

Post Excavation and Archiving



The Post Excavation process begins when the excavated materials arrive back at base.

Any small finds that have been identified during excavation are removed for separate processing.

The bulk materials in the seed trays are then sorted into their appropriate categories such as pottery, CBM (Ceramic Building Material), metal, glass, bone etc. and then cleaned in the appropriate manner (usually by brushing or washing in water). After drying, the bulk materials are then weighed by category and recorded on the bulk record sheet. The bulk materials are then bagged ready to be stored.

Post Excavation sorting of bulk finds

Animal bone, pottery, worked flint and clay tobacco pipe fragments are set aside for further processing:

Pottery - Each piece of pottery is labelled up using Indian ink and includes details of the keyhole excavation number and the level number (which was originally the spit number, but now is the context number). Pottery is sorted into bags by chronology.



Writing on very small pieces of pottery is an acquired skill. Above is Nick's 'apprentice piece'. When you can write the code on a cocktail stick, then you've passed your inauguration.



The labelling up of pottery using Indian Ink



Animal bones from TP17A

Animal bones - These are analysed in detail where the animal and bones are identified and recorded onto the animal bone record sheet, and then re-bagged.



Details of the animal bones are entered onto the Animal Bones record sheets

Flint (Lithics) - Any worked flints are removed and the details are recorded onto the Lithics Initial Survey sheet, then a Lithics record sheet is completed for each flint. Each flint is given a reference number and labelled in a similar way to pottery. The flint is then described, sketched, weighed, measured, dated, very much in the same way that a small find is processed.

Small finds - These are cleaned using the appropriate method and examined. It is often necessary to research small finds using our reference material and the Internet so that we can establish the correct identity, date and purpose. Each small find is weighed, measured, photographed, sketched, and the details such as material, cleaning process, and a full description are all entered onto a small finds record sheet.

This information is then transferred to our small finds database. Some items of special interest are sent for further analysis to experts outside the group.



Flint Tools



Examining under the microscope



Small finds being researched and entered onto the small finds record sheets

Clay tobacco pipe fragments - These are examined, given a reference number, recorded, and entered onto the clay tobacco pipe database.

All the bulk materials and small finds are kept together so that they can be looked at as a whole when the report is written up. Once this is completed, material is either returned to the landowner, donated to the group, or in the case of certain materials, disposed of. The remaining collection is then packed into archive boxes and stored in an off-site archive.