



Archaeology For All: Delivering the Council for British Archaeology's engagement programmes

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The Council for British Archaeology (CBA, <http://www.archaeologyuk.org>) is an educational charity with over 65 years of experience in supporting and developing the archaeological sector. We boast a wide membership base from the archaeological profession, and amongst interested adults and young people. We work throughout the UK to involve people in archaeology and to promote the appreciation and care of the historic environment for the benefit of present and future generations. Using the straplines 'Archaeology for All' and 'Making Archaeology Matter', the CBA strives to increase participation in archaeology amongst all members of the community throughout the UK.

We have a number of highly successful and emerging projects that contribute to this remit, and provide strong evidence of our engagement goals. This article will focus on three of our key areas of work: the Young Archaeologists' Club (<http://www.yac-uk.org>); the Festival of Archaeology (<http://festival.britarch.ac.uk>); and our community archaeology bursaries training scheme (<http://www.archaeologyuk.org/community-archaeology-bursaries-project>).

Young Archaeologists' Club

The CBA's Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) is the only UK-wide club for young people aged up to 17 interested in archaeology. It operates on two levels: nationally, through our subscription-based UK club; and locally, via our substantial network of YAC Branches. YAC has a long pedigree. The Club began as Young Rescue in 1972, and there are now many hundreds of the Club's alumni working in the archaeological sector. Famously, Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, was a member of Young Rescue!

YAC UK produces a quarterly magazine, *Young Archaeologist*, which provides a unique opportunity for the archaeological sector (including professional units, university research projects, and voluntary community groups) to share details of its projects and discoveries with an otherwise untapped audience. For example, recent issues of *Young Archaeologist* have featured: the Nottingham Caves Survey Project developed by Trent & Peak Archaeology; the University of Leicester's dig which have uncovered the remains of King Richard III; an introduction to the work undertaken by York Archaeological Trust underneath York Minster; and the Romans Revealed project from the University of Reading.

YAC Branches can be best described as inclusive hands-on youth clubs themed around archaeology and heritage. There are currently 64 YAC Branches across the UK, with a further three planned. We have Branches in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and are shortly due to launch a new Branch based on the Isle of Man. A map of the current YAC Branches can be found on the YAC website (<http://www.yac-uk.org/branches/map>).

Each Branch is run by a team of dedicated volunteers. The Branches provide unique opportunities for young people and adult volunteers to engage practically in their local heritage environment through a range of collaborative practical, hands-on activities. Branch activities include excavation, survey work, experimental archaeology, fieldwalking, craft-based sessions, museum-based work (including finds handling and conservation tasks), and more. In many cases, YAC Branch activities have contributed real data to the archaeological record.

Our network consists of Branches in urban centres and more rural areas. For example, it takes in Branches in the Welsh Marches, central London, Leicester, Belfast, Inverness, and the Yorkshire Dales. Branches are hosted by museums, university archaeological departments, archaeological units, youth centres, council archaeology departments, and stately homes. Around 550 volunteers are involved in the delivery of our Branch network. They are a diverse group of people, from a variety of backgrounds. Our volunteers range in age from 17 to 83, and include people working professionally in the archaeological and heritage sector, as well as interested people from other employment groups such as retail, local government, transport, and education. We also have a large number of unemployed people and students volunteering with the Club.

YAC Branch volunteers are given significant training and support from dedicated staff at the CBA, which enables them to run their Branch sessions safely and in line with both good archaeological practice, and exemplary levels of child protection. For example, Branch Leaders are offered NSPCC-accredited training, and First Aid training through the Red Cross. Supported by funding from English Heritage, YAC HQ staff also deliver targeted training designed to assist our Leaders in preparing and presenting practical archaeological sessions.

Our forthcoming YAC Leaders' weekend will be hosted by the Ancient Technology Centre (ATC) in Cranborne, Dorset (<http://www.ancienttechnologycentre.co.uk/>). Leaders will have the opportunity to try practical activities that they can then replicate with their Branch members (Figure 1). Workshops will be provided by the ATC's staff and volunteers, with further sessions planned and delivered by the Life in the Mesolithic team from the University of York (<http://lifeinthemesolithic.wordpress.com/>).



Figure 1: YAC adult volunteers defending a settlement on a Leaders' Weekend at Murton Park (Image Copyright: YAC)

The YAC Branch network is a flagship part of the CBA's work. It provides impressive evidence of a successful nationwide engagement project that is cross-generational and community-focused. It enables young people to gain a meaningful and real experience of archaeology, allowing them to build lasting relationships with the historic environment, whilst also educating and informing future generations of heritage stewards.

Furthermore, the YAC Branch network is one of the country's leading providers of community archaeology volunteering opportunities.

Anyone interested in volunteering with a YAC Branch, or wishing to enquire about setting up a new YAC Branch, should contact the CBA's Head of Engagement, Elvie Thompson (elviethompson@archaeologyuk.org).

