

## Making History

I love deleting email. As I work through my inbox there is the satisfying feeling of ticking tasks off my list. But I'm a Vandal (in the old Dark Age sense) - and so is everyone who empties their recycle bin; I'm no better than the person who kindled the fire in the Great Library of Alexandria, a treasure of the ancient world. Because among all the spam are the important messages - the historical evidence of the future. In 1938 Neville Chamberlain stepped off a plane waving a sheet of paper; in 2004 it would have been an email. I hope that we retain somewhere the emails between George Bush and Tony Blair on the eve of the Iraq War.

How will we write the history of archaeology in the 21st century? We've woken up to the need to safeguard the context database, the CAD plans, and the electronic site report, but what about the email correspondence that led to the project in the first place? What about the people involved? Many years ago, whilst researching for my PhD, I used the archive for the excavations of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Mucking in Essex. The most fascinating bits were not the context sheets or plans, but the site diaries recording day-to-day ephemera. The recipe for spam stew and the shopping list including a special order of two chickens for Christmas Dinner: a vivid insight into rescue archaeology in the early 1970s. More recently I've been working on a Viking cemetery in Derbyshire, first excavated in the 1940s. It was difficult to get a feel for the nature of the excavations from the brief published reports. However, the letters between the site directors, re-discovered in Repton School library, provided vital information about the dating of the site, an unpublished burial, and the anxieties of the Ministry of Public Works and Buildings inspectorate.

It's hard to find such insights in the ADS digital archives. In fact, people carefully remove personal correspondence and draft documents before they are deposited. In the aftermath of the positivist 'New Archaeology' and the false scientism of the 1970s, many excavators remove from their archive any trace of personal anecdote. In this issue of ADS News we explore several projects looking at the early history of archaeology, when people weren't afraid to record the personal aspects of fieldwork. For the sake of the future historians of archaeology we have a duty to save at least some of our email.

*Julian Richards*

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## ArchSearch NEWS

More CBA Research Reports have been released in the last few months and are accessible through the ADS Library. We are now up to volume 96 which looks at aspects of Roman Alcester. Other volumes span a wide range of interests including *Environment and economy in Anglo-Saxon England* and *Excavations at Rhuddlan Clwyd 1969-73: Mesolithic to Medieval*.

Other recent developments include an 'e-thesis' service, as announced in the last issue of ADS News. Current titles available include such diverse topics as the *Three Dimensional Modelling of Scottish Early Medieval Sculpted Stones* and the *Idea of Residence in the Neolithic Cotswolds*. Though the total number of e-theses is small, demand has been very high. We look forward to mounting more in weeks to come.

Perhaps of most significance in terms of provision of access is the deposition of eight unpublished or 'grey literature' reports by Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Services. It is envisaged that many more of these will follow as the English Heritage funded OASIS project continues to develop with its provision for online deposition.

Looking further afield the first of a series of e-books being produced by the Upper Tisza Project, an interdisciplinary Anglo-Hungarian landscape archaeology cooperation, was published. Local sites and monuments records continue to be added to ArchSearch - most recently with a load of records from Somerset County Council. This, with a recent re-load of Scottish records has brought the total number of records to almost 600,000.

All these resources can be found at: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>

## Society of Antiquaries of Scotland news

It was noted in ADS News 13 that a pilot funded by the ARCHway project was underway with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to deliver the full texts of many of its publications. This service has now gone live and includes:

- Archaeologia Scotica (1792 - 1890)
- Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (1851 - 1999)
- Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Monograph Series

More recent publications will be added on a rolling basis. This invaluable resource is accessible through the ADS Library and the ARCHway Citation Index which allows for author and keyword searching at the article level. Accessible as PDF files users can also search within articles using more recent versions of Adobe Acrobat.

***An extract from the first publication of Archaeologica Scotica (1792), now available online.***

Not surprisingly, this service has proven popular. The journals contain details of almost every theme, project and excavation undertaken in Scotland for over two hundred years. One reader commented that this was the most significant innovation in the publications of the society since the first volume appeared in 1792 - and that David Erskine, the 11th Earl of Buchan and founder of the society would be amazed and delighted.

