INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE, ARCHAEOLOGY
(HEFCE FDTL5)

Phase 1b

DISABLED STUDENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

A report based on a questionnaire survey of, and interviews with, disabled Archaeology students

(May 2006)

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LAYOUT OF THE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the student response to Phase 1 of the 'Inclusive, Accessible, Archaeology' project, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE FDTL 5) for developments in teaching and learning. The project is directed by Professor Roberta Gilchrist of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Reading in partnership with the School of Conservation Sciences at Bournemouth University and the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), and in collaboration with the Research Group for Inclusive Environments (School of Construction Management) at Reading. The project also has the active support of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), Oxford Archaeology and English Heritage.

PROJECT SUMMARY

GOALS

The project aims to address the dual issues of disability and transferable skills in the teaching of archaeological fieldwork. It will:

- Increase awareness of disability issues in archaeology;
- Improve the integration of disability in fieldwork teaching; and
- Improve all students' awareness of their development of transferable skills for the transition to employability through participating in archaeological fieldwork.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

The outcomes will be:

- The integration of disabled students into archaeological fieldwork and related activities according to, and consistent with, the mandatory legal requirements of disability legislation.
- A change of emphasis from 'disability' to 'ability': rather than excluding or categorising individuals, all students will be engaged actively in assessing their own skills. This will be achieved by developing a generic self-assessment tool kit suitable for use by all students being taught fieldwork in archaeology and other fieldwork related subjects.
- Dissemination of the results through published guidelines, websites, workshops and conference presentations carried out in association with the project's professional stakeholders (the Institute of Field Archaeologists, the Council for British Archaeology, English Heritage, and Oxford Archaeology).

PROGRAMME OF WORK

- Phase 1 – Assessment (February – July 2005, 6 months):

  Evaluate through questionnaires the issues surrounding, and current practices relating to, disability and archaeological fieldwork.

- Phase 2 – Characterisation (August – December 2005, 5 months):
  Develop a generic method of assessing physical and psychological abilities of disabled/non-disabled people to participate in archaeological fieldwork training.

- Phase 3 – Controlled Testing (January – June 2006, 6 months):
  Test and refine characterisation of archaeological field activities and environments through real-world tests in controlled laboratory conditions; produce pro-forma of self-assessment tool kit.

- Phase 4 – Field Trials (July – October 2006, 4 months):
  Assess suitability of controlled tests and evaluate generic method of assessment through field trials on archaeological excavations.

- Phase 5a – Evaluation (November 2006 – January 2007, 3 months):
  Refine the project's deliverables.

- Phase 5b – Wider Dissemination (February – April 2007, 3 months):
  Wider dissemination of project results.

- Phase 6 – Continuation After Funding Ends (May 2007 on):
  Integrate awareness of disability into archaeological fieldwork in training, employment, and the development of transferable skills in conjunction with archaeology subject providers and professional bodies.

MODELS OF DISABILITY

Disability has been described and understood through a number of different models which attempt to define the experience of being disabled.

THE MEDICAL MODEL

This considers a disabled person as ‘ill’, a subject for treatment and cure. It does not address the social, economic and environmental experience of a disabled person.

THE CHARITABLE MODEL

This sees a disabled person as a tragic individual. They are an object of pity who need to be cared for and protected from the rigours of everyday life.

THE SOCIAL MODEL

This shifts the emphasis of considering that there is something ‘wrong’ with the disabled person to the view that disabled people are often excluded from participating in everyday activities because of the physical, social, economic and attitudinal ‘barriers’ created by society.

This model is behind the spirit of the recent disability and access legislation (Disability and Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) and forms the basis for the ethos of inclusiveness.

In reality, it is unlikely that it will be possible to provide environments or develop activities where everyone can do everything, and this will certainly be the case with some tasks undertaken in archaeology. People, both disabled and non-disabled, will have different levels of ability to undertake tasks. For some, restrictions in their ability may preclude them from full participation. However, the criteria used to establish whether a person can take part in an activity should always be based on their individual abilities, not simply whether they are a ‘disabled’ or ‘non-disabled’ person.

Adopting the social model also requires us to examine the nature of the activity and determine if it is *how* the activity takes place that precludes involvement, and could the process be altered to facilitate greater inclusion. The fact that it has always been done in a particular way is not the answer, especially if the procedure could be altered so that the

number of people that can be included in the activity would be increased.

To determine the extent to which disabled and non-disabled people can effectively participate in the activities associated with archaeology, it is necessary to determine their individual abilities to undertake the typical tasks that comprise the ‘archaeology experience’. The self-evaluation tool kit that the project is developing will, therefore, be for use by all disabled and non-disabled students. In using it, all students will be able to evaluate their own developing archaeological and transferable skills.

Such self-evaluation by all students will ensure that the opportunity of full participation and inclusion is based on an ‘ability to do’ which is the driving force behind most disability and access legislation.

I METHODOLOGY

METHOD USED

The aim of Phase 1 of the project was to conduct an assessment of the Issues surrounding, and current practices relating to, disability and Archaeological fieldwork. To achieve this it was decided to use questionnaires. This method has various advantages and disadvantages.

ADVANTAGES:

- Cost effectiveness; there are no expenses relating to travel
- Time effectiveness; this also relates to travel and arranging interviews with subjects
- In relation to cost and time, there is the potential to reach a large sample of respondents
- Through ‘closed’ questions, the information gathered is in a controlled and structured format which enables it to be analysed efficiently and in a standardised way, especially quantitative data
- ‘Open’ questions included in a questionnaire allow for the collection of a wider range of qualitative data.

DISADVANTAGES:

- A low return rate is often a problem with questionnaire surveys
- The number of questions that can be asked is limited
- There is no ‘control’ over the answers received and these cannot be easily clarified; also it is not possible to ‘probe’ deeper into particular points that may be raised as in a face-to-face interview
- Not all the questions may be answered by a respondent
- The information recovered may be limited to the amount that a respondent feels like providing in written form.

The decision to conduct a questionnaire survey was taken on the basis of the time and resources available for this phase of the project. A number of strategies were adopted to mitigate the disadvantages of a questionnaire survey. These are described in the following section.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The project's terms of ethical clearance for research, as granted by the Ethics and Research Committee at the University of Reading, stated that disabled students would not be approached directly. This was to ensure that undue pressure was not put on them by members of the project team. Approaches would be made through third parties. In this case, tutors in Archaeology departments were asked to distribute questionnaires amongst the relevant students.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND EVALUATION

DESIGN

Reference was made to the survey conducted by the Geography Discipline Network's Inclusive Curriculum Project (Hall & Healey 2004). This involved a questionnaire survey of disabled undergraduate Geography and Earth Science students.

The questions were designed to recover a certain amount of quantitative data. More 'open' questions were included to recover qualitative data reflecting the experience of disability and archaeological fieldwork.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

A number of strategies were adopted to mitigate the disadvantages of conducting a questionnaire survey (see above).

- The questionnaire was designed to be as short and simple as possible so as to make them easy to complete.
- The recipients' contact details were asked for, as was permission to make follow-up contact.
- When the questionnaires were sent out, they were accompanied by a reply paid envelope.
- The questionnaire was put onto the project's website in a downloadable format. This gave the recipients the choice of returning a questionnaire in digital format.

EVALUATION

The questionnaires were subjected to two forms of evaluation before their format was finalised:

- The questionnaire was handed out to the delegates who attended the official launch of the project at the British Academy in London on 11th March 2005. The delegates attending the launch comprised interested academic and professional archaeologists.
- The questionnaires were subjected to formative evaluation by the project's internal and external evaluators.

Only after the comments received through evaluation had been incorporated into the questionnaires, were they sent out.

CASE STUDIES

To obtain more detailed information on individual experiences, it was decided to collect a number of case studies. These would be based on one-to-one interviews with a member of the project team. If the subject was based in Reading, the interview was conducted face-to-face, but most of the interviews were conducted over the telephone. The students who were invited to participate in an interview were those who had indicated on their returned questionnaires that they were willing to talk further with the project team. A number of disabled professional archaeologists contacted the project team after reading articles about the project, especially in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' publication, *The Archaeologist*. They were also invited to participate in an interview.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

- The quantitative data was entered into a simple ACCESS database which was used to calculate the totals for the different categories.
- The comments provided by the respondents (qualitative data) were typed into a Word document and then imported into a simple Qualitative Data Analysis software package for analysis – Weft QDA (2005), a free download from the Internet. Given the amount of qualitative data to be analysed, it was deemed unnecessary to purchase a more powerful software package.
- The results of the questionnaire survey were compared with data from the Inclusive Curriculum Project (Hall & Healey 2004), as

this was also a survey investigating disability within a discipline with a strong fieldwork element in its teaching programmes.

- All the students, professional volunteers and institutions were guaranteed anonymity and that any report would be written in such a way that they could not be identified. To ensure this, the names of all people quoted in this report have been changed and no institutions are mentioned by name.

II RESULTS OF THE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

A copy of the student questionnaire can be found elsewhere on the project website

THE SAMPLE OF STUDENTS

Questionnaires were returned by 38 students studying in 8 University Archaeology Departments. Four of these Universities are in southern England, three in northern England and one in Scotland.

Q2.1 At what level are you currently studying?

Questionnaires were returned by mainly second and third year students, with a lower number of first years' and two postgraduates (Table 1). This is very similar to the sample in the Geography Discipline Network (GDN) survey.

Table 1 Year of study, compared with the sample in the GDN survey (Hall & Healey 2004, 3)

YEAR OF STUDY	No.	%	GDN No.	GDN %
First	7	18.4%	18	22.8%
Second	14	36.8%	31	39.2%
Third	15	39.5%	29	36.7%
Postgraduate	2	5.3%	1	1.3%

GDN – Geography Discipline Network

Q2.2 Are you studying Archaeology as a single/major, joint or subsidiary subject?

The majority of the sample of disabled students were studying archaeology as a single subject course (Table 2). Although these figures differ from the information provided by the subject providers in response to a questionnaire survey carried out by the project team (Phillips & Gilchrist 2005), a similar trend is evident.

Table 2 Type of study, compared with the sample in the subject providers' questionnaire (Phillips & Gilchrist 2005, 14)

TYPE OF STUDY	No.	%	SP No.	SP %
Single/Major Subject	31	81.6%	1453	63.0%
Joint Subject	6	15.8%	675	29.2%
Subsidiary Subject	1	2.6%	1	7.8%

SP – Subject Providers

Q2.3 Are you a full time or part time student?

The greatest number of students who responded to the questionnaire survey were studying Archaeology full time (Table 3). This is broadly comparable to the data provided to the project team by the subject providers in an earlier questionnaire survey and with the sample in the GDN survey.

