Special section

Education in archaeology

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This Special Section on Education in Archaeology celebrates the advances made in making archaeology a subject in schools and universities. Here we have collected together a number of short essays on aspects of archaeology and education. Peter Stone has invited a number of the contributions from colleagues around the world, and these have been included alongside others which had been offered or were specifically invited. The pieces address aspects of archaeology in education, from its use in primary and secondary schools to colleges and universities and beyond into professional and teacher training. It is timely, at the end of one century and the beginning of another, to consider just what our subject has done and aims to do in the realm of dissemination and explanation to our successors. All too often, and especially now with the pressure of academic assessments at all levels, and especially to research, there is too little thought paid to content and mechanisms of presentation.

The section opens with two historical papers, appropriately describing two outstanding women in archaeology who each had a major influence over education and archaeology in Britain. There has been much celebration of Dorothy Garrod in 1999, the 50th anniversary of her promotion to Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge. Pamela **Smith** has unearthed some revealing new documentation about Garrod's rise in academic status, and describes the quite scandalous situation that existed at Cambridge before 1946 regarding women in academia in this otherwise innovative university. Christine **Finn** has resurrected a remarkable educational film about archaeology made under the academic guidance of Jacquetta Hawkes during the last War. Surely this was one of the first attempts to portray prehistory and the pre-conquest world of Britain as a worthy and civilized place! Elements of the film and Hawkes' script would be useful to the curriculum makers of today, although much was rather sexist and the gender roles portrayed would not be appropriate in the modern age.

The next theme deals with archaeology as taught in schools from an international perspective, and the papers reveal how different backgrounds and political histories direct the establishment view of the past. Training teachers to overcome these constraints is still little developed, although one training course has developed particular strategies to train teachers in appropriate skills. Education does not end in schools, but normally begins at university where most serious students of the subject get their first taste of archaeology. What they get varies enormously between institutions, and from country to country. Universities are for specialization, and it is good for the profession that some students emerge qualified to deal with environments, whilst others are better versed in medieval towns, or in Classical pottery. However, surely all courses in archaeology should be presenting some unifying elements which go beyond the simple definitions of archaeology as the study of material remains of humans? In Britain now, according to the statistics from UCAS (the organization that deals centrally with university and college entries), some 38 institutions (many of them newer universities) offer between them some 431 courses which touch on archaeology. However, this touch may be in the form of 'Waste Management and Archaeology' or 'Tourism', and not through a focused degree course. Roughly some 30 humanities degree courses at 20 institutions saw 538 students accepted to read for degrees in 1998. Getting a place on a reasonable course

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is still quite tough, with a ratio of 1:6·9 finding a place. Is Britain now training too many students in archaeology too superficially, or alternatively, are students at last with a genuine interest in the past able to explore the academic side of the discipline? These are speculations, because here our concerns are with the papers gathered for this issue, which describe and discuss the situation in several countries and at school and university level.

And what comes after education? Professional concerns enter the debate, and most colleagues will freely admit that a first degree, however specialized in archaeology, will hardly be the basis for professional involvement. Further degrees and specialized training are needed and we have some interesting contributions from colleagues concerned in the business of training professional archaeologists, and setting the standards for the future. The Special Section cannot cover everywhere or everything, and we would like to see these contributions as the beginning of a longer debate that might engage our readers. We shall welcome comment and further contributions in the future!

CM & MB

The relationship between archaeology and mainstream education has never been a strong one: the subjects tend to inhabit different, parallel and — all too frequently — mutually exclusive worlds. Despite pleas from eminent archaeologists (for example Clark 1943; **Fagan**, this issue) for the importance and relevance of archaeology for all educated citizens, all too often those involved in forming education policy have regarded archaeology as a perhaps interesting, but certainly peripheral and somewhat esoteric subject. The relationship has become more complex as archaeology as a discipline and, more importantly, as a profession has itself developed.