*These publications are available free of charge online:*

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/psas/>

***ArchSearch News is brought to you by the ADS Technical Team: Tony Austin, Jen Mitcham, Kieron Niven, Marcus Smith and Keith Westcott.***

***ArchSearch is online at: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue>***

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## Digital preservation and the future of the past

*Digital archives have become trendy. Suddenly everyone putting a database and some images on the Internet is calling it a "Digital Archive". But this is misleading. Electronic resources are fragile and digital archives require special care. Here Hamish James, AHDS Collections Manager, describes what it means to be a proper digital archive and looks at international efforts to define standards for digital preservation.*

If they think of digital archives at all, most people probably imagine a computer system, comprised of hardware and software connected to a network, that is designed to store and deliver digital resources, such as datasets, documents, digital movies or the like. These 'archives' fall well short of what we would expect from a paperbound archive, lacking the "connotations of preservation of long-term value, statutory authorization and institutional policy" associated with traditional archives.

Benign neglect can be an acceptable state of affairs for traditional archives, but without ongoing attention, information held in a digital form does not survive for long. In addition to the fundamental requirement to back-up data, curators must tackle media degradation and the obsolescence of file formats, software and hardware. Most of us have experienced some of these problems - the old disk that cannot be read any more, the data in a file format we no longer have software to open, or the old software that will not run on our new computer. Parallels to these problems can be seen in the difficulty of deciphering ancient languages or preserving ancient documents, like the famous 'Phaistos Disk' from Crete pictured above. Whereas these problems might only emerge after hundreds of years, in the digital world, they can become significant in a decade or less.

***The writing on the Phaistos Disk, found in a Minoan Palace in Southern Crete, defies attempts at being deciphered. Although contemporary with linear A scripts, no other forms of the script are known.***

There is no single solution to these problems, but the curators of digital resources can draw upon several strands of research into digital preservation. Approaches range from preserving old hardware, periodic migration of data to new file formats, and the emulation of old software on new computers. The role of a digital archive is to understand these options, selecting the most appropriate method to ensure that information remains accessible.

The most influential work on how a digital archive should operate is the 'Open Archival Information System' (OAIS) reference model, now an ISO standard. The OAIS model was developed to improve the preservation of data collected by NASA during space missions. This model describes in detail the main activities a digital archive must undertake - ingest, data management, archival storage, access, administration and preservation planning. Backup, which is sometimes confused with digital preservation, is a part of one of these activities.

The archive and library professions have also made valuable contributions, identifying the *Attributes of a Trusted Digital Repository*, and discussing *A Metadata Framework to Support the Preservation of Digital Objects*.

Research is now becoming more practical. In the UK, for example, The National Archives are running a digital archive and the British Library is also working on these issues. That's why at the AHDS we are redeveloping our own digital archive to handle the rapidly rising volume, and increasing variety, of data deposited with us.

**Hamish James**

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For more on digital preservation see 'Preserving Access to Digital Information at:

<http://www.nla.gov.au/padi/>

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## Grey literature reports online in Worcestershire

*Part of the reasoning behind the OASIS project is to improve the flow of information between fieldworkers, heritage managers and academics. In this article, Neil Lockett and Victoria Bryant of Worcestershire County Council describe how this fits into their own plans for an integrated research and management tool.*

Recent work by Worcestershire 'HER' (Historic Environment Record) team has focussed on the development of a model for incorporation, processing and dissemination of data to create a management, research and education resource served electronically.

Our new HER is based on a modular concept with the main core enhanced by the creation of additional specialist databases such as an online fabric and form series or our online tithe maps. This modular approach enables resources to be developed which specifically match criteria imposed by the datasets rather than forcing data into one large database. This system is designed to be platform independent and interoperable.

The core GIS involves the creation of four interrelated groups of themes: data; interpretation; research frameworks and management. Of these, data themes and interpretative themes, are worth discussing in more detail here.

