

FAREWELL TO THE GREAT WALLS

THOUGHTS ON THE WALLS

In the ten years I have known Steve, the hallmark of his Secretaryship has been his indefatigable enthusiasm for administrative and organisational perfection. In the early years of organising the IFA conference his willingness to tackle any university administrator or department head-on was a key factor in the IFA conferences' success. The energy he expended before the conference were matched (if not measured) by the frequency with which Steve was found recumbent at midnight in an incoherent state as the disco played yet another Champion tune.

The oblivion did not last long, but if he departed for a sunny holiday in May or June you knew that his re-charged batteries would provide the

energy for yet another year of Herculean efforts. My only surprise at Steve's departure is that it is happening now, and not five years ago; most mortals would have been worn down sooner. Without his care, attention to detail and organisational skills the IFA would not exist, nor would it have survived its first decade. Wherever it is that Steve is moving on to, he deserves the break and a sincere 'thank you' from all IFA members.

Bob Bewley



There can be no doubt that the successful development of the IFA is in huge measure due to Steve's unstinting efforts on its behalf. When I was Chair, I have to admit there were moments when the phone

rang of an evening or another buff envelope, carefully sealed with sellotape, and bearing that distinctive handwriting, dropped through the letterbox, weren't met with unremitting joy, but Steve's blend of advising/opinion-seeking/cajoling/and encouraging contained therein has been exactly what the fledgling Institute and its office-bearers needed.

He has been our Assistant Secretary for longer than Mrs T hung on in Downing Street, and is certainly on the way, in the archaeological pantheon, to being distinctly more venerable.

Steve, the Institute will be in your debt for many years to come. You've left a pair of outsize shoes to fill; I wish you all the very best for your future.

Ian Ralston

IFA

JOBS IN BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY 1993/94

INTRODUCTION

The Jobs Information Service of the IFA is an invaluable source of information about almost all the publicly advertised jobs in British Archaeology. It also provides an opportunity to review and analyse the largest body of information on trends in archaeological employment. The data for the years 1993 and 1994 have been used in an analysis of pay and employment conditions and requirements for IFA membership.

METHODOLOGY

The jobs were divided into the categories of field archaeologists, specialists and heritage workers. These categories were then broken down by job description and ranking within advertisements into sixteen subcategories of which the eight in italics are considered here.

Field archaeologists: *Excavators; Site Assistants; Assistant Supervisors; Supervisors; Field Officers; Archaeological Managers or Consultants.*

Specialists: Surveyors; Finds Workers; Environmental Archaeologists; Archaeological Illustrators and Designers.

Heritage workers: Inspectors and Monument Wardens; Conservators; Heritage Education Officers; *Junior SMR, Records and Archives Workers;*

Senior SMR, Records and Archives Workers; Heritage Managers.

Following English Heritage usage, Site Assistants are taken to be excavators with some responsibilities for recording. Supervisors are taken to be responsible for the running of a whole site, and Field Officers are intermediate in responsibility between Supervisors and Archaeological Managers.

The data recorded for each job were: pay, length of contract, private or public sector, mention of IFA membership in the advertisement, and whether accommodation was offered as part of the job. Only jobs giving the level of payment and within the UK were considered. If a single ad was for a number of posts, but that number was not made explicit, it was counted as being for a

single job (23 in 1993, 20 in 1994). It must be emphasised that the data set is small; in the categories being considered there were only 134 usable jobs advertised in 1993 and 119 in 1994.

Where a salary range was given, the minimum point was used for analysis (in line with normal public sector policy). Hourly, daily or weekly wages were converted into annual salary equivalents, and the pay for part-time jobs was calculated on an hourly basis and then converted into the equivalent of an annual full-time salary.

A few jobs receiving anomalously high or low salaries (more than 40% different from the next highest or lowest salary) were disregarded (four from 1993 and two from 1994).

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	1993	1994		1993	1994	
	£	£	change	No.	No.	change
Excavator	8331	8741	+5%	24	13	-46%
Site Assistant	8597	9612	+12%	33	8	-76%
Assistant Supervisor	9799	10767	+10%	6	4	-33%
Supervisor	11543	11745	+2%	14	22	+57%
Field Officer	12528	13637	+9%	10	21	+110%
Manager	14360	16450	+15%	17	18	+6%
Junior SMR	11084	11284	+2%	16	24	+50%
Senior SMR	13707	12641	-8%	14	9	-36%
All Jobs	10766	12261	+14%	134	119	-11%
National Average (Full time)	15116	15850	+5%			

Average starting pay for jobs advertised in the IFA Jobs Information Service.

