

# And it's goodbye from her: my experience of volunteering with ClfA

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This year marks the end of my two terms volunteering at ClfA, and it has been a such an incredible journey. During this time I have been very fortunate to make so many new connections through the varied opportunities available to volunteers on ClfA Groups and Advisory Council, and am proud to now call many of those people my colleagues and friends.

**You don't need to be a part of a committee to volunteer; Groups are very happy to hear from people who would like to help on a specific project.**



Volunteering with ClfA extends your network and opens up opportunities. Credit: Career in Ruins

In 2016, I joined the Geophysics Special Interest Group (GeoSIG) committee, who promote the value of geophysics to the archaeological sector and act as a reference point for ClfA when advice or information about our specialism is needed. This gave me the opportunity to meet with and facilitate connections between many other archaeological geophysicists. We have organised two sessions at ClfA's annual conference, aimed at supporting non-practitioners who may commission or use geophysical products within archaeology; held online sessions to collate the needs and aspirations of both archaeological geophysicists and non-practitioners to

inform the forthcoming updates to ClfA's *Standard and guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey*, and guest-edited *The Archaeologist* to promote the value geophysical survey can add to archaeological research.

The benefits of volunteering are not limited to within ClfA. GeoSIG were invited to join an advisory group for Historic Environment Scotland's three-year project to further develop geophysical survey capability and expertise for Scotland's archaeology. During these meetings, I was part of interesting and innovative discourse and met international geophysicists who have since invited me to contribute to their projects.

My own career has been forever enriched by these experiences. Following the conference session I helped convene on behalf of GeoSIG in 2019, *Archaeological geophysics: why do we do it? Is it done well? Does it matter?!*, it became clear that we need to support non-practitioners with their understanding of archaeological prospection. Thus began evidence gathering to support the considered use of archaeological geophysics, which led me to develop and start my postgraduate research last year at Bournemouth University. Working with Historic England, and funded by AHRC, my research aims to understand the effectiveness of geophysics within archaeology, and to provide evidence that can be used by non-practitioners to better plan, commission and understand geophysical survey.

Whilst we volunteer our time, GeoSIG meetings are held during working hours, as the organisations from which our committee is comprised are pleased to support their staff and the sector in this advisory capacity. My own volunteering averages a few hours a week; some weeks are quiet whereas other weeks we might be working on a project together, such as updating guidance. Many of these meetings are now online, which makes attendance much simpler. You don't need to be a part of a committee to volunteer; Groups are very happy to hear from people who would like to help on a specific project.

I have been a part of ClfA's Advisory Council (AC) for almost as long as I have been on the GeoSIG committee as their representative. The AC acts as the voice of

the membership and is informed by representatives from Groups and by elected members. When the role of Chair became vacant, I had the capacity to undertake the responsibilities through the support of my then employer, Historic England, and was really pleased to support the Council as their elected Chair. During the past 18 months, we have focused on improving communication to make the AC more effective within the structure of ClfA. Members of the Council observe the Board meetings and report back, so we are informed of current matters and decisions, and have started holding 'Meet the AC' online tea breaks to have a direct means of contact with the wider membership. The AC has a broad range of specialisms, experience and opinions, reflecting the range throughout the archaeological sector. Being a part of the AC has helped me to understand different perspectives and taught me so much, not only the skills you learn as part of the role, but by expanding your network so you are exposed to new knowledge and ideas. Likewise I am pleased to have brought my own skills, perspective and experience to the role.

Through the past six years I am proud to have made a difference; as members of ClfA we all play our part. These experiences have helped me to improve both myself and the sector. As I stand down, I look forward to following the next Chair of GeoSIG as the committee builds on what we've achieved to date, and the next Chair of AC develop the framework we have created. I hope you are inspired to see which Groups you can work with, or



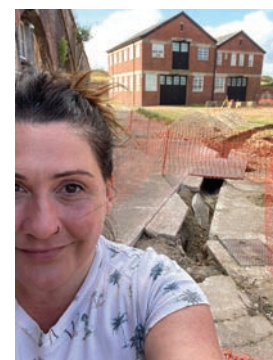
(L-R) Rob Cooke, Lucy Parker and Shelly Sell, representing Bournemouth University at Corfe Castle's Festival of Archaeology event 2022. Credit: Lorraine Pither

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indeed join the AC to see what change you can bring about? I have had such an amazing experience; I hope you get your chance too.



infographic showing the relationship of the ClfA governance committees



**Lucy Parker**

Lucy is an archaeologist with extensive survey and project management experience who has been active within the archaeological and geophysical sectors for over 15 years. She is currently a postgraduate researcher at Bournemouth University undertaking a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership with Historic England to investigate the effectiveness of geophysical survey within the archaeological sector. Her work is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (grant number AH/W002566/1).