The articles in this section have been commissioned to provide a glimpse of how colleagues from around the world perceive the relationship between archaeology and education, its origins, current state and likely development in the future. They could be described as little more than self-indulgent acts of crystal ball gazing, but we hope they are more than that. Education at all levels and all over the world is changing at a rate and in ways not dreamt of a generation ago. Some changes relate to the advent of the world wide web and the enormous potential offered by (increasingly affordable) global information technology. Other changes result from the growing realization, by directors of education and politicians, that the education of not only the next and future generation(s) but also of the existing workforce is crucial to economic survival and development. The principal aim of education is currently seen as the acquisition of generic skills, which are considered as equally, if not more, important than knowledge — subject-specific or general. As an academic subject, archaeology has a valid place within the debates surrounding this changing world of education. As a (relatively new) discipline and profession, archaeology has its own role to play in the development of national and international economies — especially as related to cultural tourism. Indeed, these two facets of archaeology — academic discipline and profession — are inextricably intertwined in the subject's relationship with education. The subject-specific and general knowledge, as well as the generic 'key skills' (such as team working, oral and written communication, initiative and adaptability), as delivered through archaeological syllabi are central to the debates surrounding the subject as an academic discipline. At tertiary level, they are crucial to the delivery of suitable training for aspiring professionals.

Some of the articles that follow begin to grapple with the relationship between traditional 'academic' programmes and the wider skills demanded by the modern professional (**Smith & Bender**; **Collis**; **Weisman & White**). Suffice to say that the long-held complaint that university archaeology departments are not producing graduates capable of walking straight into (archaeological) employment appear at least partially justified [even if archaeology graduates from some universities (Cambridge) are amongst the most rapidly absorbed British graduates into other professions and employment — CM]. In Britain the Institute of Field Archaeologists is currently claiming a leading role in determining training standards for archaeologists. Whether professional training is the responsibility of university archaeology departments or professional institutions needs clarification — and quickly. If vocational training is not to be part of the normal undergraduate degree programme, alternative arrangements

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need to be made, but it would seem odd if university archaeologists were not part of this development.

The very fact that archaeology is perceived (albeit frequently by different groups) as both discipline and profession marks it out as different from most university-based subjects. A few subjects, like law, have to balance this dichotomy. However, whereas law has a long tradition, the acceptance of archaeology as a recent independent university discipline and profession had its genesis as recently as 40–50 years ago. Archaeology's first task is to define itself and develop a secure place within the wider world of education — itself another subject split between discipline and profession. The development of this self-definition has been focused and its pace forced by external reviews of higher education that appear to be almost endemic globally. In the UK these reviews have been mainly government-inspired, but similar debate is in evidence in many other parts of the world. The reviews are essentially responding to two external issues: the (perceived) quality of all graduates and the cost — to the public purse — of higher education.

In the UK the first of these issues refers to a belief that our graduates do not possess the same range or depth of generic skills as do many of those graduating in countries that are our economic competitors. Lists of these so-called 'key skills' prepared by organizations such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) now dominate (or at least should dominate if departments want to thrive within the present environment) discussion of syllabus review as much as new developments in archaeological theory, practice or period specialism. Archaeology departments' delivery of these skills comprises a large element of the Government's Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) demanded of all university departments. All UK archaeology departments will undertake TQA in the next academic year and, while at present there is no immediate public link between funding and positive TQA rating, poor rating will undoubtedly affect the standing of departments both within their own universities and within the archaeology higher education sector. Given time, a poor TQA rating will have an undoubted financial impact on departments with a decrease in their ability to deliver programmes that satisfy TQA type evaluations. Anecdotal evidence, from subject areas that have already been through the TQA process, clearly demonstrates that prospective students are choosing departments with higher TQA ratings.

