIG, Natasha Power edited a 'ForArch Newsletter'. The Chair expressed the thanks of the group to Natasha Powers for her work in taking this forward.

More editions will rely on contributions from the membership.

In summary, our aim as a SIG in Forensic Archaeology is not to be an insular SIG but an all-inclusive one, reaching out to colleagues in other scientific disciplines used as multi-disciplined approach to the crime and to maintain European perspective.

7. Treasurer's Statement of Accounts

The Accounts had been circulated prior to Meeting

We had income of £40 and expenditure of £136.64; giving a total expenditure of £96.64. There were no questions and Barrie Simpson proposed and Steve Litherland, seconded that they be accepted; these Accounts were accepted by the AGM.

A copy the Accounts is attached to the Minutes.

The Chair expressed his grateful thanks to the financial support provided by the IfA in supporting the costs of hiring venues and refreshments.

8. Election of Officers

Only one post was vacant for election, that being an Ordinary executive committee member without portfolio.

The Chair noted that there had only been one nomination received for this post, that being from Charles Enright.

However, it was noted that one of Mr Enright's seconders was not a member of the IfA or of the SIG and therefore was not valid. The meeting agreed to substitute a valid seconder on a general "ay" and accepted Mr Enright's nomination.

As there were no other candidates contesting the position, Mr Enright was elected by default to the position of Ordinary Executive Committee member without portfolio for a three year term.