TERMINOLOGY

The terminology used to describe field staff is confusing; in 27 advertisements for jobs categorised as excavators, eleven different job titles were used. Different employers use the same terms to describe posts with differing responsibilities, and it would also appear that job titles are being manipulated to make advertised posts more attractive. For example, in 1993 an advertisement for Archaeological Assistants, implying some responsibility beyond digging, paid only the equivalent of £5307 pa.

PAY

Although the mean pay for all classes of work has increased from 1993 to 1994 by more than inflation, pay remains very low. Only the most senior archaeologists start being paid at or above the UK average, which in April 1994 was £304.80 per week, or £15850 per annum (Source: Central Statistical Office Monthly Digest of Statistics 587, November 1994). Excavators receive barely half this sum, and almost all SMR posts start well below the UK average. Overall, it was found that there is very little difference in the amount of pay being offered in the private and government sectors.

There is an increase of roughly £1000 pa in average salaries with each step up the hierarchy from Excavator to Field Officer, with a larger jump to the salaries being paid to Managers. The practice of providing free or subsidised accommodation for diggers may be diminishing. Over 50% of the jobs advertised in the Excavators and Site Assistants categories in 1993 came with accommodation, but less than one job in three in 1994 offered this benefit.

CONTRACTS

At the bottom of the scale, there are virtually no permanent posts. Of the 78 jobs advertised at Excavator and Site Assistant level, only one was not described as being temporary. The proportion of permanent posts increases with seniority; the majority of Field Officer and Manager jobs being permanent. Temporary contracts increase in length in the same way; typical contracts up to Supervisor level are for two or three months, with Field Officer, Manager and Senior SMR jobs typically being for eighteen months or two years. This reveals one of the gaps in this study; very short length contracts for junior positions are not being advertised in the press - no contracts of less than five weeks were noted in the study, so it can safely be assumed that the small number of junior fieldwork posts in the sample is partly due to advertising trends. No part-time Field Archaeology jobs were advertised.

IFA MEMBERSHIP

Owing to the small size of the sample, no differentiation was made between the different levels of IFA membership preferred. Very few of the advertised jobs at the bottom of the fieldworking hierarchy mention IFA membership. At Supervisor level, a significant number of jobs specify membership as being advantageous, and above this level a preference for IFA membership was expressed in over 50% of the jobs advertised in 1994, an increase from 1993 when about 40% of the jobs at Field Officer level and above asked for IFA membership. The same trend prevails in SMR posts.

CONCLUSIONS


The most striking fact revealed by this study is that the number of jobs being advertised in archaeology is very small, and that this number has dropped from 1993 to 1994 by 11%. This is largely accounted for by the decline in the numbers of junior posts being advertised; the number of posts at Supervisor level and above went up in 1994. This must limit the route of entry into the profession, and, combined with the short contracts available at the most junior levels, underlines the fact that there is very little job security or career structure in archaeology.

Pay has increased from 1993 to 1994, but remains painfully low. It is doubtful whether in industry a person working at the equivalent level of a Field Officer, with all the associated management and other responsibilities, would earn as little as £13000 pa. It is only in 1994 that the mean starting salaries of Archaeological Managers have risen above the UK average, and it is at managerial level that salaries have risen most from 1993 to 1994. Despite the revolution in competitive contract archaeology, archaeologists have not yet shaken off the legacy of poor pay and conditions.

Job description terminology is confusing and even misleading, and some general guidance from the IFA would go some way towards rectifying this. It is encouraging that the number of jobs preferring IFA membership is rising, since membership increasingly carries with it defined standards of professional conduct.

FUTURE ANALYSES

The analysis of the UK job market would make an interesting on-going project, which would be enhanced by going beyond the data within the JIS. More information on salaries, job requirements and equal opportunities would be of great interest. However, the data already derived from the 1993 and 1994 JIS advertisements will be used by the new IFA Archaeological Employment Working Party, which will be looking into pay and conditions with a view towards defining jobs more clearly and recommending pay scales, and may even touch on certain minimum conditions of service, thus addressing what is commonly perceived as one of the main shortcomings of the Institute.

K R Aitchison and S M Anderson 

Note Copies of the secondary data on which this paper has been based can be obtained, at a small charge, through the IFA Secretariat.