Underpinning the HER systems are a number of data themes. These themes include traditional archaeological data-sets converted from existing single layered data into a multi-layered GIS and non-heritage data-sets such as Solid and Drift geology, soils and natural environment data-sets. The integration of these data-sets will enable us to understand and manage the Historic Environment in a more sophisticated way.

Linking extant data to additional internal resources will further enhance the record. An example of this is the conversion of commercially funded archaeological reports to online digital reports (for a pilot of this see the ADS Library link below). Future developments include utilising information from national projects, such as the OASIS project which will facilitate easier integration of developer-funded archaeological work into the HER.

The interactive use of a wide range of data sources will help us to produce spatial models of the landscape through time - interpretative themes. These can be developed and changed in response to fieldwork and synthesis. The first of these interpretative themes (for the Palaeolithic) has been completed in response to the Shotten Project, a research project based at Birmingham University. This provides a model for the development of other interpretative themes in the future and the key to its success is the collaboration of experts in different sectors. The development of interpretative themes will result in a major improvement in resources for management, research and teaching.

### Conclusion

Our intention is to create an information cycle where a dynamic and cyclic process of data collection, interpretation, research and management will provide those involved in management, fieldwork, research and education with easy access to baseline and synthesised data. The grey literature reports we have now lodged with the ADS show one of the many directions that such access will develop in the future.

**Victoria Bryant and Neil Lockett**  
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For more on the Worcestershire HER see: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/her-news](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/her-news)

For the online pottery fabric and form series see: [www.worcestershireceramics.org](http://www.worcestershireceramics.org)

For more on the Worcestershire Tithe Maps see: [www.worcestershiremaps.org.uk](http://www.worcestershiremaps.org.uk)

For more on the Shotton Project see: [www.archant.bham.ac.uk/shottonproject/network.htm](http://www.archant.bham.ac.uk/shottonproject/network.htm)

For more on the Unpublished Excavation Reports in the ADS Library see:  
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit/>

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## Researching and documenting the history of archaeology

Does archaeology have good memory of its history? The question becomes all the more relevant once we recognise that this history cannot be confined to a mere internalist account, which would in turn end up as a triumphant but ultimately unsatisfying chronicle of scientific progress. The past which archaeology seeks to uncover and elucidate is too rare and precious a resource for us to ignore or gloss over the processes of its construction—that is to say, the diverse scientific, cultural and ideological contexts in which archaeology has been practiced, deployed and used, since at least the Renaissance onwards, in Europe and beyond. And to get to these crucial issues, the history of archaeology needs to have recourse to all possible sources of memory available: to the vast corpus of scientific publications produced over the past centuries, of course, but also to this broad range of correspondence, diaries, notes, sketches, photos, drafts, minutes, and other such minutiae routinely generated in the course of ongoing archaeological activities, which do not necessarily represent formal, authoritative statements designed for public consumption but nevertheless fully evidence what is it that happens when archaeology is being made. In other words, the memory of archaeology that is sought after here is the one found in the archives of the discipline, preserved but also occluded, secured and at the same time secluded, in boxes, cardboards, drawers and such assortments of containers in innumerable museums, universities, libraries, learned societies and other repositories across Europe. It is to the exploration and valorisation of this memory that the AREA network is dedicated.

Launched in late 1999 as an experimental measure of the European Commission, the AREA network—Archives of European Archaeology—links together a dozen of leading institutions from across Europe (universities, research centres, museums, archaeological services) engaged together in studying the archives and the history of archaeology. In its current phase of activities, as a multiannual cultural cooperation project of the Culture 2000 programme (Directorate General Education and Culture of the European Commission), the AREA network includes the following institutions.

