

Facts and Figures

Kenneth Aitchison, IfA Recession Seminar 16 February 2009

Where we were

In August 2007, the *Archaeology Labour Market Intelligence: Profiling the Profession 2007-08* report estimated that a total of 6865 people worked as archaeologists in the UK, an increase of 20% over the previous five years. Of those, commercial archaeological practice can be defined as the organisations that undertake field investigation and research and that are based within the private sector, universities or local government and those that provide private sector historic environment and advice; those subsectors were estimated to employ a total of 4023 individuals, representing 58.6% of the total estimated archaeological workforce. Separately, that report calculated that 58% of archaeological posts are funded at least in part by the income derived from development or the planning process.

By 2006 there was more archaeological work being undertaken in the UK than at any previous time. The *Archaeological Investigations Project* tracks the number of archaeological reports deposited with local planning authorities' Historic Environment Records, so providing an indicator of the amount of archaeological work undertaken. The *AIP* considers that there were 4,800 archaeological fieldwork investigations in England in 2006, of which 4,458 (93%) had been initiated through the planning process.

Where we are

The *Profiling the Profession* census date was Monday August 13; on Thursday August 9 2007, the ECB and Federal Reserve had injected \$90bn into the markets, and on Friday 10 August 2007, the FTSE-100 index fell by 3.9%. Simultaneously, the Land Registry figures for house prices have fallen in every month since August 2007.

Provisional estimates by the *AIP*, extrapolated from both the (incomplete) material already gathered for 2007/08 and comparison between the past collected numbers of reports and data from the Department of Communities and Local Government on the number of planning applications made, suggest that the number of reports (and hence the volume of work) will have dropped from the 2006-07 high of 4,800 to 4,474 reports for 07-08 (a drop of 7%) and 4,158 for 08-09 (a projected drop of 13% over two years).

At the start of January 2009, IfA rapidly surveyed FAME members and IfA Registered Organisations to identify the number of jobs being lost. In total, 345 archaeological jobs may have been lost in the quarter from 1st October 2008 to 1st January 2009, representing 8.6% - one in twelve - of the jobs in commercial archaeology and 5.0% of the entire UK archaeological workforce.

The total numbers employed were already down by 130 from August 2007 to October 2008, so from August 2007 to the end of 2008 there was a 6.9% reduction in the number of people working in professional archaeology (a reduction of 475 jobs).

Commercial archaeology transforming rapidly from an industry that had been growing at between 4% and 5% *per annum* over the ten years to 2007-08 and was anticipating future growth in 2007 to one that is contracting by at least 6-7% each year.

Where we are going

The overwhelming majority of respondents to the IfA January 2009 survey (55 of 57 organisations expressing an opinion, and employing 93% of staff at the organisations surveyed) consider that the market will deteriorate further.

Significant numbers of organisations anticipate further job losses in the quarter to the end of March 2009, and most of the organisations that anticipate further losses have already lost staff in the period to 1st January 2009.

Again, the overwhelming majority of respondents (53 of 54 organisations expressing an opinion) expect that at least one archaeological practice will cease to trade during the next twelve months.

In 2009 to date, no members of FAME or any IfA Registered Organisations have ceased trading.

IfA will repeat the survey in April 2009.

Information extracted from

Aitchison, K., 2009, 'Job Losses in Archaeology January 2009',

<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/Job%20Losses%20in%20Archaeology%20January%202009.doc>

and

Aitchison, K., 2009, 'Archaeology and the global financial crisis', **Antiquity** 83, issue 319.

<http://antiquity.ac.uk/projgall/aitchison/>