The Festival of Archaeology

The annual Festival of Archaeology, co-ordinated by the CBA and supported with funding from English Heritage, has been running (and growing, year-on-year) for over 20 years. The fortnight-long Festival brings together a wide spectrum of public events, activities, walks, talks and workshops with an archaeological theme. In 2012, the 22nd Festival showcased the very best of British archaeology, with over 1,000 special events organised and hosted by museums, heritage organisations, national and countryside parks, universities, local societies, and community archaeologists, right across the UK.

The Festival is a key way for the CBA to assist local groups to tap into new audiences for archaeology (Figure 2). One event organiser from the 2012 Festival praised the initiative, saying that it had “*relevance beyond those normally interested in archaeology*”. Many of the activities organised as part of the Festival attracted family audiences. A large proportion of those accessing Festival events were older people, and over 40% of event organisers reported that visitors to their events had a disability.



Figure 2: A community excavation run by the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group during the 2012 Festival of Archaeology (Reproduced with kind permission of Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group)

In the run up to, and during, the Festival fortnight in 2012, the CBA used – and encouraged organisers and participants to use – social media as a means of engaging hard-to-reach groups; we are planning to harness the power of interactive sharing through social media further, in order to extend the reach of the Festival in 2013. As both an archaeologist and a broadcaster, Bettany Hughes said, “*The Festival of Archaeology gets us closer to, and celebrates, our incredibly rich archaeological inheritance.*”

Registration of events for the 2013 Festival of Archaeology is now live on the dedicated Festival website (<http://festival.britarch.ac.uk/register>). The dates for the 2013 Festival are from the 13th to the 28th of July. We would be very interested to hear from students, university departments and research groups that are able to run events. The Festival is a unique way for the academic archaeological community to share their work, and open up the mysteries of their departments to a wider audience. Central administrations at universities are keen to show evidence of widening access and participation; the Festival of Archaeology provides a fantastic way of successfully doing this! For further information about the Festival of Archaeology, please contact the CBA’s Events Officer, Sophie Pointon (sophiepointon@archaeologyuk.org).

Community Archaeology Bursaries Training Scheme

The CBA's Community Archaeology Bursaries Project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund through its 'Skills for the Future' programme, and has additional support from English Heritage, Cadw and Historic Scotland. The project is enabling the CBA to offer year-long workplace learning bursaries designed to equip would-be community archaeologists with the skills, experience and confidence to work with voluntary groups and communities. Around half of the currently agreed bursary placements will have a youth-engagement focus.

The successful project is fulfilling a vital role in the current economic climate, in that it provides an achievable route into community-based archaeological work. Our trainees join the scheme with a wide variety of work and voluntary experience. Many have come into the bursaries scheme after an initial couple of years' experience within the archaeological and heritage sector. In other cases, the bursaries are the next step for graduates leaving UK universities with undergraduate and Masters level degrees alongside voluntary experience.

The placements are offered in conjunction with a geographically diverse range of host organisations, from Glasgow to Somerset via North Wales, Leicester, and East Anglia. Current and previous hosts comprise a range of organisations and include: archaeological and heritage trusts; commercial units; National Park Authorities; university departments; and national museums.

The first nine Community Archaeology Bursary holders have now completed their year-long placements. All of them have achieved employment as Community Archaeologists or in similar public engagement roles. A number of host organisations have retained their trainee post-placement; elsewhere, former trainees have been head-hunted by other organisations and one individual has secured funding for a postgraduate degree.

Chris Kolonko (Figure 3) is one of our current bursary holders. He is working with Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service as part of their community engagement team. He said:

"I feel I have made a strong connection with the communities I have worked with. Members of the public often contact me for information and also to make me aware of sites that we don't currently have recorded in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record."

I aim to further my career in archaeology and also pursue my enjoyment of making archaeology accessible to all which is certainly a very rewarding experience. Developing my current skills and also gaining new ones is one of my other aims as well as creating new and exciting ways of teaching people about archaeology. This placement has provided me with the opportunity to gain the experience I need, prove myself, and also do the job I love. Every day brings a new experience and learning opportunity which further nurtures my love for archaeology."



Figure 3: Chris Kolonko leading a walk about the archaeology of the Second World War to be found in Loddon, Norfolk
(Reproduced with kind permission of Chris Kolonko)

The CBA is currently in the recruitment phase for the next cohort of bursary holders, who will be due to commence their placements in April 2013. A further round of placements will be available from September 2013. For more information about the bursaries – for both prospective candidates and prospective host organisations – visit the CBA website (<http://www.archaeologyuk.org/community-archaeology-bursaries-project>) or email the CBA's Community Archaeology Training Co-ordinator, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe (tara-janesutcliffe@archaeologyuk.org).

Summary

As evidenced above, the CBA has a proven track record of delivering high-quality and successful engagement projects across the UK. We have an ongoing commitment to community archaeology and diversifying participation in, and engagement with, the historic environment. To help us continue this work and strengthen our position as the voice for archaeology in the UK, please consider joining us. You can find out more about our digital student membership at <http://new.archaeologyuk.org/student-membership/>.