



Job Losses in Archaeology

Report for the Institute for Archaeologists and the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers

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Introduction

Late in 2008, anecdotal information was coming to the attention of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) that the economic decline, and in particular the slump in housing construction, was having a negative impact on commercial archaeological practice.

In August 2007, Aitchison & Edwards¹ 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 (calculated from Aitchison & Edwards 2008, table 18), representing 58.6% of the total estimated archaeological workforce. Separately, that report (*ibid*, 36) calculated that 58% of archaeological posts are funded at least in part by the income derived from development or the planning process.

Together with FAME (the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers), IfA has approached a selection of archaeological employers to gather statistical data on any job losses in the sector in order to substantiate the impact of the current economic situation and to support the archaeological profession as a whole through this period of uncertainty.

The organisations approached represent the majority of employers working in commercial, client-funded archaeology. Their work is primarily initiated through the planning system, following and in advance of applications by developers for planning permission on land where there may be an impact upon archaeological remains.

¹ Aitchison, K. & Edwards, R. 2008. Archaeology Labour Market Intelligence: Profiling the Profession 2007.08. Reading: Institute for Archaeologists.
http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/lmi%200708/Archaeology_LMI_report_colour.pdf

Executive Summary

The economic downturn has had a direct effect upon archaeology. Many archaeological organisations lost staff over the three months to the end of 2008. Over the previous five years, the number of people working in archaeology had been expanding by approximately 4% per annum.

In total, 345 archaeological jobs may have been lost in the quarter from 1st October 2008 to 1st January 2009, representing 8.6% of the jobs in commercial archaeology and 5.0% of the entire UK archaeological workforce.

Larger organisations (those employing over 50 staff in 2007) have been particularly heavily affected.

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

Business confidence is very poor, with most employers expecting the situation to further deteriorate in 2009 and for some archaeological practices to cease trading.

Methodology

Archaeological employers that are either Registered Organisations with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) or members of the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME) were sent a short questionnaire by email on 12 January 2009, asking for responses by 19 January 2009. The questionnaire asked about past and present staffing levels, and about business confidence in the future. The full questionnaire is presented at the end of this report.

Sample

Questionnaires were sent to 63 IfA Registered Organisations and to the 59 members of FAME. As there is a degree of overlap (with some organisations being both IfA Registered and FAME members), 98 questionnaires were sent in total. As two of these organisations do not employ archaeologists in the UK (and did not reply to the consultation), and two questionnaires went to subsidiary offices of larger organisations, in total 94 organisations were contacted.

Responses

66 completed questionnaires were returned, along with two notifications of non-response from organisations that declined to provide data.

Three of the returned questionnaires came from organisations that identified themselves as not undertaking commercial archaeological practice, and so their returns are excluded from the analysis below.

Results: Job Losses

The respondents employed the equivalent of 2,228.3 people at the time of the *Archaeology Labour Market Intelligence Profiling the Profession 2007-08* (LMI) survey in August 2007.

On 1st October 2008, they employed 2,156.4 FTE staff, a decline of 3.2% since the LMI survey.

On 1st January 2009, these organisations employed 1,965.2 FTE staff, a reduction of 8.6% over the previous quarter and 11.8% fewer than in August 2007.

Change from August 2007 to 1st October 2008

The census date for the LMI survey was 13 August 2007; this was the most recent reliable benchmark of archaeological employment available. Respondents were asked how many people they employed at that date, and how many people they employed on 1st October 2008, the start of the third quarter of financial year 2008-09.

Overall, there had been a modest decline in the number of people working for the respondent organisations (3.2%) over that period of slightly more than a year.

There is a level of seasonal variation in the numbers of people employed in commercial archaeology. As the 2007 figure relates to a summer census date, the level of decline until the start of October 2008 can be partly explained by this but is unlikely to have been entirely within the normal range of fluctuation.

Change from 1st October 2008 to 1st January 2009

In total, there were 191.2 less jobs at the respondent organisations on 1st January 2009 than there had been on 1st October 2008, a decline of 8.6% over the quarter, and a cumulative loss of 263.1 jobs (11.8%) since August 2007.

This represents a substantial loss of staff over a very short period of time.

Extrapolating from the survey sample, it is estimated that a total of 345 archaeological jobs will have been lost in the period from 1st October 2008 to 1st January 2009.

On a case-by-case basis, 28 of the 63 responding organisations reported a reduction in staff numbers over the previous quarter, but although this was a minority of organisations they represent the overwhelming majority of employers with more than 20 staff. Microbusinesses of less than 20 staff were less likely to report staff losses, as with so few staff there were fewer jobs that could be lost in the first instance.

Employer size in August 2007 (number of employees)	Change 1 st October 2008 – 1 st January 2009 (number of organisations)		
	Contraction (less employees)	No change (same number of employees)	Expansion (more employees)
100+	3	0	1
50 – 100	7	1	0
20 – 50	12	4	1

- 20	6	25	3
Total	28	30	5

Although job losses have been reported across all sizes of organisations, different rates of change can be identified by comparing the effects on organisations of different sizes.

