



**I'm particularly interested in emerging theories of Saxon identity. And Catzini's chicken treats.**

# I CAN IZ ARCHAEOLOGIZT?

July 29, 2011    Andy Dufton    Commercial Archaeology, Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Digital Archaeology    Academia, Anthropology, Archaeological sub-disciplines, Archaeology, Arkansas, ARKdb, Brown University, Cultural heritage, Excavation, head, Italy, London, Museology, online discussion, Social Media, TDP, Time Team, UK, Villa Magna

Where were you on the Day of Archaeology, 2011? I've spent my day (so far) moderating posts for the Day of Archaeology and spreading word about the event on social media. I suspect the other members of the organising committee for #dayofarch are stuck with the same predicament. We've been amazed by the response to the day; it's great fun to be involved in something with such a wide breadth of contributions and such international interest.

As much as I like the metablogging aspect of dedicating a post to a day of reading other posts, spending a day overindulging in coffee and chatting online I'm left thinking "So what is there to discuss?" And yet things like today are not that different than how I've spent some of my time in my last 3 years as the head of digital at [L – P : Archaeology](#). The task of collecting and organising data from archaeological projects, excavations or otherwise, and getting that data into a format which is useful to archaeologists and the public is an overwhelming one. I've worked with commercial excavations in London ([Prescot Street](#)); with research projects abroad ([Villa Magna](#)); with community-driven archaeological projects ([Thames Discovery Programme](#)); with international collaborations ([FastiOnline](#)). In all of the above there's been a focus on engaging people with the past, on opening information to a wider audience, and encouraging new voices in the discussion.

I finish up my 6 years at L – P this month, today in fact although courtesy of some unused annual leave I've had my last week off, to begin a programme of (yet further) study at Brown University in the autumn. We've recently finished up a new release (v1.0!) of the ARK open source archaeological database system. If you've not heard about it already, or if you're interested in this much-improved latest release, you can check out [our website](#). The team from Villa Magna are working toward a comprehensive digital publication for the site stratigraphic narrative which, paired with ARK, will help future researchers to use the data from our excavations to ask new questions. The Thames Discovery Programme finishes up a stream of Heritage Lottery funding this September, passing the project on to the local volunteers originally trained by the project. Working with the team at Day of Archaeology, contacts and friends from the last six years, to encourage online discussion and narrative about archaeology serves as a pretty apropos bookend to this digital work.



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Based solely on impressions external to the discipline (and some particularly old-school archaeologists), 'archaeologists' are the people in the trench with mattocks and trowels, the sandal-wearing beardies and the tweed-jacketed academics, occupying a space somewhere between Indiana Jones and Time Team in the imaginations of the public. But the profession covers so much more ground than that, and there are so many other important skills needed to make a successful project or to get the story of archaeology to the public. The characterisations above are no more the only archaeologists than are heart surgeons the only doctors, or robins the only birds. Archaeology as a discipline incorporates aspects of classics and history, anthropology, chemistry, computer science, geography, forensics/medicine... The list is, truly, endless. This variety of interdisciplinary interests results in a variety of interdisciplinary professionals, a variety of interesting jobs and a variety of interesting personalities. It is maintaining and expanding this variety that is most at risk when we talk of the impact of the global recession on the archaeology in education and in practice. Let's hope the content from today's posts helps both to reinforce the importance in protecting and enhancing our unique skillsets and to celebrate the diversity of archaeological practice.