

Chairpersons of EAA Working Parties and Committees

Please send in the names and e-mail addresses of the members of your working party or committee to the EAA Secretariat

THANKS IN ADVANCE!

The following letter has already been on the EAA website since November 2003

**From: Professor Anthony Harding
President, European Association of
Archaeologists
Department of Archaeology
South Road
Durham DH1 3LE
a.f.harding@durham.ac.uk**

The EAA Secretariat

I am writing to you about the future of the EAA Secretariat, which may in the next 18 months have to move from Sweden to another location. If that turns out to be the case, we would reluctantly have to bid farewell to Petra Nordin, who has worked so devotedly on the Association's behalf since 1999.

With the present workload and the existing number of EAA members, we would expect to employ no more than one full-time person (or part-time equivalents) as administrator, with some extra secretarial or clerical help at peak times. The person or persons employed need to be proficient, preferably fluent, in English, and to work for a line manager and organization sympathetic to the aims of the EAA. The administrator also needs to work closely with the Treasurer.

A number of factors will influence the Board's eventual decision on the matter. These include:

- Cost (employment cost plus overheads)
- Perceived reliability
- Banking system (a modern system which is not over-priced, can handle international payments and offers internet access is essential)
- Postal and customs service (efficient and not excessively expensive)
- Ease of access to international transport networks
- Availability of workspace with up-to-date computing and other office facilities

I hereby invite you to consider the matter and, if you are interested, to initiate the process of making an offer to host the EAA Secretariat. A full list of requirements will be sent to those who respond.

Please indicate your interest to Petra Nordin at the EAA Secretariat, by email or post as soon as possible. The Board wishes to receive full bids, with all necessary details, by 31st January 2004.

The address is:

EAA SECRETARIAT
C/o Riksantikvarieämbetet UV Väst
Box 10259
434 23 Kungsbäcka
Sweden

E-mail address:
petra.nordin@raa.se

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Harding
President EAA

EAA Handbook

An updated version of the Handbook can now be found on the website

Reports from Working Parties and Round Tables

Report from the Round Table on 'the EAA in the Digital Age'

Peter Biehl (EJA Reviews Editor) GERMANY,
Arkadiusz Marciniak (EAA Secretary) POLAND

This is a report on two Round Tables - one held in Thessaloniki in 2002 and one held in St. Petersburg in 2003 - which focused on the expansion and development of the European Association of Archaeologists' website. The need for such a discussion is acute. Electronic media provides an efficient means to communicate with EAA members and we must seize the available technology to help ease what is otherwise a terribly time-consuming

task. In particular, three major issues/questions emerged at the round tables:

1. What services do the EAA members want from the website?;
2. How can the EAA website can become an internationally recognised portal for discussion about the impact of information technology on our discipline?;
3. How can the EAA website establish and set standards (a code of E-Archaeology) for archaeological research, publication and communication in Europe?

The topic is central to the EAA and its members. With its speed and simplicity of explanation, the "new media" (including multimedia and hypermedia) can - and has begun to - revolutionize the way archaeology is viewed and practiced. New media both changes and challenges archaeology and creates new perspectives for it. We have discussed these perspectives at the round tables.

In terms of archaeology, new media offers tools that influence how we communicate, publish and document research and finds. They offer us a way to collect, process, store and disseminate archaeological data with never-before-achieved speed, facility and accuracy. In the presentations¹ at the round tables an emphasis was placed on improving archaeological communication via new media.

By communication, we mean all possible stages/levels/pedagogical tools employed to create and disseminate information about archaeology, including those used by universities, museums, archives, exhibits and historic preservation as well as ones on the Internet and in learning software. In other words, everything that influences how experts and the public view and/or learn about archaeology. We have also examined the growing commercial interest in archaeology and its influence on our science and are excited about the possibilities such interest opens.

That said, we must be careful. Clearly, new media has great potential. But new media does not necessarily mean 'new archaeology'. How we implement it matters. We believe new media will enhance, and in some cases "automatically" force us, to implement a

¹ We want to thank all the participants of these round tables who have discussed and commented on the EAA website. Our special thank goes to Ruth Tringham and Michael Ashley-Lopez from the University of California Berkeley for their rich report on general tendencies in the development of web pages.

diversity of approaches and stimulate a multivocality of interpretations. This would help produce more heterogeneity and complexity in scholarship, museum exhibitions etc.

Electronic tools could further be used to handle the flood of information such approaches engender. New media also serves to soften the barriers between archaeologists and the public. The interested public will depend on guidance by the specialist, but will also be able to navigate according to his/her interest. The democratic nature of the World Wide Web and the huge amount of information it makes accessible demands a new consciousness regarding data and its interpretation. Archaeological data on the Internet is still not protected by copyright laws. Intellectual property is in danger and the EAA in the digital age has a prime responsibility to fill this gap.

