



Summary

The BWA survey of 2008 was designed to document the female experience in archaeology. 85 responses were received in total, of these three were spoiled (could not be opened by the computer) and 76 respondents were female, 8 male. The BWA survey organisers did not take part.

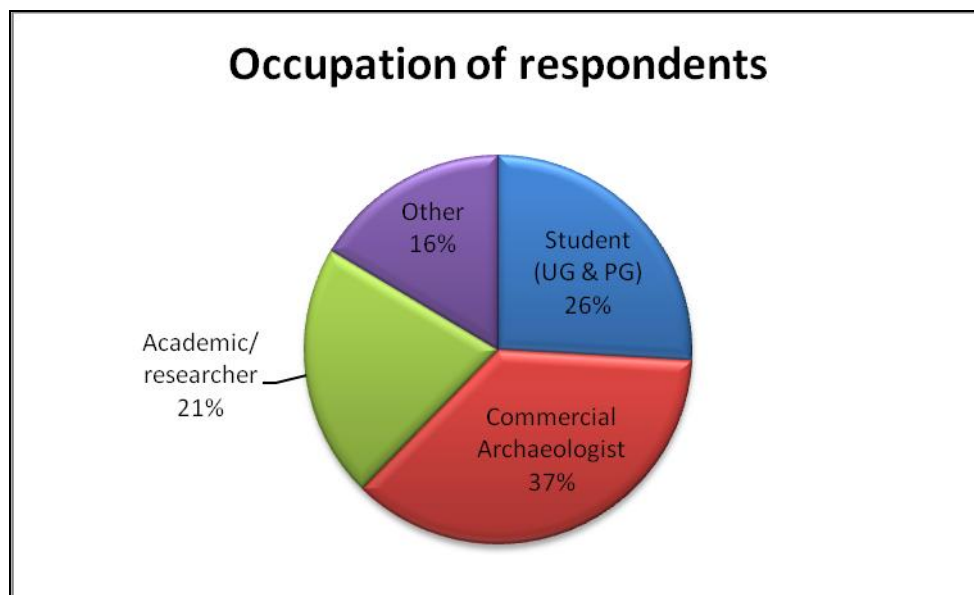
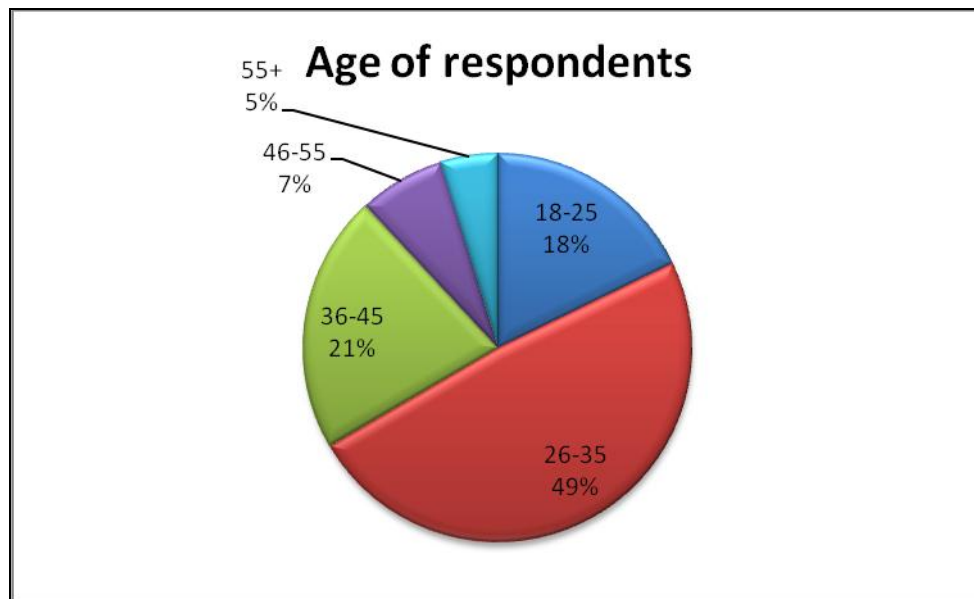
The survey encompasses c. 1100 years of experience in archaeology! This ranges from teenage training excavations through full working lives with respondents commenting on a wide range of issues. The questions were thought-provoking and at times contradictory in order to assess what respondents felt about their future career. It was often an emotive experience for women and we give our grateful thanks for the open and honest replies we had, and the not inconsiderable amount of time it must have taken for individuals to engage with the questions.

Our typical respondent profile is a woman in her 20s or 30s working in commercial archaeology. At university she was taught gender neutral language and had women in her department, but didn't connect with them as role models. She thinks she can have the career she wants and also the family she envisages, but believes she will have to compromise her career in the future and recognises that as a woman this will affect her more than her male colleagues. Almost equally she may or may not have had direct experience of discrimination so is either entirely unaware of problems, or she almost conversely is very aware, has had repeated experience of it and knows others that have.

83.5% of women responded positively to the BWA especially in terms of opportunities for networking and career support.