Table 3 Mode of study, compared to the samples in the subject providers' questionnaire (Phillips & Gilchrist 2005, 14) and the GDN survey (Hall & Healey 2004, 3)

MODE OF STUDY	No.	%	SP No.	SP %	GDN No.	GDN %
Full Time	33	86.8%	2086	90.4%	75	93.7%
Part Time	5	13.2%	223	9.6%	5	6.3%

GDN – Geography Discipline Network
SP – Subject Providers

Q2.4 What sex are you?

Just under two thirds of the respondents were female and one third male (Table 4). This differs from the sample in the GDN survey where half the students were male and half female.

Table 4 Sex of the respondents, compared to the sample in the GDN survey (Hall & Healey 2004, 3)

SEX	No.	%	GDN No.	GDN %
Male	14	36.8%	40	50.0%
Female	24	63.2%	40	50.0%

GDN – Geography Discipline Network

Q2.5 What was your age at the start of your present course?

Around half the respondents were aged under 20 when they started their course in Archaeology. In most cases, this represent probably consists of students going straight from school to University. The next largest groups in the sample were mature students aged between 21 and 30, and 31 and 40 (Table 5). This is relatively similar to the sample in the GDN survey.

Table 5 Age at the start of present course, compared to the sample in the GDN survey (Hall & Healey 2004)

AGE	No.	%	GDN No.	GDN %
<20	20	52.6%	54	67.5%
21-30	7	18.4%	15	18.7%
31-40	6	15.8%	8	10.0%
40-60	2	5.3%	3	3.8%
>60	3	7.9%	0	0%

GDN – Geography Discipline Network

Q2.6 How would you best describe your disability/impairment?

The range of disabilities represented in the questionnaire sample is similar to those reported by the subject providers and the GDN survey. Although the figures for dyslexia are lower than those reported by the other surveys, the general trends, in terms of the numbers, are similar (Table 6).

Table 6 Disabilities/impairments represented in the sample, compared to the sample in the subject providers' questionnaire (Phillips & Gilchrist 2005, 21) and the GDN survey (Hall & Healey 2004,5)

DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT	No.	%	SP No.	SP %	GDN No.	GDN %
Dyslexia	19	50.0%	178	63.1%	41	54.7%
Hidden Disability	6	15.8%	43	15.2%	14	18.7%
Hearing Impairment	1	2.6%	15	5.3%	1	1.3%
Restricted Mobility	2	5.3%	24	8.5%	3	4.0%
Asperger's	0	0%	3	1.1%	0	0%
Mental Illness	1	2.6%	16	5.7%	3	4.0%
Visual Impairment	1	2.6%	3	1.1%	1	1.3%
Multiple Disabilities	8	21.1%			10	13.3%
Other Disability					2	2.7%
Total	38	100.0%	219	100.0%	75	100.0%

SP – Subject Providers **GDN** – Geography Discipline Network

DISABILITIES/IMPAIRMENTS REPRESENTED

The following tables describe the particular disabilities/impairments under their general headings and record how many times they occur in the sample (Tables 7 – 10). The specific conditions reported are similar to those described by the subject providers (*ibid*, 23-24).

Table 7 Dyslexia and similar conditions

DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT	No.
Dyslexia	24
Dyscalculia	1
Dyspraxia	2

Table 8 Mental illness

DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT	No.
Avoidant Personality Disorder	1
Depression	2

Table 9 Unseen disabilities

DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT	No.
Arthritis	3
Asthma	3
Ataxia	1
Diabetes	1
Epilepsy	2
Heart Condition	2
IBS	1
ME	1
MS	1
Phobia (water)	1
PKU (low protein diet)	1
RSI	1
Thyroid Problems	2

Table 10 Restricted mobility

DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT	No.
Back Pain	1
Fused Elbow	1
Congenital Hip Disorder	1
Lipoma (Back)	1
Muscular Pain (Upper Body)	1
Upper Limb's Disability	1
Whiplash Injury	1
Uses crutches	1

Q2.7 When was your disability/impairment first identified?

The disability/impairment of most of the students had been diagnosed for some time (Table 11). This indicates that most of them had started their course with the full knowledge and experience of their disability/impairment.

Table 11 Diagnosis of disability/impairment

WHEN DIAGNOSED	No.	%
Within the last year	6	15.8%
Between 1 and 5 years ago	13	34.2%
Over 5 years ago	19	50.0%

Q2.8 Are you willing to talk to us in more detail about your experiences?

The vast majority of the students expressed their willingness to talk further with the project team (Table 12).

Table 12 Further contact

ANSWER	No.	%
Yes	34	89.5%
No	4	10.5%

SUMMARY

The sample of respondents answering the questionnaire provides a representative cross-section of students reported as studying Archaeology by the subject providers (*ibid*):

- Type of study
- Mode of study
- Range of disabilities represented.

A majority of the students had lived with their disability/impairment for some time and had started a course in Archaeology with a full knowledge of their condition.

Four other points can be made about the sample of disabled students:

- Most were in their second or third year of study and had experience of archaeological fieldwork training
- Most of the respondents (61%) were female
- Most of the students were under 20 years of age when they started their Archaeology course, the rest were mature students mainly in the 31-40 and 21-30 age brackets.

In most aspects, this questionnaire survey is comparable to the previous survey carried out by the project team, specifically the questionnaires aimed at the subject providers (Phillips & Gilchrist 2005), and, to some extent, the results of the Geography Discipline Network's project (Hall & Healey 2004).

THE EXPERIENCE OF DISABLED STUDENTS

Q1.1 Why did you decide to study Archaeology?

In reply to this question, nearly all the respondents said that they were studying Archaeology because of a personal interest:

> ‘I have always wanted to do it, since I was little.’ (Susan: dyslexia)
>
> ‘It is a subject I have always been interested in.’ (Janet: dyslexia)
>
> ‘Something that has always interested me and the idea of being involved in a dig is really exciting.’ (Jane: dyslexia)
>
> ‘Always had an interest in the subject.’ (Julie: arthritis, phobia, thyroid problems)
>
> ‘I have had a life-long interest in Archaeology, I really love learning about the past and wanted to study it further.’ (Annabelle: dyslexia)
>
> ‘I was fascinated by past societies and how they expressed themselves through material culture.’ (Vicky: visual impairment, ataxia)
>
> ‘Always had an interest in it from childhood.’ (George: dyslexia)
>
> ‘I’ve always been interested in History and Archaeology.’ (Annette: dyslexia)
>
> ‘I have always been interested in it, and I wanted to further this interest and get a degree.’ (Frank: dyscalculia)

There was a close relationship with an interest in studying history:

> ‘I’ve always been interested in history, and after seeing some sites I became interested in Archaeology, and therefore decided to study it at University.’ (Gayle: dyslexia, asthma)
>
> ‘I have always been interested in history, but wanted to know more about civilisations and how the artefacts found contributed to the understanding and the knowledge which was gained from investigating certain sites, thus archaeology was more appropriate.’ (Simone: arthritis, thyroid problems)

> ‘A subject, along with history, that had always interested me.’ (Paul: hearing difficulties)

> ‘I’ve always loved studying history and been interested in archaeology from a young age. As I’ve gotten older I’ve become hungry for more and more knowledge. I know the ancient world knew things that we have no idea about now. Furthermore, my father’s Egyptian and my mother is Scottish thus both come from countries rich in history.’ (Melissa: dyslexia)

> ‘Always been interested in history and archaeology, was the next logical step.’ (Mark: dyslexia, dyspraxia, asthma)

In one case, a student took Archaeology because he was unable to get onto a History course:

> ‘Because I couldn’t get in on straight History.’ (Jamie: dyslexia)

A few respondents had some back ground in archaeology including a family connection, as well as practical and academic experience:

> ‘My mother is an archaeologist and I grew up in the field. I always loved fieldwork and found it physically and mentally enjoyable. So, after 5 years in field archaeology I decided to do my degree when I was 21.’ (Irene: epilepsy)

> ‘I enjoyed the use of hands-on experience that was conducted at my first archaeological dig which I decided to do before applying for a degree.’ (Caryn: dyslexia)

> ‘I did an A-level in it.’ (Linda: dyslexia)

One student seemed to have grasped the multi-disciplinary nature of studying Archaeology and how it fitted in with her own interests, as well as noting the influence of popular archaeology television programmes:

> ‘I am very interested in the past and enjoyed both science and arts subjects at school, so Archaeology combined my interests. I had visited many archaeological sites and watched archaeological TV programmes and find it very interesting.’ (Rachel: ME)

In relation to studying History, Archaeology was seen as a more practical way of pursuing this interest:

> ‘Because I like history but I also like to do more practical things, not just sitting at a desk all day.’ (Carrie: diabetes)
>
> ‘I’ve loved history from an early age and it just ‘evolved’ into a passion for archaeology, especially Medieval. Probably because it’s more hand-on, practical and fun than straight forward history.’ (Nigel: dyslexia, dyspraxia)
>
> ‘In high school I found analysis and interpretation of sources, both historical and literary for History and English respectively, to be one of my primary strengths and most enjoyable work. Archaeology appeared to be a more practical method of extending such work and exploiting such an ability.’ (Martin: PKU, heart condition, muscular pain, Asperger’s, Avoidant Personality Disorder)
>
> ‘I have a strong interest in Mediterranean history and saw that Archaeology allows the study of history and other interests to become more practical and allow someone to be more involved than just reading a text and memorising that information.’ (Alison: fused elbow, lipoma)
>
> ‘I have always liked the material side of history and society and it is a good combination of skills rather than focussing on one.’ (Katherine: dyslexia, hearing difficulties, heart condition)
>
> ‘Because it seemed both practical and interesting. I’ve always found the past interesting, so it made sense to go further and study it.’ (Lewis: dyslexia)
>
> ‘I love the past and enjoy both the physical and social sides to excavation.’ (Samantha: dyslexia)

Some of the respondents were consciously considering their future career when they chose to study Archaeology:

> ‘I am doing joint honours, with Chemistry, in the hope of doing Forensics.’ (Michael: dyslexia, epilepsy)
>
> ‘A subject that I have always been interested in and hope to have a career.’ (David: dyslexia)

Another student referred to the wider range of skills learnt by studying Archaeology, as well as some of the specific aspects of their particular course:

> ‘Learn a range of transferable skills and 70 days paid fieldwork at any archaeological site in the world.’ (Tom: dyslexia)

An interest in Archaeology as a subject in itself was also evident in the responses from the mature students:

