



Registered Organisation news

25 Years of CFA Archaeology Ltd

Melanie Johnson MCifA (1893), CFA Archaeology Ltd

CFA Archaeology Ltd is proud to be celebrating our 25th anniversary on 1 November 2025. CFA has grown to become one of the leading archaeological practices in the UK and the company is thriving, with new opportunities arising from large-scale infrastructure, projects relating to the renewable energy industry, and Joint Venture working through CONNECT Archaeology LLP. We've also seen many changes over those years – in technology, health and safety, professional standards, and planning regimes.

CFA grew out of a unit established in the early 1990s at Edinburgh University, then

known as the Centre for Field Archaeology. That unit was closed by the University in 2000 and some of the existing staff decided to strike out on their own. That new company found its home in Musselburgh, East Lothian, and because of the successes of the business, extended operations into England in 2010. As CFA expanded, our team has diversified to include consultancy, graphics and geomatics, post-excavation, building survey, geophysics and, of course, a wide range of fieldwork services. Today, that original small team of nine people has grown to be more than 80 strong and we provide UK-wide coverage.

CFA has been committed to being a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

since 2005, an accreditation we continue to hold and value highly, and several of our staff serve on committees, Advisory Council, and the Board of ClfA.

Our projects take us all over the country, from the highlands and islands of Scotland to the south coast of England. We work on over 200 archaeological projects a year and have completed over 1500km of linear schemes, including railways, trams, roads and pipelines. In addition, we have undertaken archaeological works on over 300 wind farms, solar arrays and hydroelectric schemes. We provide expert witness for PLIs, have produced over 400 cultural heritage chapters for Environmental Statements, fulfilled over 50 masterplans, and contributed to many other building development schemes.

We would like to thank all the staff, past and present, who have helped make CFA what we are today, and we look forward to seeing what the next 25 years bring!



In 2010, CFA excavated archaeological remains ranging from Iron Age pit graves to a Romano-British possible fortlet and field system in East Lothian. Six Roman inhumation burials were recorded – four of whom had been decapitated, with their heads placed by their legs. Credit: CFA Archaeology Ltd



Milford Mills, part of the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site, was excavated by CFA in 2022 and 2023. Milford Mills, first established in the 1780s, was used as a cotton mill and, later, a bleach and dye works. Credit: CFA Archaeology Ltd

Melanie Johnson

Melanie Johnson is a director at CFA Archaeology, holding the post of Quality Director as well as project managing fieldwork and acting as the company's ClfA RO Responsible Post Holder. She specialises in designing and implementing mitigation programmes for renewables, energy, and utility projects. Additionally, Melanie is a prehistoric pottery specialist, having completed a PhD on Hebridean Iron Age ceramics with the University of Edinburgh.