

DigIt

NS Vol.1, Issue 1



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- ♦ Neolithic burial in Gua Harimau, Malyasia
 - ♦ The benefits of student groups
- ♦ Local and international archaeology programs and conferences
 - ♦ 2013 ArchSoc committee

Newsletter of the Flinders
Archaeological Society

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Flinders ArchSoc members and friends at the WAC-7 Gala Dinner at the Dead Sea Spa Hotel on the Dead Sea, Jordan (photograph: Taylor Antisdel, 17/01/2013). L-R: Gonzalo Compañy, Maria Victoria Roca, Islam Alhassn, Jessica Lumb, Eleanor Jenkins, Chanmakara Sun, Bashar Baghdadi, Susan Arthure, Clare Leever, Amy Butcher, Janine McEgan, Jordan Ralph, Joshua Brown, Andrew Wilkinson and a Bedouin Camel Herder.

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Editorial

After a successful relaunch of *Digit* at the end of 2012 after a lengthy hiatus, we have decided to start 2013 off with a new numbering system. This issue is Volume 1, Issue 1 in the New Series and we have planned to print three issues a year; one in February, one in July and the final one in October. If you have any suggestions for the lay out or content of this issue, or any issue, do not hesitate to contact me using the contact information below.

Aside from working on the printed newsletter, I have been digitising the old copies of *Digit* from the Megaw collection. Vincent Megaw owns what would be the only complete collection of *Digit* from Issue 1 1997 to Issue 15 2003. These will be available on our website very soon. It's great to look back on the old newsletters and seeing which of our lecturers and industry professionals were involved in ArchSoc committees and activities when they were at university. My personal favourite was stumbling upon the article 'What the hell is happening at JCU' in *Digit* 6 1999 by then President of the James Cook University Archaeology and Anthropology Student's Association, Michael Morrison.

As for this issue, we have lots to offer our readers (I actually had to turn away some entries!). We have had some great contributions from fellow students, and an article from Claire Smith about her experiences with WAC-7 and the efforts that ArchSoc put in to help run the WAC-7 conference in Jordan. The featured article of *Digit* 1 is by ArchSoc's first Honorary Life Member, Vincent Megaw. It is part one of 'The Flying Dutchman reaches port', which originally featured in *Antiquity* Vol. 86. No. 332 2012. It is an honour to have Vincent submitting articles to the new series of *Digit*, and if you read the old issues of the newsletter, you will see why!

Jordan Ralph

Digit

Digit is the official newsletter of the Flinders Archaeological Society. It began in 1997 and after a hiatus of at least five years, it was relaunched in 2012, with the new series beginning in 2013. It is published three times a year and is printed at Flinders Press. Digit features both scholarly and light-hearted articles from anyone with an interest in archaeology.

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Cover photographs

Front cover: ArchSocks in Egypt. Models: Jordan Ralph and Andrew Wilkinson (photograph: Jessica Lumb, Giza, Egypt, 23/01/2013).

Back cover: Petra at night (photograph: Andrew Wilkinson, Petra, Jordan, 20/01/2013).

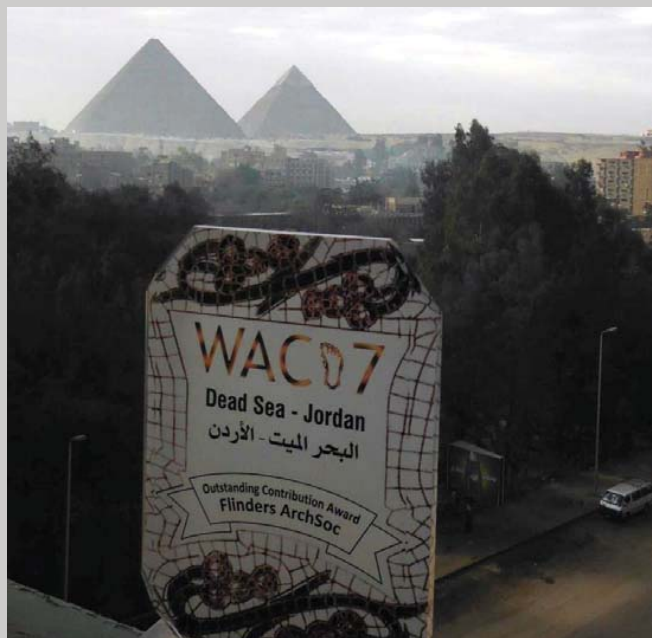
A note from the President

Welcome to new and continuing ArchSoc members for 2013. This year is proving to be as busy and exciting as 2012 was for activity. I would like to thank the committee of 2012 for their dedication and enthusiasm to ArchSoc as we have seen the opportunities grow, and membership numbers reach unprecedented levels. ArchSoc is now the largest and most active student archaeological society in the country. This is only achieved through the hard work of the members and the committee. We are now looking at generating an affiliation network with similar organisations across the country and around the world. I would like to welcome the new committee for 2013, and I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