> ‘Interest in the field: I did an A/As Level in Archaeology and decided to try for University as a mature student.’ (Stephanie: dyslexia, arthritis, IBS)

> ‘I had been interested in the subject since Grammar School over 40 years ago. I didn’t, then, have the opportunity to go to University.’ (Angie: MS)

> ‘I have had a long term interest in archaeology from an early age, but had no real opportunities to take my interest further until in my 40s.’ (Neville: restricted mobility, crutches)

> ‘I was following a childhood dream of studying Archaeology, a passion from a young age (I’m 38 now).’ (Abigail: RSI, whiplash, back pain, congenital hip disorder)

> ‘As a mature student it has been a life-long interest. After gaining an A level and then doing two years ‘life-long learning’, I had the qualifications to apply and be accepted for a place at University.’ (Joan: dyslexia)

> ‘Initially, left a job in computing which I neither enjoyed or understood (fully) to pursue something that I was interested in’ (Andy: dyslexic)

For one of the mature students studying Archaeology was seen as consciously following a new career path:

> ‘Medically retired with an interest in Anthropology, this led to Archaeology as a way to seek employment.’ (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

Another mature student was advised that studying Archaeology would be beneficial for them after they had been retired early on medical grounds:

> ‘I have had a life-long fascination with archaeology. I had retired from teaching with an ‘ill-health’ stress related pension. Discussions with my doctor and counsellor concluded that studying at University would be a good idea. (Harry: depression/anxiety)

One student said that he had purposely chosen archaeology as a degree because he felt that it related directly to his disability:

> ‘When I was first choosing which subject to study, I was told that archaeology was a dyslexic-friendly subject and I guess that is the reputation it has. This is probably true!’ (Lewis: dyslexia)

SUMMARY

The reasons given by the disabled students who responded to the questionnaire survey can be summarised as follows:

- Personal interest in the subject
- A close relationship with, and growing out of, an interest in history
- Seen as a more practical way of pursuing an interest in History
- Only a few of the respondents had a clear idea of how studying Archaeology fitted in with their future career aspirations
- Similar reasons for studying Archaeology were given by mature students.

Q1.2 What have you found beneficial personally and what has helped you in learning, participating in, and being assessed on archaeological fieldwork? (For example: practical aspects, staff support, special needs support, etc.).

The major benefits that the disabled students have found has been in the practical help, support and the positive attitude and enthusiasm of the staff and support services within the Universities:

> ‘Help from both staff in the School and Special Needs Staff and Mentor Support.’ (Mark: dyslexia, dyspraxia, asthma)
> ‘I have found the staff support very helpful.’ (Amy: dyslexia)

> ‘Enthusiasm from archaeologists and tutors. Being able to manage what I did, and when I did it, according to my physical state on the day and with the co-operation of the Project Leader.’ (Angie: MS)

> ‘All the staff have been very supportive and many have shown considerable kindness. I have been on four fieldwork projects since I started at University. I have no ‘practical’ needs, being able-bodied, but I have recorded my medication on all required forms. Three quarters of fieldwork has been great, one quarter not so good as too much pressure to complete from day one. I

am splitting the third year into two parts. The department has supported this decision.' (Harry: depression/anxiety)

'My disabilities did not affect my fieldwork, but when my report was being written the department was very supportive, granting an extension and general help.' (Michael: dyslexia, epilepsy)

'Staff support is really good in the Archaeology Department; you don't feel you can't approach people to ask for help.' (Jane: dyslexia)

'Staff support has been excellent. Special Needs support has also been excellent.' (Julie: arthritis, phobia, thyroid problems)

'I struggled on for a few years before getting any help. When I finally got help from the University Special Needs Department, they were fantastic in sorting everything out. The Archaeology Department staff have been very accommodating concerning most aspects of my course.' (Simone: arthritis, thyroid problems)

'Support from staff in the field and assessment on more than how well you remember things were especially helpful to me.' (Katherine: dyslexia, hearing difficulties, heart condition)

'Staff support has been really helpful for fieldwork participation.' (Vicky: visual impairment, ataxia)

'Senior members of staff being available for questioning both on and off site.' (Caryn: dyslexia)

'Many of the tutors are good at making themselves available to explain stuff.' (Linda: dyslexia)

Specifically, the help that the students have had has taken the form of help with note-taking, providing equipment and extra time:

'Learning Support has been a great help in my work at University. Just being able to ask help or get someone to write something for me whilst on practical work is a great help.' (Gayle: dyslexia, asthma)

'I have a note-taker, so if I'm having a bad day (health) things are okay. In fieldwork staff support has always been very good, understanding my needs and having a note-taker out and about.' (Stephanie: dyslexia, arthritis, IBS)

> ‘The departmental staff have been very understanding and encouraging with regard to difficulties arising, for example offering assistance with practical assistance problems I may have due to poor motor functions.’ (Martin: PKU, heart condition, muscular pain, Asperger’s, Avoidant Personality Disorder)

> ‘The electronic equipment provided by Access/Local Council, and the use that staff made of it, which allowed me to be treated in a similar manner as other students.’ (Paul: hearing difficulties)

> ‘Extra time and further explanation and clarification when necessary, staff support and help when required.’ (Frank: dyscalculia)

> ‘The patient and understanding members of staff gave me extra time and helped me avoid tasks that could have made my epilepsy active.’ (Irene: epilepsy)

Flexibility in how the practical work was organised and carried out on a day-to-day basis was also important for some respondents:

> ‘There was flexibility in activities and times I could attend the archaeological dig. For the other practical assignments there was an alternative assignment if I missed them and most of the assessment work was not meant to be handed in straight away after being taught about it.’ (Rachel: ME)

> ‘For me, it is essential that I rotate my activities in order to maximise my productivity.’ (Abigail: RSI, whiplash, back pain, congenital hip disorder)

In one case, this flexibility included the active support of their peers; and in another, the respondent specifically referred to help from other students as well as staff:

> ‘When I did take part in fieldwork, I found that not only the staff but the students were helpful in giving support during excavating. For example, I was allowed to take 5 minute breaks if needed and certain aspects of the excavating that I could not manage, other students freely took over when asked by the staff.’ (Alison: fused elbow, lipoma)

> ‘Encouragement from staff and fellow students has helped enormously in fieldwork, particularly with the training excavation.’ (Neville: restricted mobility, crutches)

One-to-one tuition at critical times and the personal communication that this entails was seen as being of great benefit:

> ‘One-to-one tuition whilst in the field was of most benefit to me.’ (Janet: dyslexia)

> ‘Personal tuition from tutor on some excavations, was allowed to specialise in sieving and became a specialist in environmental remains. Could be seen, and felt, to be part of the team.’ (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

> ‘…talking to personal tutors and lecturers about work.’ (Annabelle: dyslexia)

The physical act of doing fieldwork as part of a team and being present on an archaeological dig was seen as effective way of learning in itself for some of the respondents:

> ‘Doing hands-on work and working in groups’ (Carrie: diabetes)

> ‘Personally I find being able to place some kind of emotion or visual picture to learning helps assist my memory. I’m a visual learner so practical participating helps. I also find that I need everything to be written down step by step clearly so I can process the information properly.’ (Melissa: dyslexia)

> ‘Being given the opportunity to learn and teach myself about Archaeology.‘ (Annabelle: dyslexia)

In one case this was related to the on-campus teaching part of the course:

> ‘Being out in the field has allowed me to understand the theory taught in the class.’ (Tom: dyslexia)

There were also an appreciable number of students who found that they had experienced few or no problems with archaeological fieldwork. These were all students with dyslexia and their main concern was with the writing aspects of their courses:

> ‘Field work is fine, I can cope with that.’ (Joan: dyslexic)

> ‘No help has been sought, asked for or required for fieldwork. In future I may tape what is lectured on site, but this would not have helped when notebooks were handed out on the coach!’ (Andy: dyslexic)

> ‘As I am only mildly dyslexic, it didn’t really affect my fieldwork abilities. However, doing essays and dissertation I needed English support.’ (Susan: dyslexia)
>
> ‘Being dyslexic hasn’t had a massive effect on my practical fieldwork. In the assessment area I obviously state I’m dyslexic on any written work we have to do so they take that into account. Apart from this there is not much else.’ (Nigel: dyslexia, dyspraxia)
>
> ‘The hardest part has been the reading. The trouble with archaeological literature is that it is often rather dull! Working out where things were in the library was also hard at first. Consideration for my essays has been really important, not marking me too harshly on spelling and grammar. Without a doubt, my strongest area in terms of archaeology is when I’m out in the field. One of the troubles I find is the massive amounts of reading I’m expected to do. Although this University prides itself on the amount of fieldwork they make you do, I do not feel this is taken into account enough when it comes to my final mark, and I feel this is my strongest area.’ (Lewis: dyslexia)
>
> ‘I learn best from practical demonstrations, asking questions and learning as I go, rather than classroom descriptions/lessons and writing my own notes.’ (Samantha: dyslexia)

For a couple of students, participating in fieldwork was actually seen as an aid in coping with their condition:

> ‘Having to keep accurate notes has helped organise my thoughts.’ (Tom: dyslexia)
>
> ‘As I left school, due to my epilepsy, fieldwork was relaxing and occupied me in a practical way.’ (Irene: epilepsy)

SUMMARY

In response to this question, the students identified a number of aspects that they felt had been of benefit to them whilst participating in archaeological fieldwork training:

- The actual practical help and support provided by staff and the University support services, this included help with note-taking, providing equipment and the provision of extra time
- The positive and enthusiastic attitudes of staff members
- Flexibility in the day-to-day organisation of work

- Peer support from other students
- One-to-one tuition at critical junctures
- Participating in an excavation was seen as a beneficial way of learning for some students and was related to on-campus teaching by one respondent
- The respondents who had experienced few problems with fieldwork tended to be students with dyslexia, their main concerns were about written work
- In one case, participation in archaeological fieldwork had helped a student with the particular difficulties of their disability/impairment.

Q1.3 What have you found difficult personally and what has hindered you in learning, participating in, and being assessed on archaeological fieldwork? (For example: practical aspects, staff support, special needs support, etc.).

