

# The Archaeology Training Forum 21st celebration and next steps

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In 1998, the Archaeology Training Forum was created in order to review the provision of training in archaeology and to co-ordinate future strategies to meet the profession's training needs. At the time, it was sensed that if the profession could start to have more strategic discussions around skills and training, it could start providing higher quality training opportunities for archaeologists. Laying the foundation of vocational training through the creation of the National Occupational Standards for Archaeological Practice, Forum members have been working together to improve the delivery of skills and training, and to broaden access to the profession. The Forum continues to include representatives from all four home nations and from a wide range of archaeological and related organisations (<http://archaeologytraining.org.uk/about-2/>).

The Forum recently marked its 21st birthday with a focused event in Edinburgh (<http://archaeologytraining.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ATF-at-21-Summary-Final.docx>). The celebration not only explored the history and legacy of the Forum, it also invited attendees to inform the future direction of the ATF. As we head into the development of our next forward plan, the results of this discussion will help ensure the focus of the ATF remains relevant to the wider profession.

That discussion suggested that the ATF's current scope of work was in balance with the capacity of Forum members. It was acknowledged that the ATF should continue to help support the development of pathways through the profession and inform and promote the variety of careers in archaeology. Through its members, ATF can help identify exemplar case studies from around the UK – for example, how skills and training can be embedded within large infrastructure projects. It was recognised that the ATF could look at the supporting role members could play in wider initiatives – for example, what platforms and in-kind support ATF members could provide to contribute to wider equality and diversity initiatives.

Going forward we would like to broaden how we communicate our work beyond Forum members, including sharing the knowledge and experience we acquire. We want to engage more in national and international discussions on archaeological skills and training, including taking more active roles with conference sessions. And we want to make sure that the right organisations are

engaged in the Forum to ensure it represents the breadth of our profession.

2020 has developed into an extraordinary year. As our profession emerges from the worldwide state of isolation, consideration of skills development and training will be more crucial than ever to ensure we are ready to meet the new challenges that await us. The

Archaeology Training Forum will play its part in those important discussions and facilitate opportunities where it can.

A more detailed summary of the 21st birthday event, supported by subsequent discussions by ATF members, is available on the Forum's website. For more information, please check out the Archaeology Training Forum website – [www.archaeologytraining.org.uk](http://www.archaeologytraining.org.uk) and look out for the #archaeologytraining hashtag on Twitter for training opportunities.

*Cupcakes and cake to celebrate 21 years.  
Credit: Cara Jones*



*The ATF 21st Celebration organising committee (from left) Robin Turner, Cara Jones, Angela Gannon and Lisa Brown. Credit: Cara Jones/CIfA*

## Cara Jones

Cara is CIfA'S Senior Professional Development and Practice Coordinator in Scotland and in February 2020 became Chair of the Archaeology Training Forum.

## Robin Turner

Robin is Head of Survey and Recording at Historic Environment Scotland and was Chair of the Archaeology Training Forum between June 2014 and February 2020.