Age and Occupation of Respondents

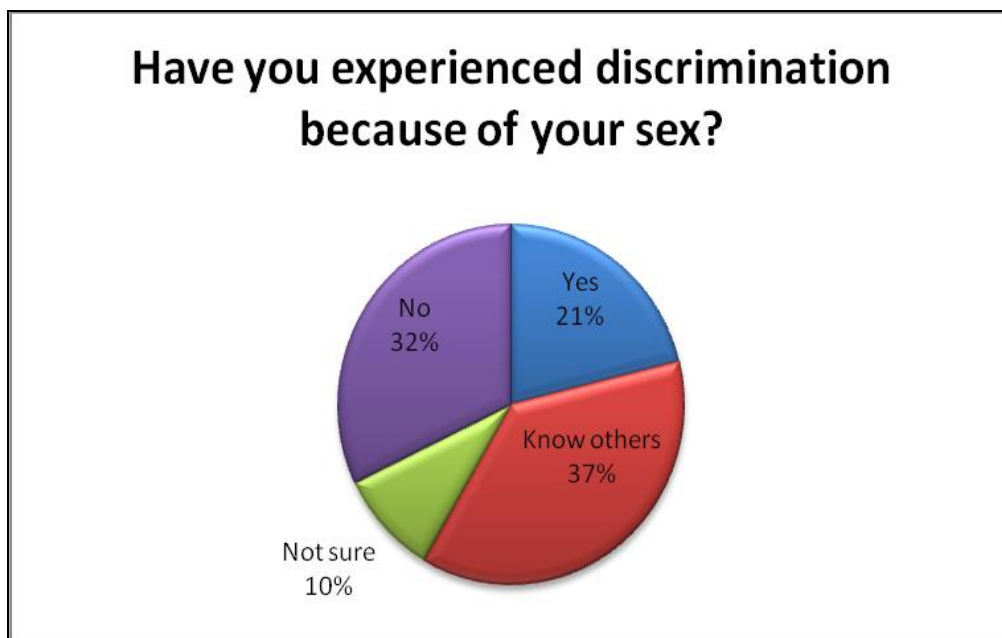
Survey responses were predominately from those working within developer-funded archaeology and those in university and research institutions. The same motivation for networking and career support was evident *across the profession*.



Discrimination

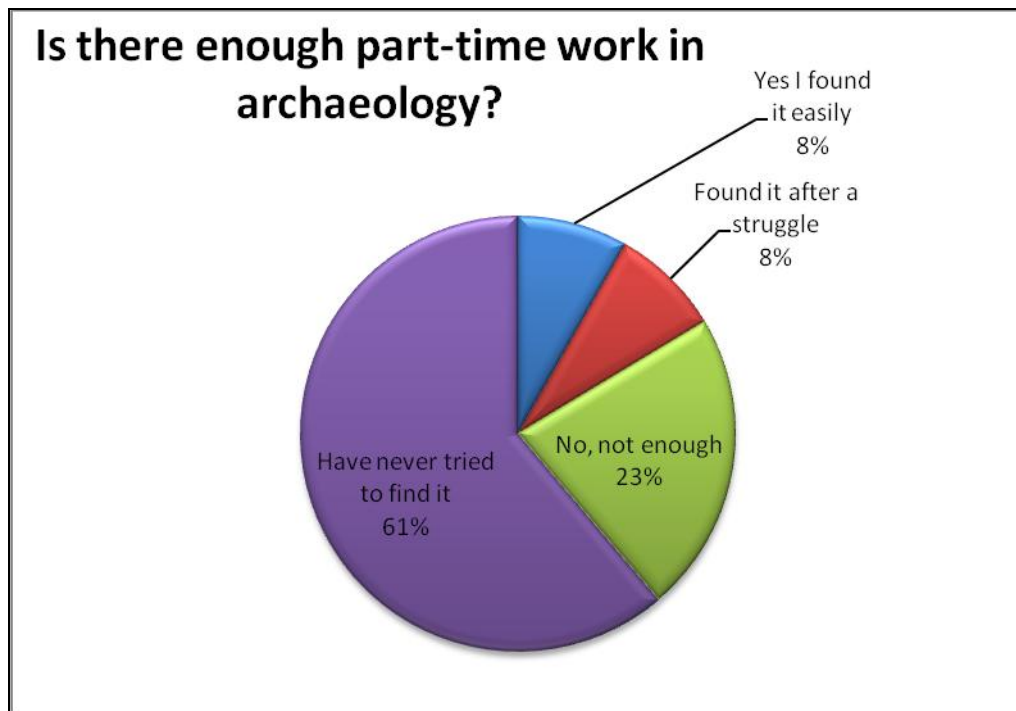
One of the more emotive parts of this survey was the direct questioning on sexual discrimination in the workplace. The results were more surprising than expected. The majority of respondents had either experienced direct discriminatory comments themselves or knew of others who had.

Women at an early stage in their careers, and often whilst at university, reported being exposed to a particularised view of women in the discipline. This was either through directed comments (e.g. women should not go on this excavation as they will not cope with the terrain/facilities) or where career advice is tailored to assumptions regarding 'female' roles within the profession. Discrimination in commercial archaeology is often more direct. For example, women reported going without the provision of toilets or being required to share accommodation unlike their male counterparts. Conditions such as these are often wrongly justified through the poor funding of the profession. The women responding often knew that these excuses were sexist and yet were reluctant to argue or question their employers for fear of not having their contracts renewed. Women who indicated that were unsure whether comments they had received were discriminatory, commonly went on to describe experiences we would class as discriminatory.



Part-time work in archaeology

Many women who responded to the survey had not yet reached a stage in their career where they had tried to find part-time work, as can be seen in the statistics. Yet many had tried and failed to find part-time work, indicative of a profession where flexible working is not yet supported.



Conclusions

As an initial step to gauging the support for a women's group in the profession this survey was successful. We have gained an understanding of the complexities involved in women's working lives and importantly the sense of how to structure such a group. This is critical to making the BWA relevant for women archaeologists of today and in the future.

If you wish to comment on any of these findings, or suggest avenues for future research, please email us through womeninarchaeology@hotmail.com or contact us anonymously using our new online forum at <http://britishwomenarchaeologists.ning.com/>.