- Department of History, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE)
- Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters, Freiburg University (DE)
- Centro Andaluz de Arqueología Ibérica, Jaén (ES)
- Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, Granada (ES)
- National Archive of Monuments, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens (GR)
- Department of Archaeology, University College Cork (IR)
- Poznan Archaeological Museum, Poznan (PL)
- Department of Archaeology, University of Göteborg (SE)
- Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford (UK)
- The Butrint Foundation (Albania), London / University of East Anglia (UK)

and, as the project leader vis a vis the EC and host of the coordination team,

- Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), Paris (FR)

Over the years of the network's activities, AREA partners have proceeded in broadly parallel and interconnected tracks, involving respectively documentation and research. On the documentation front, AREA partners produce a European wide database of archival fonds and depositories with archival material relevant to the history of archaeology, in the broadest sense of the term. Each partner proceeds in function of its research interests and priorities, in relation to its institutional needs and to those of the archival repositories it documents. The main objective is to make known and accessible these previously ignored archival resources, and notably contribute to the valorisation policies of archives holding institutions. This database is structured following the ISAD (G) norms of archival description, with appropriate modifications and additions of fields related to archaeological and historiographical issues. It is accessible online on the AREA website, and can be queried by

name of archives and repositories, names of creators, places, institutions, free text search, etc. A major overhaul and expansion of the database is being carried out.

***Marshall Smigly-Rydz, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army was one of many distinguished visitors to inspect excavations at the Iron Age fortress of Biskupin in Poland in the 1930's. Image courtesy of Poznan Archaeological Museum, ARENA Project***

Once documented, this archival material serves as a primary source for researching the history of archaeology. Besides demonstrating the crucial role of archaeological archives as historical documents-precisely because, as indicated above, they capture the science 'in action'-AREA partners engage in dedicated thematic research which notably explore the interrelations between the history of archaeology and the formation of cultural and political identities. Some of the AREA projects in this direction include: the history of protohistorical archaeology in 19th and 20th century Spain, between centralism and regionalism; the uses of classical archaeology in the affirmation of Greek independence; the practical and rhetorical roles of Palaeolithic archaeology in cementing Belgian nationhood; German archaeology and expansionism before and during the Third Reich; Polish archaeology in relation to German expansionism; dictatorships and archaeology in Albania; Irish archaeological collections in colonial contexts; long term perspectives on the discovery of the Scandinavian past, etc.

Archival materials have in all these cases brought new evidence and new insights on the various scientific and political dimensions surrounding the production of archaeological knowledge. These research activities have resulted in a range of presentation and publications by AREA partners, and notably in a special section of the journal *Antiquity* (March 2002 cf. <http://intarch.ac.uk/antiquity/histintro.html>).

As a concluding act to its current phase of activities, AREA is organising a major international conference, 'Histories of archaeology. Archives, Ancestors, Practices', to be held in Göteborg, Sweden, on the 17-19 June 2004. Plenary sessions will be dedicated to such topics as 'Sources and methods for the history of archaeology', 'Archaeological practices' and 'Questions of identity'. A publication of the proceedings is planned.

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For more information on the conference see: <http://www.historiesofarchaeology.org>

For more information on the AREA network and its partners see: <http://www.area-archives.org>

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## Access to Romanian Archaeological Archives

The 'Vasile Pârvan' Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest started half a century ago (in 1949 - 1950) the documentation for the Archaeological Repertory of Romania (RAR). It resulted in an important amount of paper cards bound together in files, arranged topographically on regions, districts and localities, according to the administrative organisation of the time. The activity stopped in 1956 due to lack of funding. The paper archive has never been published, although scholars working for territorial archaeological repertories consulted the archive during their preliminary documentation. The project had the ambition to record any mention of archaeological discovery in the known literature back to the 18th century as well as the unpublished field surveys. The result was a rather heterogeneous bunch of information. Despite that, the Archaeological Repertory of Romania has become a myth. The legend of a unique and valuable information content together with the very restricted and selective access to it induced the idea that the archive is a must for any attempt to do an archaeological inventory, in any part of the country.

During the past fifty years, the only intervention upon the archive was done in 1968, when the director of the Institute, the late Professor D.M. Pippidi initiated the up-dating of the location information according to the new administrative organisation of Romania (from 1965), in forty one counties instead of districts and regions. The manuscript cards were typed - with no further checking of the quality and correctness of the content. The regions and districts for each locality or place of discovery were converted into the correspondent counties. Then, silence again, although from time to time the idea of bringing up to date and publishing the repertory came into discussion, with no further action. The cards yellowed, the ink faded, and passing of time made the up-dating and critical interpretation of the archive more and more difficult.

