

2 Interview with an Archaeologist – Pete Smith, English Heritage.

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1. **What is your job title?** Senior Architectural Investigator, within Research and Standards, prior to this I was an Historic Buildings Inspector and Team Leader in the Listing Branch (HPR).
2. **What are you current projects?** Apethorpe Hall, Northamptonshire: Chapter for the forthcoming book *Audley End Stables*, Essex: Historic building report Nottingham City, Characterisation report.
3. **What first got you interested in Archaeology?** I first became interested in Architectural History through my Art Master at School J B Nellist.
4. **How did you get into the Archaeology careers field and your current job?** I took a degree in Art History and Architectural History at Reading University. At that time it was impossible to study Architectural History as a single subject, and the course at Reading under Professor Kerry Downes was the nearest I could get. Whilst doing my PhD I attended a Conference about the English Country House where I heard about the job that I eventually applied for, and got, working on the Accelerated Resurvey of Historic Buildings at the Department of the Environment eventually English Heritage.
5. **What kinds of experiences have got you where you are today?** Keeping my eyes open. Being open to new ideas and resources. Asking colleagues for advice. Attending conferences; giving papers and generally getting involved with relevant societies. Networking. Continuing my own personal research.
6. **What are some of the best parts of your job?** Research and the opportunity to visit buildings and investigate them.
7. **And some of the worst?** Writing up reports applying for permissions to use photographs etc..
8. **How much do you have to deal with members of the public?** Not much in my present job, but in my previous job as a Listing Inspector we had to deal with the public and the consequences of public queries and requests all the time.
9. **What are your thoughts on the state of the buildings archaeology? Do you think it is adequate, is there any room for improvement and if so where?** There are two separate disciplines vying for control of the study of buildings; Archaeology and Architectural History. Both have interesting and very different contributions to make to the study of buildings and it is high time that these differences were amalgamated together into courses for students, rather than perpetuating this ridiculous false rivalry.

10. **How do you see the current Archaeological climate in terms of jobs in this country?** Not very bright at the moment. The financial downturn especially in the property market is bound to decrease the amount of work available right across the architecture/development/planning industries.
11. **What advice do you have for students wishing to get a job in Archaeology or Buildings Archaeology?** Specialise and yet be prepared to take on any work; one can never tell what you might learn from an individual job or project. For example: I personally never had much interest in vernacular architecture, but as part of my 'listing work' I had to become familiar with this architectural subject and it taught me a huge amount about how to assess buildings without any documentary evidence and it educated my eyes to notice every detail of a building.
12. **What are your experiences of job interviews?** I have more experience of interviewing than being interviewed. Fill in the form accurately and include all your experience and knowledge, you never know what they are looking for.
13. **Do you have any interview technique tips?**
 - Listen to the questions that you are asked! And think before you answer!
 - Try and bring your experience into your answers and give examples.
 - Stick to what you really understand, talking about subjects you don't really understand will only show up your ignorance. Be prepared to admit that you don't have experience of certain subjects though you can still try to explain how you would go about gaining the necessary experience or how you would apply the knowledge you do have to the subject.
 - Field tests. Do some homework, read Pevsner, any RCHME volumes or local studies.
 - Most important; explain how you come to the conclusions and answers that you give – interviewers are as interested in your thought processes as in what you actually know.

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