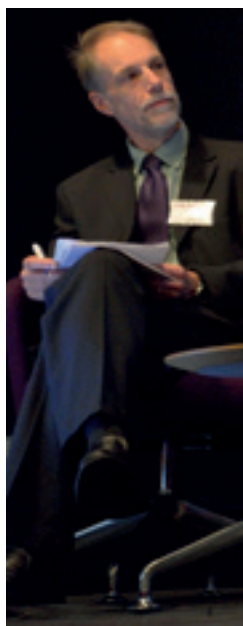


Destination Afterwards



This Yearbook is published in troubled times. This foreword is written some weeks before publication and may feel out of place when you read it – apologies if so.

Archaeologists should know about the impacts of pandemics, their effects on infrastructure, on trade, and on skills; and should have insights into how societies adapt. We may have things to say that would be helpful as the world deals with the most dangerous plague for a century. This institute has seen and sought to moderate the impacts on archaeology of global financial disaster. But while people on the front line of health and social care are exhausted, exposed and dying, and researchers are flat out on developing treatments and vaccines, this is not a time to overlay our contribution.

The chartered institute, with others, is however making the case for the value of archaeology for Afterwards – a continent that we know exists but which no traveller has yet explored. In some countries the historic environment sector envisages a three-stage voyage of recovery, with alliterative labels such as *rescue, renew and rebuild*. At ClfA we have a short-, medium- and long-term trio.

In the short term we can see that our focus needs to be on support of the membership. *Member* is a word we've deliberately used less in recent years, recognising that a professional institute exists to ensure that professionals deliver public benefit and to protect people from poor archaeology. That holds, but we need to retain a cadre of skilled, ethical and solvent archaeologists, in the best possible physical and mental health, if we are to fulfil our duties now and afterwards. A focus on membership is permissible and right. ClfA had already been moving to greater online engagement in recognition of different abilities to participate, and of the unfairness of asking an increasingly global community to attend UK venues. That process has accelerated in response to the insulation and isolation that both protect and harm us (two words of similar etymology, depending on whether you take your Italian ancient or modern, but with different connotations in disease control, psychology and electrics). We've attempted to help archaeologists navigate advice on safe-working, to augment their continuing professional development, to gain their professional accreditations (yes, you really are going to complete that application) and to participate in the trivial yet vital chat that otherwise falls through the healthy spaces we're leaving between us. We hope that we're helping.

The medium term is next to invisible. It will be shaped by medical science, weather, policy and luck. If our membership figures hold up – and it's looking good at the time of writing, so please stay with us – the ClfA staff will be able to continue reacting, flexing and striving on behalf of the board to support the profession. And we will continue to prepare for Afterwards.

The long term is easier to map. We assume that there will be people in Afterwards, that some of them will be archaeologists and that they will need a professional institute. Our consultation on the draft strategic plan for 2020–30, which started coming together before the pandemic, assumes that the purpose and direction of the institute remains the same. We know in broad terms what we need to do in the next ten years, and COVID-19 doesn't change that: how we do it – the operational details and methods – may be very different, and will be planned on an annual or more frequent basis.

So, while promoting archaeology as a world-saving discipline might be inapt and inept, our short and long-term plans will continue to include promoting the importance of archaeology, so well articulated by Lord Elis-Thomas in his preface (p5). We will reiterate that archaeology, done to professional standards, adds value to business and society. We will point out the counterproductive harm that could be done to industry and the public if it is not, if short-term policy for economic recovery dismantles or weakens the environmental safeguards that ensure development is sustainable.

Which leads me to the obligatory, but presently fugitive, up-beat ending. Society, and policy, is changing in so many countries. Government intervention is massively increased. Spending is permissible. Collaboration beats competition. Regulation is acceptable. Experts are rehabilitated and admired. These are favourable trends when trying to strengthen and promote a profession, and we will use them.

Please look after yourselves and your colleagues. Bitte kümmern Sie sich um sich und Ihre Kollegen!

Peter Hinton MCIfA
Chief Executive, ClfA