

Jobs in British Archaeology

The results this year

The results this year are presented in a slightly different format due to the increasing difficulty in getting accurate figures for excavator jobs. Some data from BAJR has been included as a supplement to JIS. The previous four years figures are, included, so trends can be examined. The results of the *Profiling the Profession 2002/3* survey should provide a more comprehensive snapshot later this year.



The first point to note is the marked drop in the number of jobs advertised from 146 to 79 (46%) – presumably a reflection of the uncertain economic climate.

Pay

Overall steady progress was noted in most categories where direct comparisons can be made – though only to levels that would still be laughed at in most mature professions! The basic excavator pay went up to £13,232, up 29% over five years, and the (anecdotal) evidence is that in some parts of the country there is a definite recruitment problem at this level. The large debts which most graduates leave university with cannot be an encouragement to seeking a career with this pay.

It will be interesting to see if the APPAG report has anything to say about low pay but it was encouraging to hear Andrew Lawson, head of Wessex Archaeology, call for a 'quantum leap' in the pay of (all) archaeologists at the APPAG public meeting in December. If there was more co-operation between the heads of the larger units, as has already happened in some instances, and less outright competition and hostility then this might be achievable. Perhaps the IFA could knock a few heads together (mentioning no names but you know who you are!).

Supervisors have nudged up 19% in the last five years to £14,806 – but supervisor covers a wide variety of roles with different organisations. It is

taken (loosely) here to cover helping run excavations but not being in charge or undertaking post-excavation work (AIFA level – minimum from April £14,817) – but please no letters if you are a supervisor and do something else entirely!

Field or project officers have surged forward in the last year to £18,489 but based on a very low number of advertisements. However, this is to a level in line with MIFA responsibilities, if taken as the role of site director/post-excavation analyst/principal author. This should rise to £19,185 in April and must be considered the *minimum* benchmark if undertaking any reasonable sized excavation.

Project managers continue to show steady, unspectacular, growth – up 18% over five years to £21,536 – though some advertisements suggest at least £25,000 is the going rate in some areas.

The pay for Junior CRM posts, specialists and illustrators showed alarming slips last year but the former's figure was skewed by a few high paid jobs in 2001. However, the latter two categories have only shown a small increase (<10% and <7% respectively) over the last five years – though the Specialist category does include finds and environmental assistants on site as well as the more academic side of specialist work. Clearly this is a matter for concern that should be addressed in the coming year.

IFA membership

A pitiful number of jobs mentioned IFA membership as a requirement. Even at the highest level a mention is the exception rather than the rule. Of the two county archaeologists jobs, it was not a requirement for Cambridgeshire (nor for the chief executive of York Archaeological Trust), but was for Cumbria. If even at such a senior level IFA membership is optional, it is no surprise that for less senior jobs the IFA hardly gets a look in. It is a

serious concern for IFA that the profession still seems to regard professional membership as irrelevant.

IFA recommended minimums

Virtually every advert was at the IFA minimum level or above – a tribute in a way, but also an opportunity to be more aggressive and increase the rates. We should also finally confront local authority units, to whose rates the IFA rates have traditionally been linked. It is now clear that the local authority pay scales on which archaeologists are employed are completely inadequate and are falling behind the private sector alarmingly. Local authority units are fast becoming an endangered species, and this problem can only be exacerbated if their pay rates

fall so far behind private competitors that available staff prefer to work for better paying organisations.

Conclusion

Despite the low level of jobs last year, finally the overall trend is encouraging, except for specialists and illustrators, who are lagging badly behind. There is awareness that pay is far too low and some steps are being taken to address the problem. However the quantum leap forward is along way off. If/when the economy starts growing more strongly and the labour market is squeezed further, this may be the time for SCAUM/IFA to get together and use their influence to ensure all archaeologists finally get the level of pay we all know we deserve.

	AV WAGE 2002	NO OF ADS (2001)	MENTION IFA	AV WAGE 2001	AV WAGE 2000	AV WAGE 1999	AV WAGE 1998	IFA MINIMA 2002/3	IFA MINIMA APRIL 03
Excavator / site assistant	£13,232	19 (22)	0	£12,378	£12,024	£11,174	£10,245	£12,291 (PIFA)	£12,720 (PIFA)
Supervisor	£14,806	12 (11)	1	£12,741	£12,868	£12,700	£12,420	£14,316 (AIFA)	£14,817 (AIFA)
Field Officer / Project Officer	£18,489	5 (21)	0	£15,572	£15,518	£13,777	£14,274	£18,537 (MIFA)	£19,185 (MIFA)
Project Manager	£21,536	5 (10)	2	£20,881	£19,447	£18,671	£18,268		
Junior CRM / SMR	£15,563	14 (39)	4	£17,532	£15,608	£14,167	£12,629		
Senior CRM / SMR	£30,605	2 (17)	1	£23,012	£23,486	£20,654	£17,680		
Specialists	£14,992	14 (12)	0	£16,531	£14,632	£15,476	£13,442		
Illustrators etc	£14,085	8 (14)	0	£14,908	£15,497	£13,271	£13,229		
		79 (146)	8 (10%)						