In the meantime, the county museums started to publish county repertories - a valuable undertake, although the methodology, content and illustration quality was sometimes to be blamed. Many of them included information extracted from the RAR archive, either citing it or not (as in the Archaeological Repertory of Cluj county). Only one third of the Romanian territory was covered. For the older ones, published in the 1970s, updating is needed. The future progress in the development of a modern National Archaeological Record cannot be done without including previous undertaking. Being responsible for the National Archaeological Record of Romania, CIMEC - The Institute for Cultural Memory in Bucharest proposed to the management of the Institute of Archaeology to digitise the archive and make it available for further research by publishing in digital format. The same year CIMEC became a partner in the European project ARENA under Culture 2000 Programme (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/arena>). European funding and encouragement were very important for the development of the project.

The project of digitising the RAR archive started in 2001, following a co-operation agreement between the Institute for Cultural Memory and the Institute of Archaeology. It aims at critically extracting the basic information out of the manuscript into a database (location, site type, period, and bibliographic reference), and scanning the originals for digital archiving. A working group proposed the data model. A database application (Access 2000) was designed for the aims of the project. The Institute of Archaeology is responsible for cataloguing, and CIMEC is responsible for the database maintenance, scanning of the original cards, image processing, and inscribing them on CD-ROMs. At least one copy is stored in each location.

***An image from the Arhiva Dimitrie C. Butculescu, part of the Romanian Arhive digitale de arheologie available through the ARENA Project. Image courtesy of CIMEC***

The database will act as a search index, and the user has also the possibility to read the original cards on screen. A team of young researchers of the Institute of Archaeology extract and enter the information into the database, while the equipment, the software application,

the technical assistance and the scanning of cards is provided by CIMEC. The result of this enterprise will be a digital archive with searching facilities, on CD-ROMs, suitable for reference, research and further study, updating and dissemination. An index of the RAR archive is going to be published in a volume. The Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, through the Archaeology Direction, finances the project as part of the National Archaeological Record. At present there are over 5,500 records in the RAR database (5,522 site records, 4,621 localities, 1,769 assemblies, 831 complexes, 6,970 finds, 14,954 bibliographic references) and 3,000 cards are scanned, which represent some 40% of the archive.

The project followed several stages. The first operation was to inventory the archive. Nobody knew before if we have 100,000 or 50,000 pages. After the identification and recording of the localities for each county, we could establish the volume of information: there were 32,000 documents, covering 4,600 localities. A general statistical table allowed for the first time to get an image of the content of the archive, on counties and localities. Two months after the work started, we solved the enigma of the amount of cards and gave identification numbers to each card page, for reference. At CIMEC, the localities and areas of discoveries were identified in the official file of the administrative organisation in Romania (SIRUTA), and unique administrative entity identification codes were provided.

The second operation was to start, in parallel, the scanning of the text archive and the extraction and recording of its basic content, with the purpose of creating an index database. What are the expected results?

- Saving the archive and facilitate access to it in digital format;
- Providing search indexes on location, period, site type;
- Including the information into the National Archaeological Record Database;
- Providing a bibliographic reference index;
- Creating a searchable digital resource with a friendly user interface for searching, browsing, zooming and printing;
- Publishing in digital format.

The project is neither spectacular nor a masterpiece of technology. It rather illustrates what we should do and could do with a low budget in order to save, bring back to the public eye and facilitate contemporary access to a work done long ago, with public money too.

Other documents in the historical archive of the Institute wait for digitisation. Most of them have never been published, are difficult to study, and in a poor state of conservation. We scanned selected text documents, drawings; museum inventories, and surveys information such as:

- Inventories from the mid 19th century of the National Museum of Antiquities;
- Journals of surveys from 19th century - beginning of the 20th century;
- Drawings, paintings, plans of sites and finds;
- Old photos from the late 19th century excavations at Tropaeum Trajani (Adamclisi, Constantza county) and Suceava mediaeval city.

