Archaeological Organisations in Britain; a fact-sheet

This brief summary has been drawn up by the Royal Archaeological Institute because students have said that a brief guide would be useful.

National and Local Government Agencies

There are four agencies with statutory responsibility for preserving and promoting the historic environment. All publish guide-books and research monographs, maintain lists and data-bases, and promote Historic Environment Records (HERs) in individual counties and cities (not all of these are on-line: check individual planning departments).

**English Heritage** is responsible for advising the department of Culture, Media and Sport on scheduling ancient monuments, listing historic buildings, protecting maritime wrecks, and for the National Heritage Protection Plan. It owns or manages many archaeological sites and historic buildings. It runs a membership scheme for individuals. Currently (Jan. 2015), it is about to be divided between ‘Historic England’ with legislative responsibilities, and ‘English Heritage’ to look after the properties portfolio. [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

**Cadw** is the equivalent historic environment service for Wales. It also has a membership scheme. [www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

**Historic Scotland** is the Scottish government’s executive agency for safeguarding and promoting the historic environment in Scotland. There is a private membership scheme. [www.historicscotland.gov.uk](http://www.historicscotland.gov.uk)

The **Environment Agency** is the responsible body in Northern Ireland, [www.doeni.gov.uk/built-home.ht](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/built-home.ht)

**Natural England** advises the government on the environment and conservation in England, including its historic landscapes; [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england)

Planning responsibilities are placed on all local authorities, which respond differently. Most employ archaeologists to advise on planning applications and maintain HERs (sometimes these services are based in museums).

Another important agency is the **Portable Antiquities Scheme**, based in the British Museum and with a network of Finds Liaison Officers in England and Wales who record objects reported from metal-detector users and others. Its data-base can be searched through [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)

In Scotland all newly discovered finds, whether of precious metal or not, belong to the Crown and should be reported to the Treasure Trove Unit: see [www.treasuretrovescotland.co.uk](http://www.treasuretrovescotland.co.uk)

The **Archaeology Data Service** is the repository for all digitised archives from fieldwork and other projects: [www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk](http://www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk)

Archaeological societies and institutions

All these societies are owned and run by private members, who pay annual subscriptions. Some have student membership; some have only elected members.

The **Royal Archaeological Institute** produces the *Archaeological Journal* annually, and has multi-period interests. It arranges lectures, field meetings and an annual conference, and gives research grants. A small number of students are given free membership, postgraduates can apply for on-line access to the journal and recordings of lectures and field visits, and bursaries are available for students to attend the conference. [www.royalarchinst.org](http://www.royalarchinst.org)

The **Council for British Archaeology** is the coordinating organisation, promoting education, conservation and research. It publishes the colour magazine *British Archaeology* six times a year, *Internet Archaeology*, research
reports and other papers. It has a network of regional groups, with CBA Scotland and CBA Wales affiliated to it. It has an annual conference with field visits, other meetings, Facebook and Twitter pages, and links to most archaeological bodies in Britain. It co-ordinates the Young Archaeologists’ Club branches. www.archaeologyforall.org.uk

The **British Archaeological Association** has aims similar to the RAI’s and is also responsible for an annual *Journal*. It has established a high reputation for its *Transactions*, which are detailed scholastic studies, usually of individual cathedrals or monasteries and their contexts. www.thebaa.org

The **Institute for Archaeologists** sets professional standards, runs training courses, an annual conference, and various specialist groups. Membership levels start with Students and Affiliates. It issues a regular bulletin advertising archaeological and heritage posts. www.archaeologists.net

The **Society of Antiquaries** is a closed society to which members (‘Fellows’) are elected. Its annual *Antiquaries Journal* is available in most libraries, and it publishes occasional books and catalogues. Its weekly lectures are available on-line, and it is usually willing to allow access to its library for specific purposes. www.sal.org.uk

The **Society of Antiquaries of Scotland** allows individuals to apply for election as ‘Fellows’. There is an annual *Proceedings*, and monographs are also published. Lectures and other events are organised. www.socantscot.org

The equivalent society in Wales is the **Cambrian Archaeological Association**; its annual journal is *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. www.orchardweb.cambrians

There is a **National Trust** in each country, owning many archaeological sites as well as buildings. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Most counties and shires have societies which produce annual *journals* on the archaeology and history (and sometimes natural history) of their area. They arrange lectures and meetings, and usually have links to a myriad of town and country local groups.

Specialist journals include those produced by the four ‘period societies’: [www.prehistoricociety.org](http://www.prehistoricociety.org); [www.romansociety.org](http://www.romansociety.org) (*Britannia* and *JRS*); [www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk); [www.spma.org.uk](http://www.spma.org.uk)

Many archaeologists join topic-specialist groups, too many to list, most of which produce journals or other publications for their subscribing members, and organise lectures and meetings.

**Books and other journals**

Most archaeological books are produced by commercial publishers, such as Routledge, Oxbow Books and Archaeopress (British Archaeological Reports and International Archaeological Reports). Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press and others have charitable aims, but usually have to price their books to be commercially viable.

Research monographs are published by the CBA, and by many national and local societies. Although not profit-making, they have to cover their printing costs, unless subsidised.

The quarterly periodical *Antiquity* is published by a Trust; individual subscribers are not members. Its remit is world-wide; www.journal.antiquity.ac.uk.

Many journals, such as *World Archaeology*, are owned by publishers, and have subscribers but not members.

The CBA’s *Internet Archaeology* utilises new media and is accessible without subscription: intarch.ac.uk

A popular monthly magazine is *Current Archaeology*, www.archaeology.co.uk.
The commercial sector

Most large-scale fieldwork in the UK is undertaken by archaeological units, in advance of building and other development. Most are independent, with some of the larger ones being charitable, or having a charitable arm; a few are run by universities, museums or local councils.

Many archaeologists are planning consultants rather than fieldworkers, either self-employed, or working for large and small development companies.

Jobs in the commercial sector are usually advertised on the British Archaeological Jobs and Resources website, www.bajr.org, as well as in the IfA bulletin (above).

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