Where individual respondents found difficulty was in some of the practical aspects of archaeological fieldwork. The specific problems were directly related to particular disability/impairments. In many cases this tended to be the physical demands of the work:

> 'I cannot sustain a repetitive activity for many hours/days at a time. This causes undue pain and decreases productivity.' (Abigail: RSI, whiplash, back pain, congenital hip disorder)
>
> 'Personally, difficulties I have found within fieldwork have been physical issues such as leaning over to long digging causing back pain, as well as not having enough body strength to dig at a more efficient rate in comparison to others and in carrying buckets to and from the sifting areas.' (Alison: fused elbow, lipoma)
>
> 'This year concentration and stamina have been difficult; both of these have hindered learning a lot. Pain makes it difficult to participate in fieldwork, but not impossible.' (Julie: arthritis, phobia, thyroid problems)
>
> 'All aspects of field work have required more time, concentration, etc. from me and this has been difficult.' (Vicky: visual impairment, ataxia)
>
> 'Difficulties and hindrances are down to my own general health and sense of well being, pain can be a drain. I have developed my own way of negotiating around the training excavation and will tackle most jobs on the site.' (Neville: restricted mobility, crutches)

The environmental conditions of excavation were cited as an area of difficulty by a couple of the students:

> ‘Physical aspects of the course can be very challenging, with work I can do even being hampered by outside influences. For example, field trips can involve difficult climbs to and from sites, and weather conditions can hinder my stamina and attentiveness. Similarly, the meat of excavation and practising field work suffers, as does my attendance, due to the effects of weather and lack of strength and stamina.’ (Martin: PKU, heart condition, muscular pain, Asperger’s, Avoidant Personality Disorder)

> ‘I am asthmatic and, if I have a chest infection, the dust on site can make it worse.’ (Angie: dyslexia, asthma)

The respondents with dyslexia and similar conditions referred to aspects that are directly related to their personal difficulties:

> ‘In practical work I feel everything has to be spelt correctly, so I feel better if someone helps write things up such as descriptions of finds. I also need to be shown something more than once before I remember how to do it.‘ (Gayle: dyslexia, asthma)

> ‘Practical and mathematical aspects of fieldwork’ (Frank: dyscalculia)

> ‘The exam we took in [the field project] on the fieldwork that was being done was difficult for me. Even though I know what I’m doing practically, I find it difficult to express this knowledge on paper.’ (Katherine: dyslexia, hearing difficulties, heart condition)

> ‘Support when writing out context sheets, I found them very confusing and hard to cope with.’ (Katherine: dyslexia)

> ‘Filling in context sheets is always an issue as I worry about spelling.’ (Tom: dyslexia)

> ‘I forget details easily if I am not doing something; such as, if I have not surveyed for a while I will get confused over back and fore sights and the calculations needed. It will take a lot of revision and people explaining things over and over until I remember and understand again.’ (Samantha: dyslexia)

Despite identifying problems, some students had not found these insurmountable:

> ‘No problems just might require greater explanation in some cases to comprehend what is being detailed.’ (Andy: dyslexia)

> ‘The only thing which could be difficult on practical fieldwork would, for me, be the filling out of context sheets or other documentation. But everybody is understanding generally and if you don’t understand something they’ll explain it, and if you spell something wrong it really doesn’t matter much.’ (Nigel: dyslexia, dyspraxia)

> ‘Very little difficulties with staff, mainly in communicating with other students (ie. voice level).’ (Paul: hearing difficulties)

Some respondents reported that they had experienced no problems in participating in fieldwork. Interestingly, a number of disabilities/ impairments are represented in these comments:

> ‘None, everything has been very good so far.’ (Stephanie: dyslexia, arthritis, IBS)

> ‘No problems with learning and participating.’ (Angie: MS)

> ‘Nothing really, the support I have received from the University has been superb.’ (Harry: depression/anxiety)

> ‘I do not require outside help for the most part, so have not had any problems.’ (Michael: dyslexia, epilepsy)

On only a couple of occasions were references made to the way sites were being run:

> ‘Some Health and Safety issues on site. I felt the standards were unacceptable for me and made me feel uncomfortable.’ (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

> ‘There is no provision, or guidelines, on how to accommodate epileptics in academic and developer-funded archaeology, apart from general first aid knowledge.’ (Irene: epilepsy)

A couple of the students had experienced a number of difficulties. These had become particularly distressing as they had built up from an initial problem which had not been addressed and, as things progressed, the situation had become worse:

> ‘I found it hard participating in the heavy work involved in the archaeological dig, but was usually given other things to do (eg.

metal detecting, trowelling, finds processing). I missed one of the fieldtrips and two of the practicals due to ill health- although I was given alternative assignments – I missed out on the information ie. the talks about different sites etc.' (Rachel: ME)

'Some members of the Archaeology Department staff have insisted that, even though I have a disability, that I must do more fieldwork in the field (which I have tried to do but have been sent home from the excavation as I was unable to carry out the heavy manual labour required on excavation). This has cost me personally to suffer a loss of confidence and self-worth, as while out in the field other excavators, supervisors and the site director are constantly having to try to find jobs for me to do and this has caused tension as certain staff have thought I was faking my pain and looking for a 'cushy job'. This in turn will affect the personal report the site director does on my contributions to the excavation which is given to my department, and I doubt it will be a good one. The Special Needs Department did take some time to organise getting equipment for me, but quickly arranged for support during exams and loan equipment whilst waiting for my own equipment. Before this I had built up a semester and a half's coursework which I couldn't complete. I am still trying to finish it over the summer as well as fit in fieldwork and operations.' (Simone: arthritis, thyroid problems)

A lack of understanding of the effects and needs of particular disabilities/impairments was cited as a major problem. This included a lack of understanding by other students, as well as staff. Some of the students felt that they were being made to look foolish because of ignorance about their condition. This was especially the case where the disability is not particularly 'visible':

'Lack of understanding from staff and others.' (Frank: dyscalculia)

'I've only recently been assessed as dyslexic so for years I have tried vigorously to hide my weakness for fear of being seen as stupid. I suppose there is a certain stigma attached where people naturally assume that you are not that bright when they know, ignorance of learning difficulties is a problem. I suppose when I did try to explain to teachers, because I showed a reasonable amount of intelligence, they put it down as an excuse for laziness. I personally don't know how to manage my problem.' (Melissa: dyslexia)

'I have a lot of problems with mathematics and those sorts of things! I worry that it may make it difficult to participate in digs. I'm

> also quite poor at remembering instructions. I start listening, but things get muddled in the end! I suppose I just need to ask again, but you do feel rather intimidated and stupid continually asking to be reminded of things!' (Jane: dyslexia)
>
> 'People teaching me to draw plans etc. were not very patient when I needed them to explain the process more than once due to my dyslexia. People who train archaeology (sic) need to be made aware of some of the possible difficulties that dyslexic students face and spend more time with them, ideally in a one-to-one situation.' (Janet: dyslexia)
>
> 'People expecting you to know more than you actually do.' (Linda: dyslexia)

This lack of understanding included the assessment of on-campus work:

> 'The occasional cruel coursework marker who doesn't take learning and communication difficulties into consideration.' (Caryn: dyslexia)

For one student the label 'disability' was a problem, as they did not encounter any difficulties with the actual fieldwork:

> 'On the dig that I was recently on, there was a misconception that when people say they are disabled or have 'disabilities' they are still treated like they have a plague or will break if they do any work. My conditions are hidden to most people, but I had to disclose for safety reasons (which I understand), but I am stable and do not require special treatment. This fact was hard to get across and almost makes me wish I had not told the site director. I am sure he was only looking out for me, but it was most annoying and may have offended other people.' (Michael: dyslexia, epilepsy)

In one case a lack of understanding was a problem from the student's point of view because the situation had not been properly explained to them:

> 'Sometimes no clear definition of my role or how I was being assessed. When there were difficulties, I sometimes felt undervalued or misunderstood.' (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

Apart from a lack of understanding, one student felt intimidated by one particular aspect of the work:

> ‘Being made to talk in front of people when I don’t feel comfortable.‘ (Annette: dyslexia)

However, it can be argued that the activity was part of the training on this particular excavation which was on a public site. Indeed, giving site tours to members of the public was part of the students’ assessment on this dig. It would have to be decided whether the dislike of public speaking was a personal matter, or related to a particular disability/ impairment; if the latter, then an alternative assessment might have been appropriate, but not in the former case.

One mature student summed up their position in relation to fieldwork training and assessment most succinctly:

> ‘Assessment: physical frailty and *anno domini*.’ (Angie: MS)

SUMMARY

The major problems encountered by the respondents can be summarised as follows:

- An individual difficulty can often relate to the nature of a specific disability, this may not just be the physical demands of fieldwork, but also other aspects such as environmental factors and written records
- There was felt to be a lack of understanding of some students’ needs, especially where the disability/impairment was not particularly ‘visible’; some respondents had thought they had been made to look/feel foolish because of this
- One respondent felt that they had not been able to understand what was expected of them because this had not been explained properly
- There is evidence of students overcoming particular barriers
- Some respondents with a variety of disabilities/impairments reported that they had experienced none or very few problems.

Q1.4 Have you ever consulted one of the University support services (eg disability adviser, counsellor, Students' Union, student services) about issues affecting the teaching, learning and assessment of archaeological fieldwork? If yes, please state which support service and briefly describe your experiences.

Half the respondents reported that they had consulted the support services within their particular institution (Table 12).

Table 12 Number of disabled students consulting University support services

ANSWER	No.	%
Yes	19	50.0%
No	19	50.0%

The support services being consulted were the specialist support provided within the individual Universities. These included Learning Support, Disability and Counselling Services, and Special Needs Services.