A catch phrase in the Archaeology Department is 'get involved'. The Flinders Archaeological Society plays an important part in realising this. Many members are graduate students and ArchSoc is often the first port of call for project volunteers. We conduct many fundraising activities in order to support our events and professional development opportunities. Involvement with these projects is a great way to meet like-minded people, industry partners, future colleagues and potential employers. For those students new to the archaeology program you will likely find friends with similar interests, and those who have experienced the many nuances of academic study amongst the membership. In this way ArchSoc also forms a support role as you embark on a new adventure. All I ask is don't be shy. Come along to things, introduce yourself and start chatting. ArchSoc activities are displayed on the notice board outside HUMN 112 so keep an eye out for what is going on. There is also the newsletter *Digit*, Facebook page, Twitter account (@FlindersArchSoc) and Blog (<http://flindersarchsoc.com/>) for keeping up to date with events and activities.

I look forward to meeting with you all throughout the year. As ever, we welcome suggestions for social events and professional development ideas from you, the ArchSoc member.

Andrew Wilkinson



This trophy was awarded to the ArchSoc members for their outstanding contribution at WAC-7. Some of us were lucky enough to go to Egypt after WAC-7! (photograph: Jordan Ralph 23/01/2013).

The benefits of student groups

A regional perspective

Jordan Ralph, Antoinette Hennessy, Vanessa Beasley and Rhiannon Agutter

The first half of 2012 was a busy time for the Flinders ArchSoc as we increased our focus to provide not only social events, but also professional development events to benefit our members. There is a genuine opportunity for groups such as ArchSoc to facilitate professional development through the organisation of fieldwork for archaeology students outside of the university classroom.



Figure 1. ArchSoc's Community Archaeology Day at the Plympton Railway Station (photograph: Jordan Ralph, May 2012).

Methods

Using an internet survey site, SurveyMonkey, ArchSoc sought responses from current, previous, and non-members of ArchSoc regarding their opinions of the benefits of being involved in ArchSoc academic and social events. These events include fundraisers, pub crawls, quiz nights, public lectures, and archaeological fieldwork. The categories of analysis used in this study are based on those used by Morrison and Rosenthal (1978) and Tansley (1996) in their studies into university-based student groups and their ability to further equip their members for the workplace upon completion of their related degree. The anonymous survey collected demographic information, such as age, gender and location, but it also addressed the level of interaction the respondents had with the ArchSoc. Respondents were asked to

rate the ability of ArchSoc to facilitate various qualities that were identified by Tansley (1996) as being of importance to the professional development of university students. The categories are: social growth, personal growth, and intellectual growth.

Results

Demographic Information

Of the 72 responses to our survey, 65.3% (n=47) were Fee-paying Members of ArchSoc, 9.7% (n=7) were Associate Members, 2.8% (n=2) were Life Members and 22.2% (n=16) were non-members. More than half of the respondents have been members for only one-two years (61.1%, n=44), while only 23.7% (n=17) have paid membership for more than three years. 15.3% (n=11) have never paid membership - reasons for this include distance from the Flinders University campus, and limited to no access to events. The majority of respondents were between the age of 18 and 34 (59.7%, n=43); only one respondent was under the age of 18. While ArchSoc is based in South Australia, 14% (n=10) of respondents we received feedback from were located in NSW, NT, VIC, TAS, WA and France. No responses were received from QLD or the ACT.

Evaluating ArchSoc

Based on attendance and participation, ArchSoc's social events are evidently the most popular, with fundraisers holding the most numbers, followed by the quiz night, and the pub crawl (see figure 1). Meet The Archaeologists Night (MTAN) is considered as both an academically and socially-focussed event, and interestingly scored the highest rating of satisfaction amongst all events listed. All ArchSoc events, however, have on average received positive reviews (s.d. = 0.39), and considerable numbers in attendance. We also provided an opportunity for respondents to suggest future improvements: those with criticisms suggested greater attendance and promotion of volunteering opportunities for members to engage.