A large selection of documents are available on the Web (<http://archweb.cimec.ro/Digitalarchives/Index.htm>). They belong to the history of Romanian and European archaeology. They are also a source of information for reference and present days research.

Digital archiving is a new field of activity with a great potential. Research and co-operation at a national and international scale is going to improve the methods, the tools, and the standards needed to gain the expected benefits for archaeology in saving, preserving, facilitating access, and publishing the most significant archives.

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For more information on the ARENA Project see: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/arena>

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## Analysis of access statistics

In response to requests from users and depositors, we have recently acquired a piece of software with which we can analyse access statistics. *Sawmill* uses an attractive web interface to display and interrogate the cumbersome log files produced by our web server. The user can choose to view the statistics in any number of ways, clicking on sections of interest to delve deeper into the data or placing filters so that only particular sections of the data are analysed at any one time. We have found that *Sawmill* can effectively answer questions about our web statistics that are not easily worked out from the raw data or quarterly reports that we produce with *Analog*.

### *Web traffic over time statistics produced by Sawmill*

One advantage that *Sawmill* has over *Analog* for analysing statistics is that we can now filter and view our statistics by individual page or directory. As each of our project archives and collections are stored in separate directories within the website, traffic for these directories can be analysed independently. If, for example, we wanted to learn more about users and usage of the Danebury Hillfort project archive, *Sawmill* can create numerous reports relating to this resource - a chart of web traffic over time, a list of the domains/countries users are coming from or the path they took through our website to reach this archive, to name but a few.

*If you are interested in commissioning a monitoring report on data that you have deposited then please contact Catherine Hardman, Collections Development Manager*  
[cs3@york.ac.uk](mailto:cs3@york.ac.uk)

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## New Faces

The last six months have seen several staff changes. In November we wished Jo Clarke well as she left for a year of voluntary work overseas. Jo has been replaced by Marcus Smith and Kieron Niven (pictured above). We also wished farewell to Kate Fernie who returned to English Heritage after her secondments to the PATOIS project and HEIRNET came to an end. New job descriptions mean that Tony Austin is now Systems Manager and William Kilbride is now Assistant Director.

## New Faces

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## Workshops in digital data

*AHDS invites you to workshops on the topic of*

### Digitisation

- London 19th April
- London 20th April
- Glasgow 29th April

The digitisation workshops introduce or re-familiarise delegates with the key issues in creating a digital resource. They offer delegates the opportunity to discuss particular issues about their own projects. Surgery sessions are organised to allow those planning or undertaking a digitisation project to have one-to-one conversations with members of AHDS staff.

For more details on the digitisation workshops, contact Anna Pinch on 0207 928 7991 or visit the website at: <http://ahds.ac.uk/news/events/workshops-spring-2004/>

### Funding Digital Resources

And for those attending the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds, AHDS is hosting a workshop on Monday 12th July on the subject of funding digital resources.

*ADS / AHDS Archaeology, with AHDS Performing Arts, English Heritage and UKOLN invites you to a*

### A Beginner's Guide to Metadata

- Glasgow 19th May
- York 23rd June

The metadata workshops provide a good opportunity to raise questions about metadata, data standards and controlled vocabularies with specialists in a variety of fields. The workshop is aimed at researchers and anyone intending to apply for funding from major grant-giving organisations, and will be of interest to practitioners in any number of cultural heritage agencies.

**Places are limited.** There is a non-refundable fee of £30 which includes lunch. Students can register for £15.

For details of the **Glasgow Workshop** contact Iain Wallace on 0141 330 3810, [i.wallace@pads.ahds.ac.uk](mailto:i.wallace@pads.ahds.ac.uk)

For details of the **York Workshop**, contact Donna Page on 01904 433954, [help@ads.ahds.ac.uk](mailto:help@ads.ahds.ac.uk) or visit the website: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/workshop/metadata04.html>

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