The second issue — the cost of higher education — is, in part, also being linked to the evaluation of quality: in this instance of academic staff's research quality. The Government's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which all departments face again in 2001, measures the perceived quality of individual and group research. *This* exercise *is* directly linked to funding and is increasingly being used as a general measure of the quality of any given department. Archaeology departments with poorer RAE scores have already seen their funding reduced, which again has had the knock-on effect of making it more difficult to deliver appropriate and quality education. Secondly, the introduction of tuition fees in the UK[1] means students are now having to commit considerable amounts of their own money to gaining their degrees. Departments with any — real or perceived — weaknesses can thus expect their number of applications to drop. The introduction of fees has coincided with a significant reduction in the overall number of applications for archaeology nationally. It is assumed, although no data exist to support such assumptions, that the reduction is because some prospective students, who would have applied to read archaeology as a general arts or humanities degree, have opted to apply for programmes that are perceived to deliver the generic key skills more effectively, and other prospective students have decided to follow other vocational programmes immediately on leaving school.

The pressures of TQA and RAE are only the first of a number of externally driven reviews that will affect archaeology departments in higher education. Already under discussion is 'bench marking' (where all archaeology departments will be measured against a set of common criteria that are regarded as being crucial to the teaching of the discipline); and hovering on the horizon is the concept of the 'regional university' — where geographically close departments in different universities may well find themselves in the position of having to

1 Readers should note that at the time of writing the implications of the Scottish Parliament's decision not to charge tuition fees to Scottish students attending Scottish universities have not been fully understood.

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justify the existence of two departments of archaeology serving the same student catchment area.

Whatever the reasons for the decline in applications, whether weaknesses in RAE and/or TQA are real or perceived, whether undergraduate programmes are vocational or not, archaeology departments are coming under increasing pressure to prove their worth as providers of a general academic discipline capable of delivering generic knowledge and skills. If university departments cannot make this case convincingly, the simple economics of higher education will confine archaeology departments to financial hardship that could easily result in widespread retraction and closure.

Archaeology is very different from both law and education in one crucial respect: for whereas both law and education are almost universally perceived as essential elements of modern society, archaeology is not. For example, archaeology's role in the creation of cultural and national identity is not usually accepted in any explicit way (although see **Cooney**, **Funari**, **Henson** and **Podgorny**, below) and, put bluntly, few people would miss archaeologists if they were not there. It is not much of an exaggeration to claim that if all archaeologists were made redundant tomorrow, any widely felt social impact would perhaps take 20 or more years to make itself felt. Yes, a great deal of information from pre-development excavation would be lost forever, but would we really see protest marches in the capital cities of the world? Probably not, until perhaps a specific site of perceived national importance were threatened (as happened at Wood Quay in Dublin) or until a particular misappropriation of the past were exposed (for example the abuse of the past by the Apartheid régime in South Africa). It is perhaps the central task of all archaeologists, and not just those who specialize in the relationship between our discipline and education, to change this; to ensure that archaeology becomes an essential element of modern society.

Some would take exception to these statements and would claim that archaeology is already perceived as an essential element of a civilized society. Evidence appears to support the more pessimistic view. One measure of the importance society ascribes to a subject is the amount of time allocated to the subject in the formal school curriculum. The past as taught in most formal school curricula around the world has been dominated by, in archaeological terms, the recent past; its study based on evidence supplied by documentary sources (see, for example, various chapters in Stone & MacKenzie 1990; Stone & Molyneaux 1994). If employed at all, archaeological evidence has been used to provide a cursory introduction to 'real' history (in England, for example, the arrival of the Romans), or as a technique to expand on what is already known from documentary sources. As such archaeology has been, is, and will continue to be the 'handmaid of history' (see **Cooney** and **Planel**, below).

