

Running out of Space: Running out of Time?



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS 2012

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ENGLISH HERITAGE



The project:

- to report on the current position of archaeological archive collecting in England
- to update the map and database of museum collecting areas
- to investigate the use, storage, and curation of archaeological archives in museums
- to assess the provision of specialist expertise





Museums

161 museums surveyed:

134 responses

Contractors

100 + organisations
consulted:

46 responses



Archaeological Collections Areas Database and Map

Society of Museum Archaeologists, 2003 (updated 2013)

Introduction
Overview
Interactive Map
Downloads

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Primary contact
Secretary of Society of



Click on the map to search
for the museum accepting
archives from that area.

The large areas on the map
are regions and clicking on
those will bring back all the
museums in that region.

Zoom in and the districts,
unitary authorities or
counties will appear, click on
one to display the
museum(s) collecting in that
area.

Map – Vital Statistics

- ❖ links to the 151 museums whether accepting or not, plus contact information
- ❖ 120 able to collect but only 84 without conditions
- ❖ 47 local authority areas with no current collecting body for archives

Specialist Staff

- ❖ Only 30% of the museums that replied had a curator of archaeology or equivalent – many reported staff lost as the consequences of local authority budget cuts

	No of museums	No of local authorities	% of local authorities
Archaeology curator	53	177	54%
No curator of archaeology	71	81	25%
Not known whether or not there is a curator of archaeology	35	35	11%
No museum	-	33	10%
Total	159	326	100%



Space

On average archaeological collections occupy 22% of space available in museum stores – local history occupies double this amount

Uses

More museums appeared to use archaeological collections for loans, teaching collections, and handling packs than other types of collections.



Visits

40 museums reported a collective total of over 2000 visits to see archaeological material in store in one year alone



Projects & Audiences

Archaeological collections, including archives, have been used by respondents to reach a very wide and diverse range of audiences.





Archives with Units

9,000 un-depositable archaeological archives in England. The estimated volume of un-depositable archives was 1,160m³. The figures indicated an estimated national storage cost of £330,000 annually.



The Archaeological Archives Forum
invites you to an open meeting to discuss the recommendations in



ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS 2012

Thursday 7th March 2013

The Dickens Room, Birmingham and Midland Institute
Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS

Society of Museum
Archaeologists



8 Recommendations:

1 Produce a policy statement on the significance of archaeological archives nationally, and their importance as a key resource in the future.

2 Promote the potential of archaeological archives as a resource for engaging all communities.

3 Establish a national strategy for archive completion as a means of providing easy access to the archaeological record.

4 Develop a national strategy for the storage and curation of archaeological archives.

5 Ensure that the significance of archives is fully recognised at all stages of planning-led archaeological work.

6 Seek solutions for archive material that currently cannot be transferred to a repository.

7 Develop a framework for the provision of archaeological archive advice to practitioners in planning authorities, contracting organisations, museums, and community groups.

8 Promote and publicise the collecting areas map.