



ClfA launches major new report: A Review of the Standard of Reporting on Archaeological Artefacts in England - 24 July 2017

In a project instigated by the ClfA Finds Group and funded by Historic England, ClfA commissioned Alice Cattermole Heritage Consultancy to undertake a review of the standard of artefact reporting in England.

The project involved the analysis of a sample of 1000 unpublished specialist artefact reports and 61 published specialist artefact reports from journal articles against a checklist of criteria devised to assess their content and quality. The report showed that

- None of the reports in the sample met all the quality criteria
- Only 12% met three-quarters or more of the criteria
- 44% met fewer than half, and of those
- 6% met fewer than a quarter of the criteria

The report makes recommendations to improve the quality of artefact reporting and concludes

'In a profession where resources are limited and commercial pressures are great, the onus is on all involved with artefact work to ensure that this work is carried out in accordance with existing standards and guidance and that where standards are not met, appropriate measures exist to remedy this situation.'

This project has demonstrated the need to raise awareness of the importance of artefact work and the need to adhere to professional standards in order to maximise the contribution of artefacts to our understanding of the historic environment. This needs to be a collaborative effort across the sector and needs to engage finds specialists and special

interest groups, commercial archaeological contractors, development control archaeologists and organisations such as ClfA, ALGAO, FAME and Historic England in order to implement the recommendations of this project.'

You can read the full report at www.archaeologists.net/publications/reports

Dr Phil Mills, Chair of the ClfA Finds Group welcomed the timely appearance of the report and said

'The results give us a good evidence based understanding of the current state of artefactual reporting and a firm grounding to improving our reporting on artefacts across the board. The checklists should prove an invaluable tool not just to specialists but also managers and planning officers to assess the quality of submitted work'

Edmund Lee, Knowledge Transfer Manager at Historic England said 'Historic England has been happy to fund this project and welcomes the publication of its innovative and timely report. The evidence base and recommendations made here provide a valuable, if sobering, benchmark and guide which we can now use to evaluate future initiatives to build the capacity and quality of specialist work in this area'

Kate Geary, Head of Professional Development and Practice at ClfA said 'this report highlights the contribution of artefact study to our understanding of the historic environment, as well as the importance of professional standards in maximising that contribution. ClfA will be considering the report's findings as part of an ongoing review of professional standards and discussing a timetable for implementing the recommendations with its Finds Group and sector partners'

For more information on the project, please contact **Kate Geary**

kate.geary@archaeologists.net

For more details of the ClfA Finds Group and how to join, see

www.archaeologists.net/groups/finds