In 1990 the phrase *the excluded past* was used to describe the various aspects of the past omitted from formal and informal curricula around the world (Stone & MacKenzie 1990). Crucial elements of this *excluded past* were teaching about prehistory, teaching through an understanding of material culture — i.e. archaeology — (as opposed to purely documentary sources), and teaching about the past as perceived by non-dominant, usually indigenous, groups in society. Four reasons for such exclusion were identified: overcrowded curricula; teacher ignorance; lack of perceived relevance; and political interference (MacKenzie & Stone 1990: 2–4). The articles here show that many archaeologists are trying to address the issue, but they do not fill one with confidence that things have changed significantly. Certainly tentative steps are being made to develop a more responsible and all-embracing syllabus in South Africa (**Esterhuysen**) and individual Teacher Training Colleges are leading the way in delivering archaeological understanding and experience to students (**Pretty**). Sadly, again from anecdotal experience, Homerton appears to be one of only a very few in running such courses (and see **Colley** regarding lack of knowledge amongst Australian teachers — although see **Hamilakis** for a better situation in Greece). In the UK where archaeology is incorporated into curricula it appears to be present as a political tool — the definition of the 'proto-Welsh' (**Mytum**) or as a mechanism for delivering a developing 'national sentiment' in Scotland (**Henson**). In France, while archaeologists knock on an open door it is the back door — essentially slipping archaeology in past curriculum planners (**Planel**). None of these opportunities should be missed, and they should all help to

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provide the environment where archaeology is perceived as an essential element of society. And, certainly, if archaeology is to develop its tenuous foothold within school curricula it will have to demonstrate relevance to existing subject areas and requirements and not try to force itself onto the curriculum as a new subject (and see Zimmerman *et al.* 1994 for a salutary tale). However, all four reasons for exclusion still appear to be valid, and there is still a long way to go before we can claim that archaeology, and the messages it carries, are part of the accepted curriculum — and therefore an essential part of modern society.

Archaeologists have become increasingly aware over the last 20 years of the importance of the relationship between archaeology and education. All over the world archaeologists have begun to develop (either on their own or in collaboration with educationalists) programmes and resources (see, for example, Jameson 1997; Smardz & Smith forthcoming; Stone & MacKenzie 1990; Stone & Molyneaux 1994). Many of those who have contributed to this Special section have been at the forefront of this work. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these initiatives have made only minor impact on the mainstream formal school curriculum. Despite many wonderful education initiatives, most are limited in scope and impact. Internationally, the two worlds of archaeology and, at least, school education (and crucially, despite what is being achieved at Homerton and a few other institutions, teacher training for school education) continue on their essentially parallel, rarely converging, paths. However, not everything is negative. Archaeological and heritage organizations are increasingly accepting that their educational role is of crucial importance: English Heritage continually expands its Education Service; the Canadian Archaeological Association has recently adopted education as part of its mandate (**Smardz & Lea**); the World Archaeological Congress has, from its inception in the mid 1980s, always seen education as one of its main areas of interest; and UNESCO has recently launched a major initiative and resource materials in World Heritage Education related to the 1972 Convention. However, it seems that almost every positive step is matched by a negative. Cadw has made its education officer redundant and the Toronto Board of Education has withdrawn funding from its innovative Archaeological Resource Centre. The situation in Russia appears so difficult that ther is a suggestion effectively to restrict knowledge of the past, for all but an intellectual (?) élite, to essentially modern history (**Berezkin**). Perhaps it is a case of two steps forward and one back. Does this matter? It does for at least two reasons. First, we appear to be failing to fan the enthusiasm of young students who arrive at university and perhaps even failing to deliver the key skills that they will need to compete in the wider job market on graduate (**Fagan**). Second, because archaeology can expand our understanding of the human past not only by enormously increasing its time-depth but also by including elements of society all too frequently ignored or overlooked in the documentary record — for example, as noted by **Davis**, the non-literate — including ethnic minorities (and dominated majorities), women and the working classes. In this way archaeology becomes not a handmaid to history but an equal partner; it moves from providing a comfortable setting for the past to provoking a dialogue with the past, its construction, its use in the present, and its role in shaping the future (and see **Funari** and **Podgorny**). As **Henson** argues, such an approach extends the importance of archaeology from simply learning *about* the past to learning *from* the past. If we are concerned about the future of archaeology then we must be concerned with its relationship with education, for it is this relationship that will ensure its continued survival.

PS

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