When asked to rate ArchSoc and its potential in facilitating various qualities for personal, social and intellectual growth (see Figure 2), the highest rated qualities were in relation to social growth (social skills and teamwork) and personal growth (confidence). The lowest rated

Figure 2. Responses to the question: which semester one 2012 ArchSoc event/s have you taken part in?

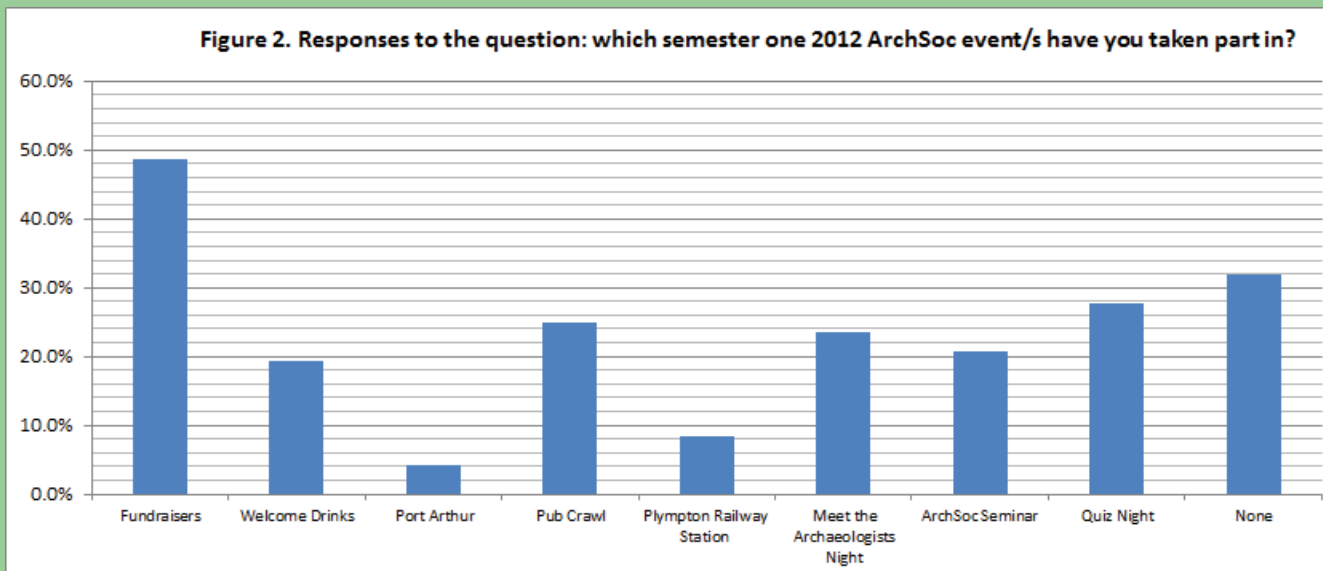
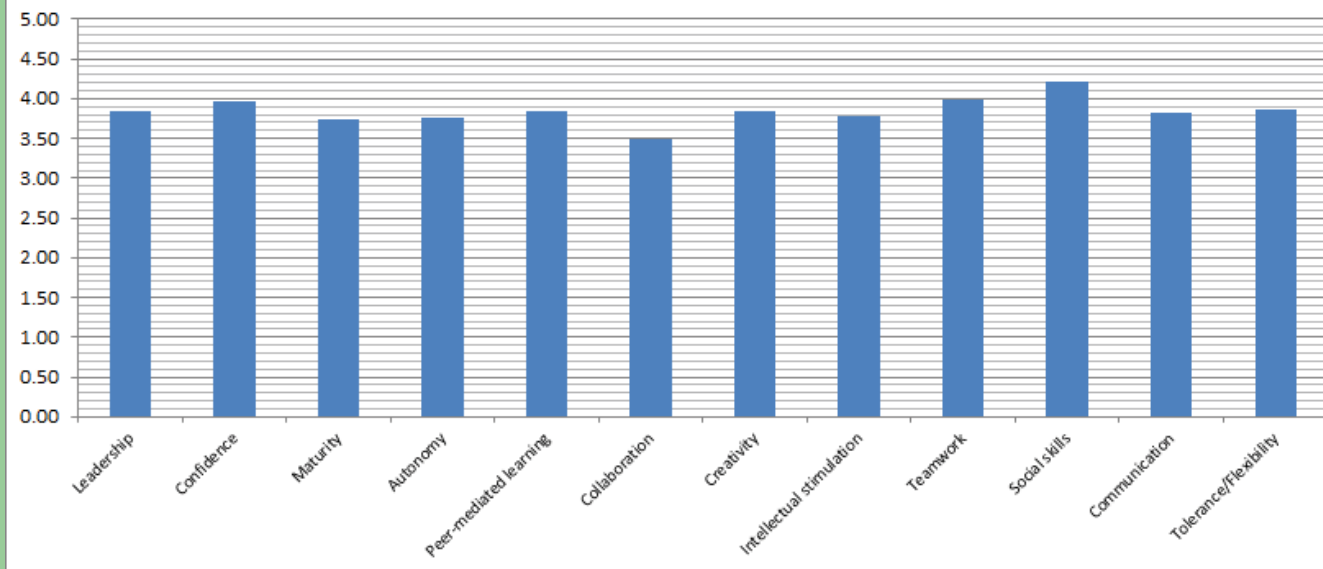