Employer size in August 2007 (number of employees)	Total number employed			Change 13/08/07 – 01/01/09	Change 01/10/08 – 01/01/09	Sample size
	1 January 2009	1 October 2008	13 August 2007			
100+	752	814	838	-10.3%	-7.6%	4
50 – 100	406	479	566	-28.3%	-15.2%	8
20 – 50	536.1	579.3	556.8	-3.7%	-7.5%	16
- 20	271.10	284.10	267.50	+1.3%	-4.6%	35
Total	1965.2	2156.4	2228.3	-11.8%	-8.6%	63

There are only a very small number of archaeological employers which had more than 100 people working for them in 2007, and these organisations have lost 7.6% of their workforce in the last quarter. Relatively hardest hit have been the moderate sized organisations that employed between 50 and 100 people, where 15.2% of jobs have been lost. Organisations of more than twenty but less than 50 employees have lost 7.5% of jobs, and organisations employing less than twenty people in 2007 have reported an overall loss of 4.6% of jobs over the last quarter.

Anticipation of Further Losses

Respondents were asked whether they feel they will be able to maintain their present staff numbers over the three months to the end of March 2009.

While the majority of respondents (42 of 63) felt that they would be able to maintain their present staffing levels, 20 anticipated further losses and those that anticipate further losses are the employers (as of 1st January 2009) where 66% of the workers at the respondent organisations are employed, and most of those organisations had lost staff in the previous quarter.

Do you anticipate being able to maintain your present staffing levels over the next three month period (to 31 March 2009)?

	Responses	Number employed on 01/01/2009	Lost staff in previous quarter	No change in previous quarter	Expanded in previous quarter
Yes (will maintain present levels)	42	673.7	15	25	2
No (will not maintain present levels)	20	1288.5	13	5	2
Don't know	1	3	0	0	1
Total	63	1965.2	28	30	5

Results: Business Confidence

In anticipation of a worsening situation, respondents were asked how they felt about market conditions in the rest of 2009. Overall confidence is very low, as the overwhelming majority of respondents (employing 93% of staff at the organisations surveyed) consider that the market will deteriorate further.

Do you believe that the market conditions will deteriorate further in 2009?

	Responses	Number of staff employed on 01/01/2009
Yes (market conditions will deteriorate in 2009)	55	1824.2
No (market conditions will not deteriorate)	2	81
Don't know or no answer	6	60
Total	63	1965.2

Respondents were also asked whether they expect any archaeological businesses to fail in 2009. The overwhelming majority of respondents (the employers of 85% of the archaeologists working at respondent organisations) expect that at least one archaeological practice will cease to trade during the next twelve months.

Do you expect any archaeological practices to cease trading in 2009?

	Responses	Number of staff employed on 01/01/2009
Yes (expect practices to cease trading in 2009)	53	1676.1
No (do not expect any practices to cease trading in 2009)	1	2
Don't know or no answer	9	287.1
Total	63	1965.2

Future Surveys

IfA will repeat this survey on a quarterly basis, reporting the results on its website and tracking changes, until further notice.

Questionnaire

Job Losses in Archaeology

Dear Colleague,

The current economic downturn is having a serious and adverse effect on archaeological work.

It has led to some job losses, but reliable information on just how serious the situation has become is currently not available.

In order to better inform employers and individual archaeologists about the present situation, IfA, together with FAME (Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers – formerly known as SCAUM, the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers), is gathering information on how much the downturn has led to job losses in archaeology.

This email has been sent to all IfA Registered Organisations and FAME member organisations, and in order to help us, can you please answer the following short series of questions.

How many members of staff (FTE) did your organisation have on 1 January 2009?	
How many members of staff (FTE) did your organisation have on 1 October 2008?	
How many members of archaeological staff (FTE) did your organisation have on 13 August 2007 (the census date for <i>Profiling the Profession: Archaeology Labour Market Intelligence 2007-08</i>)?	
Do you anticipate being able to maintain your present staffing levels over the next three month period (to 31 March 2009)?	
Do you believe that the market conditions will deteriorate further in 2009?	
Do you expect any archaeological practices to cease trading in 2009?	

Please send your responses to me, [Kenneth Aitchison](#), by Monday 19 January 2009.

Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidentiality; while aggregated and extrapolated figures will be provided to FAME and published on the IfA website and elsewhere, I personally will be the only individual who ever sees the organisational responses.

The information gathered will be used to see how IfA members, Registered organisations and the profession as a whole can be supported through this period. We don't just want to monitor statistics, we want to be able to help individuals and employers through these difficult times. The IfA has already set out some [immediate actions](#) to assist IfA members and Registered organisations during the current financial situation, and we will continue to track the impact and work to alleviate the effects of the recession on archaeology by repeating this short survey on a quarterly basis until further notice.

Yours sincerely,



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