

Minutes of the meeting of the Cifa Finds Special Interest Group

Held: Wednesday 16th January, 2019 at CGMS offices, Bastion House, 140 London Wall, EC2Y 5DN

Present: Louise Rayner (LR, Chair), Kayt Hawkins (KH), Mags Felter (MF, Secretary), Rowena Hart (RH, treasurer), Ruth Pelling (RP), Nicola Rogers (NR), Alex Beeby (AB)

Action points:

MF to draft new business plan.

MF and KH to fill in event form for AGM 2019 and email Kerry and new Events person.

LR to send a copy of the Finds Standards and Guidance with committee comments to Jen Parker-Wooding.

Action points from previous meeting still to be completed:

RP to email Rebecca Nicholson to invite her to join the FSIG.

KH to write conference session review for the Archaeologist.

KH to draft list of FSIG survey questions and circulate to the committee.

DB to contact Sam Paul of the ASIG re response to the Chichester document. MF to send on.

Agenda item		Action points
1. Apologies for absence	Marie-Claire Rackham-Mann	
2. Minutes of last meeting	Taken as a true record.	
3. Matters arising (not covered elsewhere)	The committee reviewed the current Standards and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials, sharing comments that committee members had after reading through it.	

	MF had not yet completed the new business plan. This will be done for next time.	MF to draft new business plan.
4. Finds issues	<p><u>Internal to ClfA</u></p> <p>Specialist standards – This was covered in the afternoon session. (see below)</p> <p>ClfA Groups Forum meeting RH had not been able to attend due to sickness but caught up with proceedings later: The new Osteology SIG is looking to run a workshop. Voluntary and Community SIG is wanting partners for running group events. New Generation SIG wants to hold talks with FSIG regarding training in how to become a finds specialist.</p> <p><u>External (EAA, ICON, Other groups etc)</u></p> <p>MF gave an update on the ICON Archaeology Group which has recently had changes to its committee. Joint events were seen as a good idea.</p> <p>NHSF Resources Working Group – LR is now on the mailing list for this group. There has been no engagement to date.</p>	
5. Training	The idea of online training resources was raised. It was decided to talk further about this once the Standards and Guidance had been finalised.	
7. FSIG Events	<p><u>ClfA conference session 2019</u> FSIG has pulled back from further involvement with the session headed by the Emerging professionals group, as it was too broad a topic. KH is giving a paper, however the session still needs more papers on the topic of becoming a specialist within archaeology.</p> <p><u>FSIG AGM 2019</u> This will be the 30 anniversary of the Finds Group and the FSIG will hold the 2019 AGM event to focus on this. KH is currently making a list of previous Chairs who will be invited to come along. We will also want to be looking forward; a re-brand of the name of the FSIG to Archaeological Materials SIG (which was the original name of the group). A date of 25/26th September 2019 was chosen and KH and MF agreed to take this forward.</p>	MF and KH to fill in event form and email Kerry and new Events person

8. Projects	<p><u>Project 7090 update</u> The enhanced proposal to use outcome of the project to develop a toolkit for training and quality benchmarking had been completed and returned to Kate Geary who has commented and returned it to DB. It is now in its final stages. The hope is to turn it into an online training resource in the future.</p> <p><u>Survey</u> KH's ClfA-wide survey has been launched. Our FSIG survey could follow on from this. A discussion was held about the questions it should contain and about engagement of emerging professionals and younger members and how to get them to join in with committees etc. It was decided that the survey should include questions on who our members are, what events and training they would like to see and if more digital content would be desirable. It was suggested that KH could give a paper at the FSIG AGM discussing the results of the survey.</p>	KH to draft list of FSIG survey questions and circulate to the committee.
9. Communication	<p><u>Website</u> Website is up-to-date with new committee members since the AGM 2018.</p> <p><u>Social media</u> We now have 242 followers on Twitter. RP suggested more use of appropriate hashtags.</p>	
10. Any Other Business	Nick Boldrini, HER officer at Durham CC had asked for a FSIG member to give a talk at a CPD event on 22 nd May on finds assessments and reporting. MF had been contacted about this also and MF and NR agreed to respond to Nick to deliver this training.	
11. Date of next meeting	Wednesday 3rd April at CGMS.	
Discussion session on projects, interconnections with other HE/ClfA projects and revision of Standards and Guidance	<p>Present: committee members as above + Jen Parker-Wooding (ClfA) and Dan Miles (Research resources advisor at Historic England).</p> <p>JPW gave details of some issues that had been raised from an event run by ClfA called '21st Century Challenges in Archaeology'. This had been a symposium of different workshops including archives, standards and guidance and publications. JPW had created a spreadsheet of projects that would address some of the issues raised in the workshops and how they link to the workshops. The idea is to bring work together where there is overlap in issues.</p>	

MF asked if ClfA and HE are working together and DM said that HE are often asked for funding of projects and there is lots of overlap between the work of the two organisations. DM then gave an update on a number of projects where sharing of information between the organisation could be beneficial:

1 Write Here, Write Now – updating the Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief S&G

ClfA conference 2018 inspired effort to update S&G for evaluation and watching brief reports. This work is in response to the recent findings of a number of projects, including the Review of the Standard of Reporting on Archaeological Artefacts in England (Catermole, 2017) and the methodological analysis of the Roman Rural Settlement project (<http://cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/community/discover-the-past/developer-funded-roman-archaeology-in-britain/methodology-study/>). Outputs include updated ClfA S&G, an updated report template (including the need for spatial information on site and trench location etc...), and standardised data tables for archaeological evaluations that should be included.

