

For your information from Wednesday's *Contract Journal*.

## **Quarry firms count cost of archaeological digs**

Archaeologists delaying aggregates extraction are creating hefty bills for quarry firms, according to the British Aggregates Association (BAA). Archaeological digs have nearly doubled the time in getting planning permission over the past two years, to 53 months. A BAA survey found the average cost to businesses was more than £200,000 last year – nearly six times the cost in 2001.

BAA executive officer Richard Bird told *CJ* planning authorities are ignoring Office of the Deputy Prime Minister rules. He said: "Local authorities can be a law unto themselves. They can be more interested in keeping their locals happy." Bird said a BAA member was last year charged £60,000 for archaeological work on a site. He warned companies to draw up contracts with archaeologists. Bird added: "We've got a bit of a gun to our head."