

## ICON Archaeology Group

### Archaeological Archives Event: Notes from Discussion Sessions

#### Fishbourne Roman Palace 16/06/2015

Question posed: What is the general way forward for Archaeological Archives in the future?

##### Group 1 discussion:

- A couple of positives were noted – there was a perception that archives are finally ‘coming into their own’, and that events such as Fishbourne were testament to the sector starting working together – various roles within collections care were represented, not just conservators.
- There seemed to be a feeling that ‘bottom-up’ solutions were required to increase understanding at undergraduate level of an archive from start to finish and bring together resources. There needs to be more of a crossover between universities and the working world. It was thought that the CBA might be a good starting point for skills exchange.
- We discussed that there may be a shortage in posts at the moment, but there is certainly not a shortage in the need for skills. Perhaps placement opportunities could be better advertised, museums could try to respond reactively.
- We agreed that it might be useful for the SMA to publish some of their case studies in how to think creatively about using collections and archives.

##### Group 2 discussion:

- How can we get developers to pay more towards archaeological archives? Will they have too much influence if we allow them to control the funding of archaeological archives? Developers won't want to pay for open-ended storage. Archaeological archives need to be ‘talked-up’ to developers and contractors. They need to understand their importance in the long-term rather than forgetting about them once the site has been published. It needs to be emphasised that an archive is needed to publish. Who owns the archives? Not the contractors. Deeds of transfer scare developers.
- There are two avenues for storage: a public-oriented focus rather than research based. Should this increase as a way to bring in resources?
- Are there new guidelines on making archaeological archives more sustainable? This needs to come from within the profession rather than the government.
- The policy statement on the importance of archaeological archives written by EH and the Arts Council still needs to be implemented.
- Fragmentation of the sector is a major problem with universities, EH, National Trust and developer-led archaeology all working in their own bubbles. The approach by all of these groups towards finding a solution for archaeological archives should be homogeneous. We

need to work more with other parts of our industry. The profession needs to work with IFA and TAF (ICON Archaeology group already have representatives working with these groups).

- Heritage Act abandoned in 2010? Devolved responsibility: Scotland and Wales have their own Heritage Bills now. England needs one too. A Heritage Bill would shift the focus away from construction/Planning. The government loosening planning regulations could be problematic.
- Support is needed from the electorate. It's very difficult for the public to be involved in developer-led archaeology. Need to get kids interested. Getting archaeology "out of boxes" is essential. It's the stories and not just the archaeology that's important.
- Where do we put archaeological archives? There's no space! Salt mines could be a solution to storage problems. Deep storage is a solution for keeping objects as long as possible. This is the ultimate goal of archaeology: to retrieve archaeology for the future. If using external companies like DeepStore, make sure they're willing to be flexible and offer solutions.
- New councillors always want to know why they should pay for archaeological archives. This creates a recurring need to always explain why archaeological archives are important. The public and not just politicians need to be on side to win this argument.
- Connecting with universities. We need relationships with digging units as well. There's more interest from academia once archaeological archives/storage have been improved.
- Treasure Act review is 8 years overdue. The definition of treasure might be widening. We need a policy to define heritage 'value' as significance rather than financial value of the object.

Overall feeling in the group: we need stronger legislation.