

Jobs in British archaeology 2000

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INTRODUCTION

This is the eighth year of collecting data relating to archaeological employment in Britain. The process of data collection involves several phases of sifting the information before it makes it onto the spreadsheet. Only jobs that are advertised in the JIS weekly bulletin are included in the survey. Foreign posts, university lectureships and a number of jobs considered as not having an archaeological component are all discarded. In the last category there is obviously a subjective decision about a post but use of the word archaeology will always mean it is included and adverts mentioning heritage or conservation will usually be included. Many jobs appear several times in the bulletin so in a typical week only about a third of the adverts will make it through the first sifting. The remaining jobs tend to fall into three main categories, each of which is dealt with in a particular way. Single post (occasionally two or three posts) adverts usually contain all the information that is needed for the spreadsheet. Field posts cause more of a problem since the adverts rarely indicate numbers or contract length and some are missing salary information. These have to be followed up by contacting the relevant organisation for the missing details. Experience has demonstrated that this is better left for a few weeks, as organisations often don't know how many posts they are actually advertising for or even how long the contracts are going to be. This makes collecting the data for field posts a frustrating process and a few get rejected. The third category includes everything else. There are only a few jobs of this type each year and the particular problems vary from deciding what sort of job it is (sometimes harder than you might imagine) to persuading a prospective employer to impart information about the starting salary. The latter are usually consultancy type

jobs for which salary is likely to be dependent upon previous salary and experience.

JOB NUMBERS AND CONTRACT LENGTH

There was actually a slight fall (4%) in the number of jobs advertised in 2000 in comparison with 1999 but as the 1999 figures were a huge increase on the previous year the overall situation should be regarded as fairly good. There was a significant increase in the number of junior cultural resource manager posts with SMR and development control jobs advertised in about 26 different counties and unitary authorities. Nearly all of these were temporary posts but most had contract lengths of 12 months or more. There was little change in the number of excavator and site assistant posts, which suggests that turnover in these jobs is fairly constant when work is available. Contract length for both was markedly better than 1999 indicating that organisations were keen to retain staff. There was even a slight improvement in the number of permanent site assistant posts, which is a welcome trend. There was a decline in the number of advertised supervisor and field officer posts but this may reflect organisations promoting internally rather than a real reduction in the number of jobs.

The number of project managers was similar to 1999 and contract length was not significantly different since the majority of the posts are permanent rather than temporary. The number of unit managers was the same as 1999 and although there were fewer senior cultural resource managers these form only a small percentage of the overall total jobs. Drawing/surveying job totals were the same as 1999. However, contract length increased dramatically, now averaging longer than two years. As those appointed in 2000 will mostly have contracts that potentially

run into 2002 or later, it will be interesting to see if there is a decline in the number of posts advertised in 2001, representing previously temporary posts being brought onto a more permanent basis, or whether there is genuine growth in this sector. Finds and environmental jobs posts now tend to be either permanent (35%) or very temporary with contract lengths of less than five months. This is the first year that the new miscellaneous category (which relates to education/outreach posts) has comparable data and it shows a trebling of the number of jobs (to a still modest 18) reflecting current interest in archaeology. The mean length of contracts is a little more than a year.

PAY

The overall situation with regard to pay was rather similar to that reported last year suggesting that there are some trends across the profession. Overall starting pay across the profession increased by an average of 6% compared to an overall 7% last year. There was fairly low inflation during 2000 with the All items RPI hovering around 3% for most of the year¹. Pay increases averaged 3.5% in the public sector and 4.3% in the private sector so overall there was another improvement in archaeology salaries¹.

Excavators and to a lesser extent site assistants both had real increases with the former seeing a starting salary rise of 11% compared to 1999 in which there was a 10% increase on 1998 levels. When combined with the increase in average contract lengths it suggests that market forces are beginning to work and that organisations are being forced to increase wages in order to attract staff for field projects. Other field posts fared less well although field officers regained the ground they lost in 1999. Supervisors now start on little more than diggers suggesting that there has been a decline in their status.

