

GAMES – AND POSSIBLY A LITTLE FUN

July 29, 2011 Janet E Davis Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Digital Archaeology, Education, Finds, Museum Archaeology Archaeology, Cultural heritage, digital, digital games, digital technology, education, Janet E Davis, London, long-term management planning tools, Museology, Museums, online resource, Technology_Internet, United Kingdom, wonderful online heritage resources

Today is a day when the paid work that I'm doing is something I cannot tell you much about yet. I can tell you that it involves a museum, and creating and trying out a game using very current digital technology. It will be available to the public soon – if I can work out how get things to display as I want.

I have been using computers for different purposes in cultural heritage since 1986. A computer is a very useful tool in archaeology, possibly more essential than the more familiar trowel and spade in the 21st century. The computer in the photograph on the right was my first work computer. It was 3 years old when I took the photograph, and I used it for 3 years after that. I used it to create spreadsheets to help monitor progress on capital projects relating to the North of England sites in care. I also used it to keep track of information about the sites, write submissions for funding, and to develop long-term management planning tools. All the digital files were in that box under the monitor or on floppy disks.

Today, I have been working mostly in the Cloud (networked digital resources available through the Internet). Part of my work today included communicating digitally with someone in a museum hundreds of miles away who took a photograph and sent it to me within the same morning.

I searched the Web to obtain more information about the creator of the museum object in the photograph than had been available on the museum's database. I was lucky. There was a connection with Scottish architecture, and there is a superb online resource about historical Scottish architects, landscape architects and similar professionals. Having found the additional information I wanted, I re-sized the image to reduce the file size, and uploaded the photograph through a website, adding caption and description.

Such tasks are part of the everyday work that create the wonderful online heritage resources.

It is not the most obviously exciting, Indiana Jones adventuring sort of work. It is, however, really cool. We are developing new ways of enabling more people to learn about and interact with their heritage. Best of all, today is one



The box behind the lamp was my 1st work PC, at English Heritage in Savile Row, London, April 1989. Photo: Janet E Davis.

of the days when I have been working on subversive heritage learning. I want people to play games, have some fun, and not notice that they are learning about their heritage.