

Community Archaeology Study Days 2007/8



Dealing With Burial: From the Ground to the Osteologist

With Rebecca Storm

Saturday, 15th December 2007

Feedback from the study day:

'Really enjoyable day- expert speaker, good content and presentation.'

'Fascinating and informative.'



Burials have always provided very important archaeological information. They can tell us about ritual practices, the types of artefacts used by a certain society, and even the health or manner of death of the individual. They can also provide information about settlement patterns. The excavation and study of burials is a complex process involving experts such as archaeologists, artefact specialists and osteologists, or scientists

who study human bone. It is important to learn how to deal with human burials during an investigation, as great care is needed to preserve the finds and to follow the proper laws regarding human remains. Many ethical issues surround the treatment of burials during an excavation. The proper investigation of burials provides fascinating insights into past cultures, but burials are a sensitive matter to many people. It is crucial to address these issues in order to respectfully handle and study human remains.

This study day provided information about how to properly excavate and study human burials. It started with a discussion of what to do when a burial is found in the ground, including the ethical issues involved. Those present learned what to do if they ever come across a burial during their investigations. The day also involved a consideration of the different kinds of information burials can provide. The day ended with a look at how osteologists can study bone to learn more about the age, sex, trauma and pathology of the individual(s). This was a very important and informative study day that offered valuable insights into the study of burials.



First picture- <http://matthewsalomon.wordpress.com/category/wessex-archaeology/>

Second picture- <http://www.picture-newsletter.com/archeology/index.htm>