Discussions at these round tables have made it clear that the EAA website – which serves both EAA members and European archaeology in general – must continue. Our chief focus should be on the improvement and expansion of communication – that is, on making archaeological information accessible and archaeological data easily available. These aims can be realized in two ways:

1. By expanding the amount of information on our website, and
2. By steadily pushing to transform our list from a passive list-server state, as it is now, to an interactive portal.

A recent change in the server makes it possible to host web pages of EAA members and their institutions. This can be done in special cases and when posting the pages elsewhere prove to be impossible. A need for such a service was expressed recently by some members and we are happy to now be able to accommodate them. Further steps, however, involve setting up clear criteria and standards to be filled when a member requests space on the EAA server. We suggest that an Internet Committee be set up to formulate such guidelines. This committee would be a forum of discussion and evaluation that would regularly offer ideas for projects and activities to the Executive Board as well as report on new-media related issues and/or problems.

One issue sure to come up is the limited availability of space on such a "hosting-service" and how many web pages can be accepted.

Other important possible expansions involve the archiving of documents, the creation of an organized Europe-wide job listing and the

publication of all upcoming conferences and field schools.

It is our goal to make the EAA web page more useful and a more productive forum of communication. We can achieve this by expanding the already-existing register of archaeological resources across Europe. Currently, there is a passive register of web pages from European universities, museums, institutions and projects. We want to make it more interactive by allowing members to add new links. Another step would be to implement a search engine, which would allow speedier access to information. Of course, all such freedom requires monitoring. The EAA Internet Committee would have to write and post a quality statement outlining what is expected of users and those who add links.

We believe these changes can transform the EAA web site into an active portal where members regularly contribute. Such changes depend upon our ability to secure appropriate IT support as they are both expensive and labour intensive.

Still, we have already taken a first step towards interactivity in the 'E-Reviews Section' of the *European Journal of Archaeology* (EJA). The online version will start in Spring 2004 and will complement the print version. It will allow discussions that begin in the printed journal to continue without concern over page length, publishing costs, or time delays. There will be a 'letters to the editors' section which will feature comments on the reviews section, suggestions for books to be reviewed as well as comments or statements in regard to specific reviews printed. We hope this interactivity will trigger debate among book authors and their reviewers as well as other specialists and interested archaeologists. We will formulate guidelines and policy for the use of the E-Reviews Section and we will post them on the website. In this document we will clearly indicate the objectives of the site and explain how we will monitor and edit contributions posted online. We hope you will support this first effort and send ideas, comments and reviews and review ideas to the reviews editor.

To conclude, the Round Tables came up with the following suggestions, which are being recommended to the Executive Board.

The EAA-Website should be transformed into a forum for communication: It would serve us - with our multiple and disparate interests - much better than a list-server. Threads for job listings, upcoming conferences, field schools, research

opportunities, ethics etc. can be established to spark discussion. Once threads are set up, it would be easy for members to add forums and threads, building a dynamic and vibrant virtual community.

The EAA-Website should be dynamic: Keeping websites up to date and interesting is a difficult chore and labour intensive. A possible alternative would be to set up a database for content that would then be pushed to the website through a conduit, such as MYSQL and PHP (a free and open source) or MYSQL and COLD FUSION (commercial, but not very expensive and very easy to use).

The EAA website's members section should be a significant source for communication and service: Promotion of the organization can be enhanced by offering content that is only available to members (e.g. the E-Reviews Section). There can be members-only forum threads and dynamic content plus the secure uploading of papers for conferences.

The EAA website should be a portal: Establishing a site as a portal, a nexus of information for interested members worldwide is a worthy goal. The power of a portal is that people internationally will be able to add their own content to the site by simply typing in a web form or uploading photos and other materials to the EAA site. This creates a truly European, multi-national, democratic project.

Round Table on Perspectives of Medieval and Post-medieval Pottery Production Centre Researches in Europe

Following the Round Table discussion on medieval ceramics at the St Petersburg Conference it has been decided to take forward the idea of setting up a Working Group on Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramic Production Centres in Europe. The main aim of this group will be the creation of a database of these centres in Europe. As a first step the group will carry out a pilot study of selected areas.

The Working Group would like to ask EAA support for this project. The group has designed a pro-forma record sheet to aid with data collection. This will be sent to different institutions and colleagues and the group would like to ask members to ensure that this form is passed on to the relevant people.