



Community Archaeology Workshop: 8

WORKSHOP 8 - First Aid for Finds Conservation Day

Praise for workshop 8:

"It was good to have an 'open' approach and not be treated as 'just those amateurs'; it helps us get it right" (Local History Society member)

"Useful information, an insight in to some of the less well known aspects of archaeology, provides inspiration to pursue local archaeology" (Finder, metal detectorist)

"It was good to meet other people doing projects" (Local History Society member)

"Fascinating. Very informative and well presented." (Conservator)

"Our 12 year old said she enjoyed all of it and they were friendly too!" (Education activities in the galleries)

"I enjoyed the day a lot...it was spot on!" (Metal detectorist)

The November workshop was something a little bit different. It was organised in conjunction with the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and all of the day's events focussed on the conservation of artefacts. The idea was to get people thinking about how to look after the finds that we recover and how to preserve them for future generations to enjoy. The workshop was held at the Yorkshire Museum in York and was open to people from all over Yorkshire. Around 55 adults came along to the free event, plus 30 children who joined in the children's activities.

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The day began with an introduction to the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme by Anna Marshall, the Finds Liaison Officer for South and West Yorkshire. This was followed by a talk on Community Archaeology in the region by the Greater York Community Archaeologist, Eliza Gore. Both of these talks aimed to give people an insight into the outreach projects that exist in the region and to raise awareness of the opportunities that are out there.



The first talk on conservation, '*From Grot to Bling - is it possible?*', was led by Erica Paterson from York Archaeological Trust Conservation Services. She described the numerous ways in which conservators work to preserve metal objects and described the conservation methods that can be applied to different objects and some treatments that definitely should not be applied! This was a useful and interesting insight into the dos and don'ts of conservation.



After this, Julie Jones, also from York Archaeological Trust Conservation Services, gave a talk on Preventive Conservation Techniques, highlighting the best ways to store and display objects in order to ensure their long-term survival.

Running alongside these talks was the usual monthly Finds Surgery held by Simon Holmes, Finds Liaison Officer for North Yorkshire, and Jim Halliday. They had set up a stand in the Medieval Gallery of The Yorkshire Museum where finders of objects and metal detectorists could take their finds to be identified and recorded. This was a huge success and attracted larger crowds than usual due to the Conservation Day.



Also in the Medieval Gallery was a series of children's activities being run by staff from York Museums Trust, the Finds Liaison Officer for North Lincolnshire and Cainwen Paynton, the Education Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme. A projector was set up to enable children to take part in an interactive archaeological display called Past Explorers. This included activities such as learning about life in an Anglo-Saxon village, deciding what equipment would be needed on a fieldwalking survey, and learning how to locate and find objects by metal detecting and fieldwalking. To find out more about Past Explorers, or to have a go yourself, see www.pastexplorers.org.uk

Other children's activities included learning to handle and identify archaeological objects and how to make a medieval shield. Great fun was had by all who came along and thanks go to all who helped to run the activities.

After lunch a series of tours of the York Archaeological Trust's Conservation Laboratories took place. Groups of sixteen people were taken over to the laboratories by Eliza Gore, where they spent 45 minutes learning what a Conservator does and exploring the Wet Wood Laboratory. The tours gave those attending a chance to ask questions, to interact with the Conservators and to see the equipment that is required for large-scale conservation projects. Thanks to Jim Spriggs, Julie Jones and Erica Paterson, who led the tours, which proved to be extremely popular.



Alongside the tours Dr Kevin Leahy, Finds Advisor to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, gave two talks on the Archaeology of Metals. This was an excellent talk, which covered the manufacture of metal objects throughout the ages.

To find out more about the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which is also funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, visit www.finds.org.uk

Thanks to all who helped to make this day go smoothly, particularly Anna Marshall, Simon Holmes, Cainwen Paynton and Lisa Staves.

Contact

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