

Reflections with an outgoing Chief Executive

Peter Hinton MClfA (101) and Alex Llewellyn MClfA (4753),
Head of Governance and Finance, ClfA

June 2024 marked the end of an era for ClfA as Peter Hinton retired as Chief Executive after 27 years. Pete has seen the Institute through many significant developments and changes. This 'in conversation' article reflects on some of these achievements.

■ **Alex:** I know I speak for many in thanking you for your dedication and determination in making the Institute what it is today.

■ **Pete:** I'm confident that I speak for many in our sector in thanking you likewise – and we don't need to wait for your retirement to say so! You underwent multiple promotions as need and opportunity arose, and soon became the person I depended on to make the Institute run efficiently and grow, while I engaged in the kind of creative sabotage that chief execs do when trying to change an organisation. Whatever I achieved was a team effort by the members, their elected representatives and staff.

■ **Alex:** I remember first starting work at the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), as ClfA then was. I'd joined as the Admin Assistant and I think at the time I was the fourth employee. You'd recently been appointed as the first Director of the Institute, although you'd been involved in committees before that. **What were your aspirations then?**

■ **Pete:** I presented what I wanted to achieve at my interview, and I have my very retro overhead projector sheets here. I wanted archaeologists to develop a culture of professionalism, to improve the quality of their work by actually *using* the Standards and guidance that IFA had published, by encouraging stronger regulation of archaeological activity, and by improving archaeologists' employment conditions.

I was keen to raise the Institute's profile and influence, and to build better relationships with its members and Registered Organisations, improving retention and recruitment rates. I challenged a mantra that IFA was 'the voice of archaeology', arguing that collaboration with partner bodies was the route to success. Relaunching the Registered Organisation scheme was high on my list too, with future admission being dependent on demonstrated compliance with the Institute's *Code of conduct* and Standards. There was a Gantt chart for all that, as you'd expect!

*Pete and Alex at
Pete's leaving do.
Credit: ClfA*



My understanding of professionalism then would make us wince now, as would my naivety about how far the Institute could lawfully become involved in leaning on employers about pay (at least I recognised that legal advice was needed). The interview panel was kind to me!

The appointment of a Director, working with a small but excellent admin team, changed the relationship between staff and elected directors: what did that feel like for you?

■ **Alex:** At the start we had more committees than you could count on your fingers. So much rested on the volunteers involved to produce reports or meeting minutes, and take forward the ideas and action points, in and around doing their day jobs. Over the years that dynamic between volunteers and staff has shifted, and from my perspective, it's gone from us providing the administrative support to really being at the heart of taking forward the strategic aims – or those visions you had on the projector sheets! I know you've kept a list of these achievements, so none get forgotten. When you look at this, which are you most proud of?

■ **Pete:** I'm proud of ClfA for so much! I've seen its turnover, staff, membership and Registered Organisation numbers significantly increase – plus merging with the Association of Archaeological Illustrators and Surveyors and establishing ClfA Deutschland. Growth has given ClfA greater influence over UK laws and policy on archaeology, and over practice more widely. We've both noticed how much time ClfA now spends responding to requests for advice, and no longer on trying to get noticed.

ClfA has recognised that a professional institute exists to put the interests of the public ahead of the interests of its members. Early annual reports show that our founders understood well the difference between a professional institute and a trade union, but the clarity had been lost by the time I took up post, and I took a couple of years to grasp it. Of course there's more work to do there, and Nathan's article (page 6) shows he's on it!

We've learned by drawing (selectively!) on the practices of other institutes. I was pleased to oversee the introduction of peer inspections for Registered Organisations (I think we pinched that one from the psychiatrists). And much of the work on skills has drawn on good practice elsewhere – if we'd just depended on archaeologists, our colleagues would never have created the career structure that we're so proud of.

What do you think the greatest successes are?

■ **Alex:** This really isn't an easy question to answer, is it? Becoming a Chartered Institute has definitely been one, particularly the feeling of pride which came from the members who attended the launch event in 2014. As you've mentioned, we've made enormous progress in training and development in archaeology: creating National Occupational Standards for Archaeological Practice, introducing National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and establishing ClfA Qualifications to manage and deliver end-point assessment for apprenticeships in archaeology. We also have ClfA-accredited university degree programmes.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' launch event in December 2014. Credit: Adam Stanford/Aerial Cam



I always feel a sense of achievement from some of the 'smaller' things we do, particularly when I'm then sat in a meeting or conference session and see them featured in someone's PowerPoint presentation. Ones that spring to mind are the *Delivering public benefit* practice paper, our carbon reduction guide table, the recent *Qualitative inequalities research project for the archaeology sector*, and our informal neurodiversity network and the resources we've been able to share from this. What I value most about these is that they have been created together with members and I've been able to facilitate their production and promotion. It feels very collaborative and at the heart of the objects of the Institute: they show how we advance the practice of archaeology and stimulate interest in what we do through our member networks, committees and groups.

I'm sure there are lots of things I've forgotten (I'll have to revisit all our past annual reviews) and there is still a lot more to do. ClfA reaches its 42nd birthday in a few months' time and compared to many professional bodies we're still very young. **As you move on from working at ClfA, what are your hopes for the Institute and the profession?**

■ **Pete:** I hope it maintains its trajectory but increases its velocity. And can we please become a chartered profession? There was little point in getting ClfA a Charter and not seeking to award Chartered Archaeologist. That's holding the whole profession back and denying us parity of esteem with the equally skilled chartered professions we work with. My biggest regret is failing to achieve that (though I told the interview panel we had a long way to go).

Development of the professional institute for archaeologists

	1982	2024
Code of conduct	yes	yes
Standards and guidance	0	13
Membership entry procedure	by assertion	by rigorous assessment
Professional qualification	no	yes
Professional conduct procedure	no	effective
Members	240	4298
Registered organisations	0	80
Staff (FTE)	0	16.5
Turnover	£9,381 (1982-3)	£1,044,000 (2023-4)
Professional influence	some	significant
Political influence	none	significant
Chartered	no	yes



Pete and Andrea Bradley at the ClfA 2024 conference in Chester, one of many of the opportunities for members to come together to share developments in archaeological practice. Credit: ClfA