Most of the help and advice that had been received related to on-campus learning. This was especially the case for students with dyslexia. Another aspect that was revealed by the responses to this question was the way in which the support services and the Archaeology departments often work together when considering the needs of individual students. This was noted in the questionnaire survey of subject providers and disability support services (*ibid*):

> 'Learning Support – they have helped with essays and with planning my work.' (Gayle: dyslexia, asthma)
>
> 'Disability Centre – help with maths, exam revision and writing skills.' (Joan: dyslexia)
>
> 'The Disability Resource Centre has helped in facilitating my organisational and written work. Regular contact (1 hour/week) helps focus on particular topics which I will utilise outside of this degree program.' (Andy: dyslexia)
>
> 'I have consulted both the University disabled student support service and the IT support service, both of which liaised to provide a laptop and appropriate software. Also the disabled student support service helped coordinate with the Departments I was learning from, providing effective support for teaching and

exam arrangements.' (Martin: PKU, heart Condition, muscular pain, Asperger's, Avoidant Personality Disorder)

'The University Special Needs Service, my disability advisor was brilliant. She organised for my outstanding coursework to be re-arranged in consultation with the department's own Disability Officer, and organised scribe support for exams; arranged for recordings of lectures to be allowed and handouts given; arranged loan equipment until my own equipment arrived, so I could record lectures and continue to do my coursework.' (Simone: arthritis, thyroid problems)

'I went to the student support service on campus where they told me how to structure essays more effectively, which helped in exams.' (Katherine: dyslexia, hearing difficulties, heart condition)

'Disability advisor – they were very supportive of my situation. Had to justify extensions to essays every time, would have preferred one individual form to cover this.' (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

'Asked Disability Advisor about essays and got a brilliant response. Via email (written source) I was given help and info about structure and research techniques which I found really useful and helpful.' (Annabelle: dyslexia)

'I was given help with essay writing at the University Dyslexia Centre.' (Caryn: dyslexia)

Generally, the students felt that they had received very good help and advice from the support services:

'University Service for Students with Disabilities, I found them very supportive and helpful.' (Abigail: RSI, whiplash, back pain, congenital hip disorder)

'The best help I've ever had, the University is very good.' (Joan: dyslexia)

'Counsellor and Student Disability Advisor, both very good advice, easily available and very useful, easy to contact and good availability after.' (Frank: dyscalculia)

> ‘Generally, the University has been brilliant in its support for me.’ (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

Only a couple of students had experienced problems with their respective support services. In one case, this was in knowing what help was available; in the other, the problems seemed to be more serious:

> ‘Special Needs Librarian – extremely high level of support, but had to find it myself. Have an issue with publicity of services.’ (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

> ‘I was given no help and had to arrange my own study tutor to help me with my work. The student services staff in general were also very unhelpful when I went to them for help.’ (Janet: dyslexia)

One student felt that his dealings with the support services were inconclusive and he found his own way of coping:

> ‘Inconclusive meeting with the disability officer, I really depend on my own devices.’ (Neville: restricted mobility, crutches)

Very few of the respondents seem to have contacted their support services in relation to actual or possible problems with archaeological fieldwork:

> ‘My extreme clumsiness was worrying me before I went to [the field project] so I went to discuss techniques to minimise damage to myself and the archaeology.’ (Katherine: dyslexia, hearing difficulties, heart condition)

> ‘No problems in fieldwork.’ (Andy: dyslexia)

SUMMARY

- Just over half the respondents had sought the help and advice of their institutions’ support services
- The advice being sought and given was mostly related to on-campus teaching issues
- Very few students were seeking help with actual or possible problems with participating in archaeological fieldwork training
- Most of the students felt happy with the help/advice they had received; only a small number had cause for complaint.

Q3.3 Is there any other information relating to your experiences as an archaeology student that you may think may be of interest to the project?

This question, although not answered by all the respondents, gave the students a chance to provide more details on their individual experiences and to express some of their own opinions.

The experience of archaeological fieldwork training for several of the respondents had been extremely positive. These came out of a combination of the help they had received, approaching things with a positive attitude and by making the most of the opportunities they were presented with:

> ‘My experiences at the University have been superb. I work hard at my studies because I enjoy the subject and find that the courses are all very well taught indeed. The lecturers are always supportive, open to discussions and support personal needs. In my second year I had a huge pre-Christmas work load and one lecturer was very supportive in organising/granting extensions for work deadlines. They were not needed in the long run, but it was a useful ‘safety net’ and the lecturer always asked how I was coping. I have achieved good grades over the last two years and, despite being quite old; I would like to continue my studies at Masters level if possible.’ (Harry: depression, anxiety)

> ‘[The University] is excellent in their disability support. We have a student on our Student Archaeology Society to represent the views and needs of all disabled students, and to offer advice or point out where we need to go for help. [The University] also offers free dyslexic tests, and the standard help with exams and essays.’ (Nigel: dyslexia, dyspraxia)

> ‘I took every opportunity to be involved and have had a great experience. On my first excavation I was allowed to stay on for extra time. Have done environmental work, trowelling and other jobs including dendrochronology and the tree recovery team (submerged forests). Have a wide range of experience through the University as a student. I need to work at my own pace, difficulties if I had to work at commercial rate, but I was able to specialise. I have been encouraged by complimentary comments from academics and professionals and fantastic support from people on excavations. Will probably do one module a term and do the third year over three years because of my problems with reading. It has helped me rebuild my life [after the accident], a

> very positive experience.' (Simon: dyslexia, arthritis, asthma, upper limbs disability, depression)

One respondent acknowledged the effective procedures that their department had put in place with regards to on-campus teaching and disability, but was concerned about how they handled fieldwork training:

> 'On the whole the Archaeology Department are very good when considering medical conditions at the academic level. However, I feel more work is needed when it comes to including students with disabilities in the area of fieldwork.' (Julie: arthritis, phobia, thyroid problems)

One student with dyslexia commented that the greatest problems they had experienced had been with aspects of the on-campus teaching:

> 'When studying at the field school I was not recognised as dyslexic, so I'm not sure what extra guidelines and support I would have gained. I found the Library hard to cope with, as many of the books I needed were always on Short Loan which is 4 hours or overnight, which was not enough time for me to read and understand the text.' (Annette: dyslexia)

Despite the evidence for University support services and Archaeology departments working closely together when considering individual students (Phillips & Gilchrist 2005 and Question 1.4 above); one respondent felt that this was not the case in their institution:

> 'The Disability Representative in the Department should be provided with more information about the Disability Service within the University (an internal communication issue). I also feel that staff should be kept well-informed about the Disability Discrimination Act and its specific implications for students.' (Abigail: RSI, whiplash, back pain, congenital hip disorder)

The problems of not fully understanding an individual's specific needs which was highlighted in the responses to Question 1.3 (above) were also mentioned by one student. They felt that this was due to a lack of effective communication between the relevant staff and in the initial induction process. They also emphasised the need for flexibility when dealing with an individual student:

> 'I think that the staff should be more informed about individual students' 'disabilities'. The system should be less bureaucratic so that there is understanding of why/what students are able/not able to do. There should be one person who you need to inform,

> not lots of people for each aspect of the course. Greater flexibility and understanding of students' conditions would improve the teaching of Archaeology to more students. Clear information should be given to students when they first arrive about who they should speak to within their department about the situation.' (Rachel: ME)

Another respondent related how they purposefully reviewed each situation they found themselves in then discussed it with their tutor. They considered that effective communication by themselves about their condition and needs led to a greater understanding by the staff of what was required:

> 'I have always made a point, whether on a dig or during study, of letting the Tutor/Leader know if I am finding something difficult on a particular day, or if I predict that some activity requiring particular skills (ie. penmanship and drawing in my case) may be challenging. I continue to believe this is the best way to manage my programmes and MS.' (Angie: MS)

The necessity of dealing with each student on an individual basis can be seen in the following comments from one respondent:

> 'I object to diabetes being classed as a disability. I have been diabetic since I was 2½ years old and it has never 'disabled' or 'impaired' me.' (Carrie: diabetes)

In this particular instance, the individual did not see themselves as 'disabled' or 'impaired', as their condition had never affected what they had wanted to do in life. However, the project team spoke to one student who said that her boyfriend was diabetic and that he did consider himself 'disabled'. This was because he had not been able to join the army or the police because of his diabetes.

Finally, two of the students offered advice based on their experiences. One was directed to other disabled students and emphasised making the most of opportunities. The second piece of advice was for the project team in formulating any guidelines:

> 'Have faith in yourself that you can do the course. Listen to what people tell you and watch what people are doing. Have the courage to ask questions.' (Joan: dyslexia)

> 'In the main, disabled people dislike being 'nannied'. Please do not over-regulate, this always achieves the opposite of what is intended, particularly where the regulation is introduced with the

best of motives. One only has to look at the school trips/risk analysis industry to observe the pitfalls of such an approach.' (Angie: MS)

On the student side it is up to the individual to make the most of the opportunities available to them to get the most out of the course they are doing in Higher Education. At the same time, the subject providers should not go to an extreme and over-compensate in the case of a student who has particular needs. This advice can apply to all students, not just those who are disabled. It is in concentrating on the needs of all students as individuals, and through the input of the students themselves into their courses, that inclusiveness can be achieved.

SUMMARY

In answer to this general question, the respondents emphasised some aspects that had already been referred to in the previous questions, but also raised other points:

- The need for understanding and flexibility in relation to student needs
- Students need to be considered on an individual basis
- Although many Archaeology departments and disability support services work closely together in the same institution, this is not always the case
- There are indications that, although on-campus teaching and disability has been tackled successfully in many cases, the teaching of fieldwork needs to be considered in greater depth
- Where on-campus teaching problems have occurred, this tends to be related to students with dyslexia and similar conditions
- Advice is given which applies to all students – the necessity for students to make the most of the opportunities available and that the subject providers should not over-compensate in the case of students with specific needs
- Despite many disabled students experiencing problems, several have had very positive experiences of archaeological fieldwork training.

III CASE STUDIES

The full transcripts of the interviews discussed in this section of the report can be found elsewhere on the project website.

INTRODUCTION

The case studies in this report were collected through interviews with disabled archaeology students and professional archaeologists. Some of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the others over the telephone. The nature of the interviews was ‘open’, in that the interviewees were encouraged to describe their experiences in their own way, with the interviewer only asking for clarification or for more information on particular points of interest. The interviewer used a list of guidelines. These were not set questions, but more an aid to ensure that the major points were covered in the interview. These guidelines are listed in Table 13.

Table 13 Interview guidelines

Background to self and disability?
Can you describe the extent to which your disability affects your functional ability, such as day-to-day activities?
Could you tell me about the archaeological fieldwork that you have been involved in during your time as a student?
In your personal experience, what would you describe as the most positive aspects of doing archaeological fieldwork? For example: enjoyment (including social aspects), learning, achievements, working as part of a team, overcoming obstacles.
What difficulties have you experienced in doing archaeological fieldwork? For example: enjoyment (including social aspects), learning, assessment, working as part of a team, adjustments, failures.
Do you want to pursue a career in Archaeology?
In relation to archaeological fieldwork, do you have any regrets about doing Archaeology as a degree?
Are there any other things that you would like to tell me about your experience as a student and of doing archaeological fieldwork?

STUDENTS

1. Jane - Dyslexia

Jane appeared to be perfectly self-aware with regards to her dyslexia. This was mostly in relation to her poor organisational abilities, a different perception of time-scale and a difficulty with numbers. However, she does also recognise that she thinks visually and spatially. She enjoys archaeological fieldwork and has had only minimal problems. These she relates directly to her dyslexia, such as difficulties with numbers and frustration at taking longer to do things. This had caused her some distress at times:

> ‘Because it can take me a little longer to do things, that can be quite frustrating. Everybody else gets on with it and I am still standing there. I understand what I am meant to be doing, but not really. I feel stupid, but I know that I am not stupid, and other people also know that I am not stupid. I do find it quite intimidating when everyone rushes off doing things. It might only be one little thing that has not clicked with me. I do not always feel comfortable.’