Junior and senior cultural resource managers again had large increases in starting salaries with rises of 10% and 14% respectively. Unit managers starting pay actually declined but last years figures were distorted by one very highly paid job with a slight decline if that post is discounted. Finds and Environmental posts lost out heavily with a 5% reduction in starting pay based on a similar number of

jobs. When coupled with the reduction in contract length the year 2000 must be regarded as a bad one for specialists. The first comparable figures for the miscellaneous category show a 17% reduction in mean starting salaries but since the 1999 figure was based on only five posts and it covers a range of jobs types this is not very surprising.

The big winners in 2000 were surveyors, designers and illustrators with an average starting pay increase of 17% based on exactly the same number of jobs. Since average contracts were nearly four times as long as 1999 there has been a marked improvement for this branch of the profession.

PRIVATE BODIES

A total of 30% of all the posts advertised were for private bodies in 2000 which was virtually identical to 1999 with project managers recovering from the decline last year.

IFA MEMBERSHIP

The number of adverts mentioning the IFA actually declined to 27 although this still represented 5% of all the posts. There was slightly more recognition for field posts and more than half of the field officer jobs mentioned the IFA but since there were far fewer of these jobs advertised last year it is hardly encouraging. Most worrying was the fact that fewer senior CRM posts mentioned IFA and again none of the unit manager adverts. This suggests that the IFA is only considered relevant to junior and middle management.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

The number of jobs advertised in 2000 held up rather well with 1999 which was considered a good year. There were also some encouraging trends regarding contract lengths for excavation staff. There was a huge increase in the number of junior CRM posts suggesting that archaeology is becoming more bureaucratic. The range between the worst paid starting salary of £9290 and the best of £36,690 narrowed compared to 1999 and most categories had real starting salary increases compared to the previous year. Overall there was steady improvement.

¹ IPMS *Negotiator* No 8, November 2000



TABLE 1 Jobs in British archaeology, 2000 summary (enhanced data: compatible with 1999 enhanced data)

CATEGORY	EXC	SA	SUP	FO	PM	J CRM	S CRM	UM	FEC	IDS	Misc	SUMMARY
No. of jobs	165	150	10	17	19	74	23	7	43	23	18	549
Mean starting pay	12535	11462	12869	15518	19447	15608	23487	24404	14632	15497	16848	14033
Min. starting pay	9290	10494	12192	13038	14766	11000	18911	16000	10763	10000	10903	9290
Max. starting pay	14050	11838	13302	20000	26250	24018	32000	36690	29061	28000	30000	36690
Achieve IFA min. pay	89%	82%	60%	100%	100%	77%	100%	71%	98%	83%	94%	87%
Private bodies	5%	76%	20%	59%	68%	9%	0%	14%	5%	17%	17%	30%
Temporary contracts	100%	93%	80%	94%	37%	42%	22%	14%	65%	65%	39%	77%
Mean contract length (months)	3.3	4.1	4.5	9.1	20.6	15.5	30.6	9.0	4.9	27.4	18.0	13.4
Mention IFA	0%	1%	20%	53%	26%	8%	4%	0%	2%	4%	6%	5%
Mention accom.	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%

EXC = Excavator; SA = Site assistant; AS = Assistant supervisor; SUP = Supervisor; FO = Field officer; PM = Project manager; JCRM = Junior SMR/CRM; SCRM = Senior SMR/CRM; UM = Unit manager; FEC = Finds, Environmental or Conservation; IDS = Illustration, Design or Survey

TABLE 2 Jobs in British archaeology: comparison of pay & job numbers, 1999-2000 (based on enhanced data)

		Mean pay			No. of jobs		
		1999	2000	Change	1999	2000	Change
FIELD POSTS	Excavator	11311	12535	+11%	167	165	-1%
	Site Assistant	11037	11462	+4%	170	150	-12%
	Supervisor	12700	12868	+1%	30	10	-67%
	Field Officer	13777	15518	+13%	31	17	-45%
	Project Manager	18671	19447	+4%	21	19	-10%
CRM POSTS	Junior CRM/SMR	14167	15608	+10%	48	74	+54%
	Senior CRM/SMR	20654	23486	+14%	34	23	-32%
	CRM/Unit Manager	35367	24404	-31%	7	7	0%
SPECIALIST POSTS	Finds / Enviro / Conserv	15476	14632	-5%	37	43	+16%
	Illustr / Design / Survey	13271	15497	+17%	23	23	0%
MISC		20281	16848	-17%	5	18	+260%
Overall		13220	14033	+6%	573	549	-4%