Figure 3. Responses to the question: How do you rate Flinders ArchSoc in facilitating the following qualities in its members' professional development?



qualities were in relation to intellectual growth (collaboration, maturity and autonomy). While ArchSoc was considered successful in facilitating all the qualities listed (s.d. = 0.17), it can be argued that ArchSoc is particularly successful in qualities associated with social interaction and activity between peers.

Limitations

This survey was open for response for several months from the end of semester one 2012. All the questions, therefore, ask respondents to consider their experiences with ArchSoc during semester one alone. While this should not affect the responses to questions on attendance, as these were event-specific, it may influence the results for other questions that require ratings, and open-ended responses. Some qualities (for example, collaboration – the main collaborative project of the year, Prospect Hill, occurred during semester two) may be more relevant to events held after the survey was created, and before it closed. Limitations may also arise from the type of questions asked. Due to the contactless nature of the survey, it is difficult to gauge the accuracy and regard respondents may have adopted when considering each question, particularly open-ended, and scaled questions. Several factors might influence this, such as lack of time, or disinterest. The response rate saw almost one-third (35.07%) of ArchSoc members participate, including committee members.



Figure 4. (L-R) Scott Jacob, Nicole Monk, Andrew Wilkinson and Bradley Kerr (photograph: Zidian James, July 2012).

Discussion

The popularity of social events is likely to explain why social skills were rated the most highly satisfactory (scoring 4.22/5) qualities facilitated by ArchSoc. Despite the importance of such events in encouraging

students to engage with their peers in social settings, the highest rated event was a professional development event (i.e. MTAN, see figure 2). This could be due to the event's dual function as an academic and social event for a wide audience. Social skills, teamwork and confidence were the three highest rated qualities respondents felt ArchSoc successfully facilitated. This is likely a reflection of the aforementioned popularity of social events, and also the increase in field and volunteer opportunities ArchSoc has provided this year (such as the Prospect Hill field surveys and Port Arthur field trip). This data illustrated the ability of student groups such as ArchSoc to significantly assist in the strengthening of employable qualities in students through both social and professional development/training activities.

The demand for professional development events indicates that students now expect (or at least desire) student groups to provide an environment where students can practice and build on the skills learnt through their degree: 53.3% of respondents who provided comments on future ArchSoc events would like more opportunities focussing on field work, and the application of practical exercises "that help students develop their skills".

Conclusion

The results of the 2012 ArchSoc survey revealed a spectrum of student expectations and perspectives. However, the majority of responses to key questions clearly paint a picture of student organisations as a vehicle for student involvement in social and professional events which help shape and strengthen personal-development qualities in participants. These benefits (such as increased social skills, confidence and teamwork) are invaluable to students seeking employment during and after their academic studies, and thus student groups provide a powerful support network for boosting student qualities.

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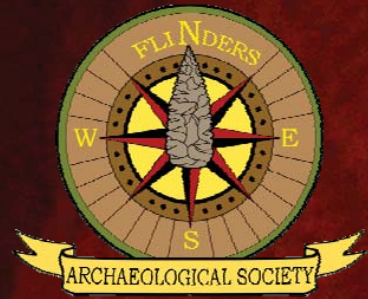
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