Although she does not say it directly, the other people probably do not know, or even understand, about her condition and how it affects her. Another interesting comment that she makes is that she gets extra time in exams, but not for anything else such as fieldwork.

2. Paul – Hearing Impairment

Paul is a mature student who prides himself on his ‘life skills’ and feels that he copes well with his hearing difficulties, especially as he has been provided with a very good hearing aid. He does not consider himself to be an ‘average deaf student’. His biggest problem is with hearing peripheral sounds. The few problems he has had have been mainly with some of the on-campus teaching situations and site talks. He feels there have been few difficulties with actual fieldwork and did not have to ask for any special treatment, he relied on the technology that had been provided for him. Although he would have been happy to accept help if it was necessary, he recognised that different people would react in different ways to that:

> ‘Many people might be embarrassed by getting special treatment, I have got used to it. It comes with time and experience. It would probably be different for a non-mature student. Different reactions from different people depending on the length of time they have been deaf.’

3. Simon – Dyslexia, Arthritis, Upper Limbs Disability, Mental Health Difficulties

Simon was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident several years ago and has not worked since because of medical retirement and regular hospitalisation. To get himself 'out of an armchair', he decided to do a part-time course in Archaeology and hopes to eventually get a job. However, he feels he may be disadvantaged because of his disability:

> 'I am still constantly looking for a job, but it is difficult in my position. It is a case of finding a path where it is beneficial to me and to others. It has been very frustrating and it can be a cause of depression at times. Discrimination does happen, I know when I am up against able-bodied people I do feel that I am handicapped.'

He has had a wide experience of archaeological fieldwork, although he recognises his limits in some of the field techniques, 'With my physical limitations, two weeks digging was as much as I could cope with'. Where Simon feels that he has succeeded is in specialising in environmental sampling and sieving, an activity that he feels both physically and mentally capable of doing. By finding himself a 'niche', he eventually hopes to get a job in archaeology.

He feels that his greatest help has come through the encouragement and understanding he has received from Site Directors and established specialists. He was allowed to work at his own pace, develop his skills and fulfil his potential. He has also taken the opportunities that have come his way. There have been difficulties with fieldwork. Some of these he attributes to his own physical and mental limitations, but others relate to his interaction with other people. These seem to have revolved around a lack of knowledge about Simon and his condition. This led to misunderstandings and some confrontational incidents and also involved a breakdown in communication. Misunderstandings and problems of communication affect anybody working on an archaeological excavation, but in Simon's case the consequences were probably more deeply felt.

Simon's experience of off-site activities has also been mixed. He recognises the importance of the social life to a training excavation and has been involved in this. Where there have been problems he attributes this to his own mental state.

Despite having experienced problems on fieldwork, Simon does feel that taking up archaeology has been one of the most important

decisions that he has taken in that he is able to make a contribution that is valued by other people:

> ‘I feel that I am somebody now and can make a contribution. I have been made to feel a valued member of a team. I can put my head up and say I am an Archaeologist. I am somebody, I am not a disabled person sat in an armchair. I am an Archaeologist, I have a speciality and I am working towards a job. People respect what I do.’

4. Annette - Dyslexia

Annette was not diagnosed with dyslexia until her final year at University. She had noticed that she was forgetful and slow at reading and writing, as well as having organisational problems. Finding out that she was dyslexic came as a relief:

> ‘Once I had been diagnosed I found it a lot easier because, in my head, I could cope with it more. I got the extra time in exams and in my essays things were discounted like spelling and grammar.’

Her experience of fieldwork has been very positive and she experienced very few problems. She recognised that she did have difficulties filling in context sheets in that this seemed to take a long time. However, she did not appear unduly distressed by this. There had been few problems with planning, but she had only participated in this activity a couple of times. Her greatest difficulties had been with on-campus activities, such as using the library.

5. Neville – Restricted Mobility

Neville was badly injured in a motorcycle accident, uses crutches and is often in pain. He takes a very positive attitude towards his condition and refuses to let it restrict him, ‘I do not like the disabled ‘sticker’, it is stigmatic. Once you accept that you are disabled, you become disabled.’ He is a very experienced fieldworker and has worked out ways for himself by which he can participate. This includes lying down to excavate, as he is unable to kneel, and removing spoil in a bucket because he cannot push a wheelbarrow. His attitude to fieldwork includes the feeling of making a contribution and that it provides a ‘target’ to aim for.

Having the experience of fieldwork he has come to know what his own personal limits are. This is balanced by letting other people know what his own abilities are so that they can understand:

> ‘If you have disabilities, all you have to do is let people be aware of what they are and what you are capable of. Allowances can be made for things; it is good the way it works.’

An example of this was at the training excavation where he discussed his abilities with the Site Director.

He has found the greatest help has come from the encouragement and support of the University staff and his peers. He has had very little contact with disability support services. This may be part of his attitude towards ‘disability’, seeing these services as there for the support of other people, especially dyslexic students:

> ‘I do not really know what the Disability Office could have done for me. They are employed for the seriously physically disabled and the dyslexics. Helping the dyslexic students is more important because of all the studying. I have never been to see the Students’ Union for help and I have not really explored Student Services. Counsellors, that is for people who classify themselves as disabled and need real help.’

6. Darren – Dyslexia

Darren has extensive experience of fieldwork as a professional archaeologist and is now currently studying for a PhD. His greatest difficulties have been with writing reports, completing context sheets and doing the site matrix. He has had help with putting reports together, but has had to adapt to field conditions. His way around the difficulty has been to get used the context recording system in use and, as he is a supervisor, delegate particular jobs. This shows an awareness of his particular abilities and limitations. However, rather than seeing his dyslexia as an obstacle to participating in archaeological fieldwork, he considers it an advantage:

> ‘In excavating I can see stuff that nobody else can; like differences in the soil stratigraphy and features, more than anyone else I know. It is almost second nature to me. I find it hard to believe that other people cannot see the same things. With lots of field experience they can, but it seems to me that they have to learn it much more. I think that being dyslexic has meant my spatial awareness skills and my abilities to make connections between things are much increased.’

7. Nigel – Dyslexia, Dyspraxia

Nigel has experienced what he feels to be extremely good support from his department when he started having problems. After his diagnosis he found the staff very aware of the issues involved with dyslexia and supportive:

> ‘The staff are very clued-up about dyslexia and there does not appear to be any stigma attached to it. The same on fieldwork, they are not bothered if you are dyslexic, everyone is equal.’

His only problems on fieldwork have been with completing context sheets which he sometimes takes several attempts to complete. He emphasises the social side of fieldwork. It is through this that he has met other dyslexic students doing archaeology, as well a site supervisor. He has found this interaction encouraging. His main concern is that some students classified as dyslexic may be getting an unfair advantage over their peers:

> ‘On essays we just put that we are dyslexic and it is taken into consideration. I you are only mildly dyslexic you could be getting an unfair advantage. It affects the extra time in exams as well. It would be much fairer if they graded it by severity.’

8. Harry – Depression/Anxiety

Several years after a breakdown, Harry was advised to take up Archaeology almost as a form of therapy: ‘It has probably been the main-stay of my life, one of the most important decisions I have ever made, a fantastic experience.’

He has found the staff in his department extremely supportive, especially having essay extensions in place as a ‘safety net’. This support appears to be due to the fact that they know the details of his condition and the medication that he needs to take. There has also been a degree of flexibility in that he has been allowed to change to part-time for his final year. He seems to have had very few problems with fieldwork. Whilst away on one overseas excavation his mother fell ill. The support and consideration that he received from the Site Director is what would be extended to any student in that situation. His only other problems have been relating to younger students. Similarly, this can be a problem experienced by any mature student.

9. Mark – Dyslexia, Irea's Syndrome, Asthma, Back Injury

At his first University Mark started by studying Earth Sciences. By the beginning of his second year he was having serious problems with his course. He puts this down to the lack of support and understanding about his condition by the staff and this had led to severe depression. He decided to leave and applied to another University to study archaeology. At this institution there was a policy of supporting disabled students and he found that he was able to cope with his course now that he was provided with help and an understanding of his condition.

Mark has enjoyed his experience of fieldwork, but there have been difficulties to overcome. He finds it difficult to working with a large group, he was learning more in smaller fieldwork groups as he was able to interact better with, and learn from the example of, his peers: 'If I see someone doing things well, I will copy that.' Other difficulties have involved a lack of understanding about his condition:

> 'The difficulties I have had are misunderstandings of why I am doing something in a particular way. Because of my back injury I cannot kneel for too long. I got shouted at a lot because I was not kneeling properly. I find it less painful lying on my side. It is just a lack of understanding of why I do things in a certain way; they just assume that I am doing it wrong.'

The other assistance that Mark has been provided with by his LEA are a mentor and a note-taker. He feels that these have helped him to successfully continue his course:

> '[My mentor] basically kicked my backside from year one to year three. Without her help, I doubt I could have kept on track or got the good grades that I am getting now. They cannot really get her to help me on fieldwork, as she is usually looking after other people as well. But I do have a note-taker who also acts as a kind of mentor.'

10. Adrian – Dyslexia

As a mature student, Adrian was not diagnosed as dyslexic until he went to University. He was told this was not severe and he not experienced many problems. He has not found any difficulties in participating in archaeological fieldwork and did not feel it necessary to declare his dyslexia:

> 'When things have not gone as they should, it was not dyslexia orientated. In some respects I am not really that practised at

> fieldwork yet, but the stuff I did on my last excavation, there was absolutely no problem.'

Although in favour of everyone being treated fairly, he does not feel that he needs any special provision. He seemed more concerned that the current administrative changes in Higher Education were having a more detrimental effect on his education than his disability. Indeed, he did not consider himself to be 'disabled' because his dyslexia had never affected what he wanted to do. However, he did wonder if it, or other factors such as his age, would affect his employment prospects:

> 'I do wonder if my dyslexia will hold me back. I do not know if being labelled 'disabled' is going to restrict my job prospects. A bit like the problems pregnant women can have at work. I also worry about my age and perhaps being a bit unfit. But you do not actually know if these things do hold you back.'

11. Anita – Multiple Sclerosis

Anita's Multiple Sclerosis is not severe, but it has had a marked affect on her physical abilities. She is allowed extra time for writing in exams because it has caused muscle weakness in her right arm. However, the main effect has been attacks of fatigue.

She has experienced very few problems participating in archaeological fieldwork. She declared her disability to the Site Director and appears to have been allowed to make her own adjustments:

> 'They knew that I had MS because I had told the organisers up front. There was no point in hiding it; there would be Health and Safety issues if I felt wobbly in a trench. I told them that I do not do mattocks; it is just something I do not do. You have to know your limitations, but I did everything else. When I felt tired, I went over to the Finds Hut and did some washing, cataloguing or marking. It was not regulated and they saw me as a responsible adult.'

