

SMA delivers ‘SMART’ New Standards!

The Society for Museum Archaeology is pleased to announce the publication of:

Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections

Gail Boyle & Anooshka Rawden (Eds.) SMA 2020

Covering the Care, Management and Use of archaeological collections with 71 pages, 11 expert contributors and providing links to more than 200 sources and resources online and in print.

This brand new free publication has resulted from the ‘SMART’ (Society for Museum Archaeology Resources and Training) Project funded by Arts Council England. It seeks to update standards which were produced in 1992 by the Museum and Galleries Commission. Although the 1992 Standards remain a useful guide, they are recognised as being outdated and no longer reflect the reality of archaeology collections management in light of a rapidly changing sector.

The updated content was produced after evidence mapping exercises and consultation with focus groups and sector representatives in 2019. The results will act as a signpost all those who work with archaeological collections, whether professionally or voluntarily, whether a subject specialist or not, to current best practice. In addition to this, SMA has also produced a series of **14 individual fact sheets** in support of the new standards relative to the care of different types of material found in archaeological collections. It is with thanks to Arts Council England for its Subject Specialist Network Fund grant to the Society for Museum Archaeology, and support from a wide range of recognised thematic and collections specialists, that these new Standards have been made possible.

The new standards and fact sheets are **free to download** from the SMA website and also via the Collections Trust, which has generously added them to the resources they make publicly available:

<http://socmusarch.org.uk/training/smart-project/>

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/standards-and-guidance-in-the-care-of-archaeological-collections/>

Duncan Brown, Chair of SMA said:

“A revision of curatorial standards for archaeology collections has been long overdue and it is a real pleasure to welcome the release of ‘Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections’. This is a great achievement and huge congratulations and plaudits are due to the team that worked so hard to produce them, to budget and within the timetable. Thanks are also due to ACE for having the foresight fully to fund this initiative.

The SMA’s SMART project included not only new standards and guidance but also training sessions and a pilot mentoring programme. Those other two strands provided a clear understanding of just how much the new standard will help, especially where museum staff currently have little experience of dealing with archaeological material. This new resource will be invaluable for curators with any level of expertise but the work of the SMA will not stop there. As the SSN for archaeology we are committed to providing support in the application of the new Standards. If there is one single

message from the SMART project, from the SSN programme and from the SMA it is that you are not alone. The work of promoting and adopting our new guidance is just beginning.”

Kate Bellamy, Director of Museums, Arts Council England, said:

“I’m delighted that the Arts Council has been able fund the development of updated standards and guidance for the care of archaeological collections – aimed at everyone who works with archaeological collections, regardless of level of expertise, helping to ensure that they can meet best practice. As the Subject Specialist Network for archaeology, the Society for Museum Archaeology does invaluable work supporting the sector and I’m sure the new standards, guidance and fact sheets published today will prove to be a vital resource for many.”

Notes to Editors:

The Society for Museum Archaeology is recognised by Arts Council England as the subject specialist network for British Archaeology in the UK: it has members in all regions as well as abroad. The Society promotes museum involvement in all aspects of archaeology and works to encourage greater public understanding of the archaeological past and a fuller public appreciation of the importance of archaeology. It campaigns for the acceptance of museums as guardians of a vital part of the nation's heritage and as the appropriate location for the storage and interpretation of all archaeological material.

www.socmusarch.org.uk

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SMART Project background

The Society for Museum Archaeology (SMA) received an award of £49,413 from Arts Council England (ACE) in response to its application to the ACE Subject Specialist Networks Funding Programme, 2018-20. The funding was provided to deliver the SMART Project (Society for Museum Archaeology Resources and Training Project) which was designed to:

- Enable museum staff and volunteers to develop the skills to work with archaeological collections proactively and confidently across collections care, interpretation and public access.
- Connect museum staff and volunteers with subject specialist expertise in order to facilitate knowledge exchange, and strengthen expertise in museum archaeology.
- Ensure toolkits and guidelines were updated, and readily accessible to museum staff and volunteers through the SMA website, and those of other key stakeholders.