



Community Archaeology Workshop: 7

Excavation and Recording, Saturday 15th October 2005

Praise for workshop 7:

"Workshop 7 had enthusiastic and friendly presentations pitched at a good level... This is a good series, I am enjoying it very much" Participant

"I've been interested in learning about archaeology for some time but this has been the first opportunity I've come across to do so" Participant

"The workshop was very informative and I will be able to use what I have been taught" Participant

"Workshop 7 was relaxed, challenging and at the right level... we are lucky to have these workshop days and a full course... thanks" Participant

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Workshop 7 was a challenging and thought-provoking workshop. It provided people with the opportunity to learn about excavation techniques and recording, as carried out in professional archaeology today. Those who attended enjoyed a series of relaxed but informative presentations looking at:

Why we dig and **Excavation Techniques**

This part looked at why excavations are carried out. Rescue excavations and controversial sites were discussed, and the aims behind different types of excavations and the tools used to carry them out were described. All tools were available to handle on the day and tool techniques were demonstrated superbly by Duncan.



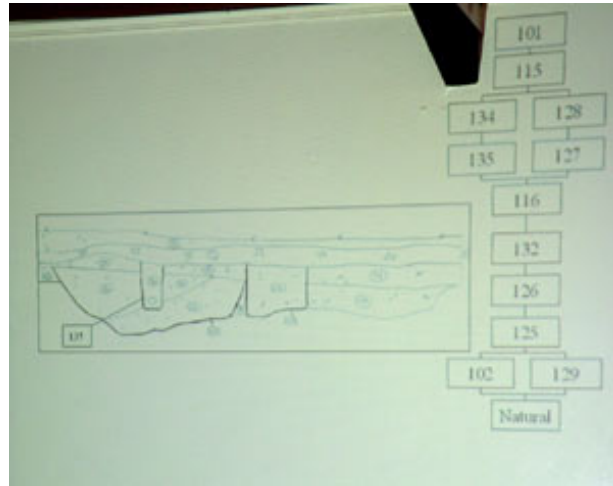


Health and safety on site

This talk looked at the serious issue of health and safety on site, explaining the dangers (collapsing trenches, contamination etc) and the precautions (personal protective clothing, shoring, site security etc) that need to be taken. Giles even demonstrated the complete range of personal protective clothing by modelling every item that might possibly be needed!

Why and how we record

Giles and Duncan gave a good overview of why the recording of excavation is important, describing changes in attitudes to recording from antiquarian times to the modern day. They demonstrated the range of techniques that archaeologists use to record excavation; including the written record (context sheets, reports), the drawn record (plans and sections) and photography.



Stratigraphy - layers of information

Giles gave an excellent talk on the principles of stratigraphy and demonstrated how archaeologists put a Harris matrix together. This was a challenging, interactive session, with the audience taking part in deciding what order the layers should appear on the matrix. See the Powerpoint presentation for further details.



Post-excavation work

Finally, Duncan talked about what happens after an excavation has finished. There is a huge amount of checking, drawing, interpreting and writing involved in post-excavation work. This all culminates in a report, which was described in detail.



Each talk was followed by a question and answer session, providing people with the chance to discuss the principles of excavation and recording with the archaeologists present.

It was hoped that this workshop would be followed by a visit to an archaeological excavation. However, at that particular time there were no excavations taking place in York and therefore it was decided to postpone the site visit until a suitable excavation was available.

Thanks to all who took part in the workshop and to Duncan Stirk and Giles McFarland for running such an interesting and useful day.

Contact

For further information on Community Archaeology in Greater York please contact Jon Kenny on 01904 663020 or email jkenny@yorkarchaeology.co.uk

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