She stresses the importance of knowing her own limits and gives the example of deep excavations, asking whether there is a 'reasonable' way to make these fully accessible:

> 'This last year the dig got down to levels where I would not have felt safe, because I am a bit hesitant about going up and down ladders. So I decided that if it was that deep, I would go and work on Finds. It was a matter of access. I think that people who are more disabled than me would find it more difficult to get access

> unless ramps could be built and maintained, but that would be pushing it a bit for an excavation.'

Almost in answer to her own question, she suggests that the answer probably lies more in people's attitudes and perceptions than in physical adaptations:

> 'I think with sensitivity, and being aware that we all have disadvantages of one sort or another, that archaeology could be a lot more inclusive than it is. Before I started, I had the view of a young, fit and healthy image. Not so much an image problem, more of an image factor. I am sure that if the idea that we cannot all do everything could be got across, it would be a lot better. That is being a human being, not a disabled person. If that idea could be developed, I do not see why archaeology cannot be inclusive.'

12. Jackie – Dyslexia

Jackie had always had problems with her reading and writing and originally went into a trade where this was not an essential requirement. Through her life she found ways of coping when faced with difficulties, such as learning speeches by heart and, more recently, using computer technology.

She has not found fieldwork difficult, only writing the reports which take her some time to complete. Her major problems have been with the University library. Her coping mechanism was to learn the 'geography' of the building, but when they rearranged the shelves she experienced difficulties:

> 'The library was a problem to start with; I could not see the secret of how the books were numbered. They were very helpful and found the books for me. But I thought that I could not spend three years doing it this way. So, I made myself go there, giving myself plenty of time to find the books and got into the habit of knowing where they are, that certainly helped. I think I went a lot by the shapes and colours. They moved them over Christmas and when I went back I had a blind panic because I could not find anything. When they showed me where they had been moved to, I found that I could go back and cope again.'

13. Vicky – Visual Impairment, Ataxia

Vicky has been disabled from birth and has always had an interest in archaeology. It was not until she spoke to a specialist Careers' Adviser that she was given the encouragement to pursue the possibility of studying it at University. Her experience of archaeological fieldwork training has been very positive. A great deal of this was due to her working with a 'buddy' (see Case Study 14). She found that she was able to participate in most of the activities on site. Working with someone else, she was eventually able to plan features, a very 'visual' task. This was after a lot of trial and error which involved finding suitable equipment.

She has experienced difficulties with some tasks. These she attributes to her disability. In excavating she found it difficult to determine the subtle differences between some contexts. She did use tactile skills to find artefacts amongst the excavated material. The greatest problem was with barrowing the spoil away and general navigation around the site. She managed to overcome these difficulties by learning the 'geography' of the area where she was working and the 'pathways' across the site. She was unsure to the extent that adaptations were made for her; the changes that she observed may have been for the 'general benefit of all'. Similarly, she seems uncertain as to her peers reactions to, and thoughts about, her. She avoided some of the social activities for safety reasons.

Her experiences of fieldwork training have stimulated ideas that she would like to follow, possibly as part of her career path:

> 'A local blind/partially sighted group asked me for my input in sorting out a site tour. It was quite interesting. It was the challenge of describing a large site like the training excavation; I cannot even see much of the site myself! It did bring out some very interesting challenges for me. After that, I thought I would like to learn more about presenting Archaeology, not just to the public, but how it is presented to, and how access has changed, for disabled people.'

14. Angie – 'Buddy'

Angie acted as a 'buddy' for Vicky (Case Study 13 – Visual Impairment, Ataxia) on an archaeological training excavation; she also has previous experience of dealing with Special Needs. Angie had made friends with Vicky and they knew each other well before they went on the Field School. The strategy they adopted was to identify the potential difficulties in advance and structure ways in which they could be

tackled. Angie's role also included reassuring Vicky not only about the physical difficulties, but also over the social aspects, such as what other people would think of her. A major challenge was to learn the 'geography' of the site. This involved learning the overall layout of the site, the location of the Planning Hut, the camp site and other facilities, as well as the 'paths' across the site. Excavation with a trowel was a problem, as Vicky had problems seeing the wider picture of what was in front of her and in discerning the subtle differences between different contexts. By having someone working alongside her, Vicky discovered that she possessed the ability to participate and began to enjoy what she was doing. The same was true of planning where her drawing and numeracy skills were in evidence.

Major problems seem to have arisen in her relationship with other students. There was the time factor with Vicky having to take longer to do some jobs. Angie attributes this partly to an air of 'competition' in universities, and perhaps society as a whole:

> 'In University now there is a lot of competition and at times you could see that other students felt that she was holding them back. It did stress her at times, but it seems to be the attitude of the Institutions. This was a problem for her, she has to do everything in a ponderous manner and other students showed impatience.'

The other problem was on the social side, being 'accepted' by the other students. However, there were also other students who did not seem to fit in with some aspects of the digging culture, so this is not just a case of social discrimination based on disability. Angie drew Vicky into this group so that she could make friends of her own age.

Angie's strategy was to get to know Vicky and her abilities, identify potential problems and then find ways to overcome these difficulties. In many ways this involved 'reactive' adjustments, but it does appear to have been successful with Vicky discovering her abilities and gaining confidence in them:

> 'By the last season she was fine and really confident. The sign of success was that she did not need to work with me anymore and we hardly worked together at all last season. She was taking wheelbarrows up the planks to the top of the spoil heap and back down again on her own.'

Angie also tried to set Vicky's experience against a wider picture of students with differing attributes and abilities. Although Vicky may never follow a fieldwork based career, her experience of fieldwork will be of tremendous value to her:

‘I think you have to put her specific problems against the background of what other students count as problems. There were many people at the Field School who suffered more than Veronica because of their individual attributes. It could be aching joints, or because they were vastly overweight or just bored out of their minds. Some people find the whole task of trowelling mindless because they do not have anything going on in the brain behind it. The actual experience for an archaeology student is essential. Even if you are not going to work in the field, the fact that you actually had that experience helps you understand what you have to go through to get the data, even if you end up in a library or a museum. For Vicky, her eventual work may not be in the field, but she has had terrific experience which she will always be able to draw on.’

SUMMARY

The Case Studies are about the individual experiences of a small number of individuals. In this they provide snapshots of disability and archaeological fieldwork training, not a comprehensive overall picture. The Case Studies are also overwhelmingly positive which says more about the people who elected to help the project than the actual situation with regard to all disabled archaeology students.

Despite these limitations to the Case Study evidence, a number of important points can be drawn from them:

- The greatest problems occurred where there was a lack of understanding and knowledge about an individual’s condition, especially by staff. Conversely, the greatest successes were in cases where there was an understanding of an individual’s condition and support and encouragement were provided. This was especially the case where ‘anticipatory’ measures appeared to be in place. These were not just physical adaptations, but perhaps more importantly involved the attitude and knowledge of staff members and peers which led to an atmosphere of ‘acceptance’.
- A self-awareness of their condition and their ‘limits’ were seen as important to some of the interviewees, as was the communication of this knowledge to members of staff and also peers if necessary. Having said that, some interviewees extended their perceived limits and abilities by participating in archaeological fieldwork training.
- This awareness of one’s own limits can be related to the several cases where individuals found their own way around particular problems thereby making their own adaptations.

- There was a recognition that there could be a mixed reaction to receiving ‘special’ treatment dependent on the individual’s attitude to this.
- The example of a ‘buddy’ working alongside one student highlighted the importance of there being a previous relationship between them, an effective strategy to overcome obstacles and the ability of the buddy to eventually ‘let go’.
- Particular aspects that the interviewees referred to include:
- a desire to make a contribution to archaeology
- dyslexic students main difficulties had been with completing context sheets and writing reports
- being given extra time for some aspects of fieldwork similar to the allowances given in exams and being able to work at their own pace, especially in a competitive environment
- the need for a flexible attitude by site directors and supervisors with regard to body positions; such as lying on one’s side when trowelling, rather than having to kneel
- a concern that in some cases individuals may be getting an unfair advantage
- concerns over aspects of Health and Safety
- concerns over future employment.
- Some of the interviewees did not like the label ‘disabled’. This was partly due to the apparent stigma attached to it, but may also relate to their self-image. An alternative way of looking at things was suggested by two of the interviewees. An acceptance that all individuals possess differing attributes and abilities would lead to full inclusion in archaeology. Indeed, some of the difficulties cited, such as misunderstandings, a lack of communication and relationship problems with peers or social discrimination, can be experienced by all participants on archaeological fieldwork training.

PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS

1. Mary, Self-Employed Archaeologist – RSI, OCD, Eating Disorder

Mary is a self-employed buildings archaeologist with an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder which affected the way that she approached her work:

> ‘I tend to obsessively overdo things in great detail, a perfectionist. My coping strategies included self-imposed deadlines. I felt I needed to prove myself and wanted to be valued for something I produced. I thought if I do things well, I will get more work.’

She feels that it was due to this that she ‘acquired’ another disability, Repetitive Strain Injury through excessive typing. She was not able to work for several years and described her bitterness at not receiving further work from one client because of this. She attributes this to a lack of understanding about her condition.

After specialist treatment and taking medication, she was able return to work. Later in her career she worked for another client who took a flexible attitude to her condition and provided her with adapted equipment. She also received help from Access to Work and support from her colleagues.

2. Sarah, IT Specialist in Archaeology – Restricted Mobility (Internally Rotated Femur), Dyspraxia

On her first training excavation Sarah ripped a hamstring. This was apparently caused by kneeling for long periods and also related to her physical condition. On this occasion, she does not feel that she received a great deal of understanding. On her second training dig her abilities seems to have been taken into consideration. She was receiving physiotherapy at the time and the medical advice was that she should not do activities that involved kneeling. However, she was able to participate in a number of other jobs as part of the team: ‘…bucket, barrow and finds girl’. These were the ‘…the particular jobs they thought I could do’.

Although her dyspraxia causes her some difficulties with everyday activities, she feels that it actually assists her in her job. This involves the logical processes of web-coding and other computer-based activities.

From her own viewpoint, she feels that she should not participate in excavations because of her physical condition:

> ‘On my training dig, it became apparent fieldwork was not for me.’
>
> ‘I think it would be dangerous for me ever to take part in another excavation.’

However, she does appear to be content in the job she does as a ‘computer archaeologist’. Physically she sees herself able to do this and it combines her interests of archaeology and computers.

