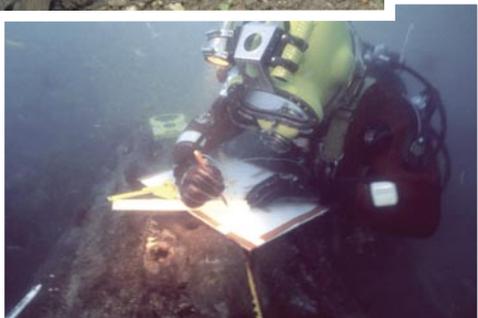


Archaeology enriches us all



Everything that is special about Britain has been touched and shaped by millennia of daily human lives – creativity, conflict, changing beliefs and technologies.

Archaeology is about uncovering, recording and interpreting that story. And for all but the last 2,000 of over 500,000 years, archaeology is central to our understanding and appreciation of this rich and diverse past. It helps explain the growth of our towns and cities and the evolution of our countryside as well as our relationship with nature and the spiritual world.

Why does archaeology matter?

- Archaeology is key to understanding an irreplaceable store of human history, most with no written record and sometimes highly vulnerable
- Understanding and appreciating this legacy makes a core contribution to local identity and to our sense of who we are as a nation and in our communities
- A sense of place and a common cultural perspective are essential ingredients of quality of life for communities and for individual citizens
- Archaeology links people in a direct way with continuity and change in our society and our surroundings
- Like other disciplines in the historic environment, archaeology makes a major contribution to the tourist economy and to heritage-led regeneration.



Archaeology and Government policies

Archaeology has an enormous amount to contribute to the Government's agenda for sustainable communities, helping to create better places for people to live and work and to enhance local identity. Archaeology provides a rich resource for outdoor education, in our cities and in the countryside, and for cross-curriculum learning. It supports a large voluntary and community sector and inspires enthusiastic interest in all age groups. Archaeological discoveries feed into new understanding about long-term climate change and about our diverse cultural backgrounds in Britain.



How can we make the most of the UK's archaeology?

Members of The Archaeology Forum believe that archaeology's potential social, economic and cultural contribution should be more widely recognised, reflecting the great public appetite for archaeological discovery. There has been limited support through Government for developing its public benefits, though welcome recognition of its role. We need to create many more opportunities for people to be involved, to reach new and diverse audiences, to share skills and to invest new knowledge from archaeology in our communities.



We have identified four main areas where action is needed to harness the full value of archaeology and to help deliver Government's goals for sustainable communities and the cultural heritage. We would like to see



- Robust, clear cross-governmental recognition of the social, economic and educational value of our rural, urban and maritime historic environment, with DCMS and its equivalents across the UK providing a strong, strategic lead within Government
- Sustained investment in national and local government historic environment services, including museums
- Capacity-building and resources for the voluntary sector to improve delivery of social, cultural and educational benefits
- Promotion and celebration of the contribution that archaeology and the historic environment make to quality of life in our communities





In particular, we would like to see:

- Positive progress with the reform of heritage protection (the Heritage Protection Review in England and the review currently under consideration in Scotland), including the implementation of statutory provision of local Historic Environment Records and an end to Class Consents permitting plough damage to protected sites
- New planning policy guidance for the historic environment in line with the outcome of the Heritage Protection Review in England, emphasising the importance of the knowledge base and the link with research, education, outreach and engagement with local communities
- New opportunities for including archaeology in the National Curricula and life-long learning. Archaeology acts as a great bridge discipline between the humanities, sciences and social sciences. Every child should be encouraged to understand and respect the roots of his or her local community and neighbourhood identity
- Strong support for the Heritage Lottery Fund to continue to fulfil a vital and necessary role in community and public archaeology projects
- Recognition of our international responsibilities through UK accession to the Hague Convention, the European Landscape Convention and the UNESCO Conventions on Underwater Cultural Heritage, and implementation of the Valletta Convention.

Taking forward this vision through The Archaeology Forum

The historic environment sector works best through national partnerships: the Historic Environment Review Executive Committee (HEREC), Heritage Link and the Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies in England, the Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) in Scotland and Environment Link in Wales. These bring together voluntary, public and professional bodies. Already more integrated working is bringing about a better-focused vision for the historic environment.

Within these partnerships, a shared approach is being taken forward by a number of national archaeological bodies working together through The Archaeology Forum to promote the distinctive contribution that archaeology makes in the historic environment. In collaboration with national heritage agencies, Government officials and politicians from all political parties, such as members of the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APPAG), archaeologists are seeking to deliver a strategic vision that will realise archaeology's full social and cultural benefits.

Through these partnerships we will strive to ensure that archaeology makes a major contribution in protecting the historic environment, strengthening local identity, supporting regeneration and enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations of UK citizens.

This document is produced by The Archaeology Forum, May 2005.
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The Archaeology Forum is a grouping of independent bodies concerned with the archaeological investigation, management and interpretation of the historic environment - both buried remains and standing structures. The Forum provides an opportunity for institutions to discuss matters of common concern, with the intention of establishing shared positions and promoting clear and consistent messages from archaeological practitioners and other stakeholders. We work in a joined-up way with others in the historic environment sector through other umbrella organisations like Heritage LINK, HEREC, BEFS and Wales Environment Link.



The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers

Association of Regional and Islands Archaeologists

The Association of Regional and Islands Archaeologists



The Council for British Archaeology



The Institute of Field Archaeologists



The Institute of Historic Building Conservation



The National Trust



The National Trust for Scotland



Rescue: the British Archaeological Trust



The Society of Antiquaries of London

Society of Museum Archaeologists

The Society of Museum Archaeologists



The Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers

Photo credits:

1. Devil's Arrows near Boroughbridge, N. Yorks. Mark Whyman (York Archaeological Trust); 2. Children involved in St Leonard's Hospital training excavation, York (York Archaeological Trust); 3. Chester Amphitheatre excavation, Chester City Council & English Heritage; 4. Pre-Construct Archaeology and Southwark Council; 5. Diving archaeologist, Douglas McElvogue, recording the Mary Rose stem timber in situ, Christopher Dobbs (Mary Rose Trust); 6. Shorewatch group working at eroding salt pans, Brora, Sutherland (Tom Dawson, SCAPE Trust); 7. Excavation at St Leonard's Hospital, York (York Archaeological Trust); 8. Excavations at Shoreditch Park by the Museum of London (Alison Taylor); 9. Dixon's Yard Foundry excavation (York Archaeological Trust); 10. Castell Dinas Bran, Clwyd (Lesley Collett); 11. Kids at St Leonard's excavation (York Archaeological Trust); 12. Ightham Mote, Kent (Jason Wood, National Trust); 13. Excavation of Lambeth potteries, Albert Embankment by MoLAS (© Catherine Cavanagh, English Heritage); 14. Schools dig at Meggernie (National Trust for Scotland); 15. Inclusive, Accessible Archaeology project, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Reading; 16. Plough damaged Iron Age site, Easingwold, N. Yorks (York Archaeological Trust); 17. Surveying an historic building: The Old Rectory, Sheppall, Herts. (Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd); 18. Public Open Day during excavation of Bennetts Mill, Merton (© Catherine Cavanagh, English Heritage); 19. Wymondham Abbey, Norfolk. (Phil Thomas); 20. Recording Roman burials in excavation at Driffeld Terrace, York (York Archaeological Trust); 21. Local group planning remains on the remote shore of Loch Houran, Highland (Tom Dawson, SCAPE Trust)