Involving Dan Miles, Rosy Szymanski, Ed Lee (HE) and Stuart Bryant (ind)

DM said that one of the outcomes for this would be to look at training in report writing and what should be included, rather than only following local protocols. This could lead to more standardisation of reports so that they could be compared for different sites. The consultation on 'Write Here, Write Now' is going out soon.

JPW mentioned here the possibility of getting documentation and resources attached to toolkits online on the ClfA website as well as embedded training videos. DM commented that if this was to be done the content would need to be owned by ClfA to make it possible to update it regularly and for it to be easy to access.

2 Pottery type series standard

An information standard is being created to establish what should be recorded (units of information) and what controlled vocabularies (thesauri) eg pottery form types, inclusion definitions etc... The aim of this work is that future pottery type series will use this template to create

their series leading to the creation of interoperable and a network of joined up type series.

Involving Worcestershire CC, PCRG, SGRP and the MPRG, Duncan Brown, Tanja Watson (HE) and Dan Miles (HE/Forum on Information Standards in Heritage (FISH))

3 Digital Archaeology Archives Project (Dig Ventures)

The ambition of this project is to:

- understand how digital data is currently used and managed
- signpost how different digital data should be collected and stored
- highlight relevant technical guidance and relate that to industry standards
- provide step-by-step guidance for practitioners at all stages of an archaeological project
- explain how born digital data can form part of a sustainable archaeological archive

<https://digventures.com/projects/digital-archives/>

Involving ClfA, Dig Ventures (project management), advisory group including reps from the Archaeology Archives Forum, national agencies etc...

DM said that the Mendoza Review had stipulated that no digital archives should be handed to museums any more but that they should all go straight to an official digital repository such as the ADS. However this leads to inefficiency as staff at these repositories have to spend time making the archive suitable for digital storage. The project is to develop training in formulating digital management plans and helping to standardise digital archives.

4 Review of current archaeological reference resources

This has been restarted since the closure of the project in 2017. The first part has been a review of pottery type series and the draft report is now out and will be circulated soon. Future work reviewing what are the main reference resources used by the sector will be undertaken though on a more strategic level. The aim of this is to identify gaps and prioritise HE funding of these types of resources.

Involved: Dan Miles (internal HE project)

	<p>5 Pilot work looking at the potential for creating standardised data tables for specialist finds reporting</p> <p>This is just trial work looking at the potential of creating standards for specialist data tables for finds analysis. Resulting from the recent reports eg Catermole 2017 and work by Historic England to create data management plans (Corley and Tsang 2017) and digital archiving work (eg ADS metadata templates for spreadsheets etc..) this work has just looked at the potential for developing a suite of finds standards, data table templates and accompanying metadata forms. The first example has been to look at clay pipe recording, how this is undertaken, the terminology used etc. The aim is to see if guidance is required for this type of recording and to define what should be included in a recording form and what controlled vocabulary should be created. There may be synergies between this and other work that ClfA finds group is involved in.</p> <p>A question was asked about who would monitor this in terms of quality assurance. It was suggested that a checklist could be put together for post-ex managers and that implementation would be through ALGAO etc.</p> <p>6 Various archaeological archives projects</p> <p>TBC. But is there a need to look at how all the recording, analysis and archiving all fits in together?</p> <p>7 Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS) and ADS work on OASIS</p> <p>Work is currently being undertaken to review the recording forms, including controlled vocabularies, being used by OASIS (including work on building recording) for OASIS 2.</p> <p>Involving: ADS, HIAS advisory board, FISH</p> <p>After going through the different projects DM said that the idea behind all this could be that a whole suite of guidance could be available for the whole finds/archive process online. This could be in different formats; whatever was appropriate.</p> <p>LR asked what the next steps should be for FSIG. It was decided that to start, a copy of the Finds Standards and Guidance should go to JPW for comment in the first instance, followed by the toolkit.</p>	<p>LR to send a copy of the Finds Standards and Guidance with committee comments to Jen Parker-Wooding.</p>
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	<p>We could aim to get a series of best practice guides (like the ones for pottery) out for all the main finds categories. It was acknowledged that this would be a lot of work. It was suggested that it might be an idea to hold a workshop to scope this out.</p>	
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