3. Sandra, Site Supervisor – RSI, Diabetes

Sandra’s diabetes only seems to have been a problem on one occasion in her experience of archaeological fieldwork. On one site she did not declare her condition and the supervisor was not pleased. She puts this down to a lack of understanding, but she was supported by her co-workers:

> ‘I had low blood sugar on site one time. I made the mistake of not telling the site supervisor and he got quite upset about it when he found out. He said, as a diabetic, I should not be working in the field, I should be office-based; an unknowing sort of comment. Fortunately, the other archaeologists I was working with said: ‘No, she can do fieldwork perfectly well’.’

She has since made her own arrangements to ensure that her blood sugar is kept at the correct level. At times this means eating on site which is against the rules. This is the sort of measure that a diabetic employee would require in any job, not specifically archaeology.

Sandra’s difficulties with Repetitive Strain Injury in her wrists have had a more serious impact on her employment. She feels that the RSI is a work-related condition, digging on hard ground, but it developed because she has ‘loose joints’. It appears that her employers were understanding and did try to help by making adjustments and allowances to the tasks she was doing. She was laid off only after she had taken the legal limit of time off for sickness. However, she admits that she did push herself too hard because she thought that she was on the verge of getting a permanent contract. This highlights the insecurity of archaeological employment:

> ‘I kept working through it, but it just got too bad. Trouble is everyone is so worried about losing their job in archaeology that you keep pushing these things. You say, ‘Oh, I’ll rest it later and

> sort it out then' without realising that the longer you go with a problem, the more damage you do.'

Currently, Sandra feels that she cannot do archaeological fieldwork, but hopes to find work that is archaeology related and where she does not have to use her wrists.

4. Katy, Project Officer – Dyslexia

Katy did not discover that she was dyslexic until she was 29 and in the final year of her PhD. She was resistant to being 'treated differently' and feels that before this she had unconsciously worked out several coping mechanisms. This included using photography and a Dictaphone for her research and planning ahead when tackling jobs.

Katy seems to have had few problems participating fully in fieldwork. There have been problems with some of the planning tasks, but these have not been insurmountable and can be seen in the context of a task that many people have problems with:

> 'Measured drawings I sometimes find quite difficult. Doing a sketch plan outlining where things are on site, that is fine as I can estimate distances. With the graph paper, tapes and using the actual planning frame I tend to get very confused. The little squares on the grid, it is infuriating. It really depends on the level of detail. With time you get round it, lots of people have trouble with that anyway. It is certainly one of the hardest things I have had to do.'

On the positive side, Katy accepts the dyslexia as part of herself and feels that it gives her certain advantages:

> 'Now I definitely see it as part of myself and I have other skills over my colleagues. Lateral thinking is very much one of my strong points, I tend not to get stuck over details. My skills are very much related to my higher abilities.'

5. Pauline, Museums Officer – Impaired Vision, Diabetes, Dyslexia

Pauline's impaired vision is due to her diabetes. She used to work as a curator, but as her eyesight deteriorated felt that she should shift career track to something she could do with little vision:

> 'I used to be a curator working with collections, very much hands-on work. I really had to decide that it was no longer a career option because I could not do the quick visual checking of

> collections which is an essential part of the job. When I decided to make the move from curator to career development work, my eyes were very unstable and I did not know how long it would be before I had very limited sight. They are actually stable now, but I did not know that would be the case at the time, so I changed to a job that I can do with very little vision.'

She sees this as making her own adjustments to cope with her condition. She also considers that one of her major difficulties is being able to identify particular colours, which is a problem with coloured geological maps. However, she has managed to overcome this by using digital maps available on the internet.

On the positive side, Pauline feels that her dyslexia gives her a particular 'awareness' that helps her to understand buildings: 'I can look at buildings and say' 'I understand that'; whilst other people just see a pile of bricks.' Also, she considers that her interest in political issues has helped her with social and archaeological theory whilst studying part-time at postgraduate level:

> 'I think that being disabled has helped me enormously in doing my research. I have always been fairly aware and active on the political side. A lot of the theoretical stuff at both MA and PhD levels was very familiar, although I did not realise this before I started. It was a series of recognitions. Throughout my working life, because of my interest in disability politics, it has led me into working with other areas such as ethnicity and gender. This means that, with regards to research on the archaeology side, things which appear to many students to be very theoretical and perhaps irrelevant to what they are doing, to me the connection between practice and theory is there in my own life. It is not the divide that it appears to be for many people.'

6. Alan, Archaeological Agency – Restricted Mobility

Alan was employed in a senior position with a government agency when he was seriously injured in a road traffic accident and suffered multiple fractures. He was off work for 18 months and now alternates between using crutches and a wheelchair. On his return to work there were some jobs that he had previously done that he was no longer able to do, specifically those ones that involved visiting sites. This, he considers, would involve unacceptable Health and Safety issues. Some of his previous work remained, but over time the nature of his job did change. He is uncertain as to the extent to which his disability was the cause of this:

> ‘I am not sure if this was to do with my accident. Certainly there were issues about me not being able to get into the office as often as would have been ideal, and I certainly lost any appetite I had had previously for office politics.’

He feels that he has received tremendous support and understanding from his employers, although this may be part of an existing system of support not available to other archaeological employees:

> ‘One of the benefits of working for a government agency is that they have certain rules and structures embedded which are put into action when something terrible happens. As a result, I think I have been extremely well treated. They have bent over backwards for me and will, I hope, continue to do so. Whether this is a conscious policy tailored to me as an individual or a series of automatic procedures that would apply to anyone, I do not know. I know that most archaeological employers would have found it difficult to continue to employ me in any professional capacity.’

He does consider that in some ways he is treated differently from his colleagues. Although his employers have found him interesting jobs to do that are within his abilities, he feels that he is in a different category when it comes to job security and promotion.

From the perspective of becoming disabled in mid-career, Alan has rethought what he considers ‘archaeology’ to be:

> ‘This has made me think hard what archaeology is about in the first place. Although I have directed a couple of excavations, I have never considered myself to be an excavator. I have always taken excavation data and analysed it. To me, that is the main work of an archaeologist. The mechanical skills of excavation can be learnt relatively quickly, whereas your understanding of what has been excavated develops continuously. In ten years of being disabled I have never been held up by an inability to get hold of the data on which to undertake archaeological analyses. A good question to ask would be: could someone who is disabled and wants to be an archaeologist access *the results* of fieldwork? For my definition of archaeology, that is the most important thing.’

Although still able to pursue a satisfying career, Alan’s experience has been that full inclusiveness is not always a reality. The example he uses is not being able to go on the field trips at some conferences because the coach companies are not insured to carry disabled people:

> ‘I think there is quite a tension between inclusiveness as such and what Health and Safety and the insurers will allow.’

It is not only at the professional level that Alan feels he is treated differently, although not always in a negative way, but also at the personal level. He describes the experience as one of ‘isolation’. He illustrates this with examples of people who do not know what to say to him, or even try to avoid speaking to him. The different attitudes he faces depending on whether he is on sticks or in a wheelchair make an interesting case study in itself. On sticks he is generally treated as an ‘equal’. In a wheelchair he can be treated condescendingly and be left feeling disempowered, not allowed to negotiate himself. The assumption is that somebody must be looking after him. These attitudes come out of the probably unconscious context of the Medical and Charitable models of Disability.

Becoming disabled in mid-career has caused great changes in Alan’s professional and personal life; however, he does not feel that his experience has been overwhelmingly negative. He is able to see that there have been positive outcomes:

> ‘I now have an enormously different outlook on life as a result of the accident. Becoming disabled has gone alongside enormous changes in my personal circumstances. I think that I have relaxed a lot and got things more in perspective than I used to have. I find I now have to rely on other people and it has made me more trusting of them. People have said to me that it has helped me develop more, mature and grow up. It has been good for me almost! In professional terms, I do not feel that I have had an enormously negative experience because of my disability, rather the reverse. The various changes in my life have resulted in my getting even greater satisfaction from my archaeology. I think I have a more rounded and a richer appreciation and understanding of the struggles of past people as a result.’

There is more to this than just an admirable stoicism. It reflects a pragmatic attitude and the coming to terms with a radical change in circumstances during mid-life.

SUMMARY

The interviews with professional archaeologists show a greater balance of positive and negative experiences than the interviews with disabled archaeology students. Again, this may reflect the individuals who wanted to tell their stories. From these experiences a number of major points can be summarised:

- As with the students, the professional archaeologists experienced the greatest problems where there was a lack of understanding and flexibility. When this was present they were able to function as well as their colleagues.
- Another problem was with Health and Safety issues and the attitudes of other people. The latter could have the deeper effect with individuals feeling they were being treated differently at work and in society and that in general they were ‘isolated’.
- In some cases, individuals made their own adjustments. This included a change in career path in some cases where the interviewees felt that they could no longer continue in fieldwork. However, they did wish to continue working in archaeology. As with the students, this reflects an awareness of their own condition and ‘limits’.
- There were examples of individuals receiving practical and moral support from their co-workers.
- One employer was angry when a condition was not declared. This attitude can be correlated with the concern for full disclosure during the recruitment process that was identified in the employers’ questionnaire survey (Phillips & Gilchrist 2005).
- Some of the interviewees felt that there was a positive aspect to their disability, whether they were born with it or became disabled later in life. They saw this positive aspect in both their professional and personal lives.
- For one interviewee, becoming disabled in mid-career had altered their perception of what ‘archaeology’ actually is. They argued that interpretation was as equally important as participating in the original fieldwork.

IV CONCLUSION

The questionnaire survey, and especially the case studies, provide a view of what it is like to be disabled and involved in archaeology. A variety of individual experiences are represented, both positive and negative. From this information there are three major interrelated themes that stand out.

1. There is a need for understanding of an individual's abilities. Physical adaptations and support are important, but probably more crucial are a sense of moral support and acceptance from the hierarchy and from peers. It is people's attitudes that are seen as being important. Where most problems occur is where there is a lack of understanding. Behind this lie the Medical and Charitable models of disability.

2. This need for understanding can be balanced by the attitudes of the disabled archaeologists. In many cases they understand their own abilities, but there is a need for this to be communicated. This communication does not happen where a person fears their position, either professionally or socially, may be under threat. For full disclosure to take place a culture of acceptance is necessary.

3. Many of the disabled archaeologists were able to identify abilities that were directly related to their condition. This comes out of knowing themselves and is an aspect that needs to be communicated. It also emphasises the importance of individuals evaluating their own abilities, something that is central to the objectives of this project with the development of a self-evaluation tool kit for participation in archaeological fieldwork training.

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