

Dear FAME members

Firstly, I'm sorry that prior commitments have prevented me from joining you to celebrate the important milestone of FAME's 50th birthday.

It's hard to believe that half a century has gone by since the Standing Conference of Unit Managers first - as it were - stood up.

Since then, as SCAUM (the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) and later as FAME, the organisation has become the voice of archaeological businesses, and an integral part of the UK's professional archaeological landscape.

Thanks to its energetic and visionary leadership, it has matured hugely, both in stature and in scope, providing practitioners of every kind with the professional support, information and guidance they need.

From its original focus, primarily on health and safety, it has extended its influence into all areas of professional practice, including procurement, contract law, employment best practice, market analysis, innovation and research.

And that last word, 'research', is an important one.

SCUM was born in an age where a clear distinction was always drawn between 'research archaeology' and what was then called 'rescue archaeology' - what we would today call 'development-led archaeology'.

Now, of course, we recognise that distinction as rather 'old school' academic snobbery.

Through the efforts of FAME members, it is now widely recognised that development-led archaeology is the main driver of UK archaeological research. We now, quite rightly - and proudly - describe the work of FAME members as 'development-led research'.

FAME has truly come of age as the trade association for professional archaeology in the UK and, whilst FAME membership used to be considered an option, now it's an absolute necessity for all archaeological businesses.

I was honoured to serve as FAME's first Chief Executive, and I'm very proud to be its Honorary Life President.

I heartily congratulate FAME on its 50th birthday, and wish all its members an inspiring conference - and of course another rewarding and successful half-century!

Adrian Tindall

Honorary Life President, Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers