



Useful Websites

Getting Involved in Archaeology

Lots of people, including Metal Detectorists, share the same love of history & discovery as Archaeologists and are getting involved in Archaeology.

There are many advantages of getting involved such as learning, getting hands on experience, uncovering history, thus helping to write the record books being just a few.

If you are involved in a metal detecting role you will invariably be asked to hand over all finds & waver all rights to any treasure found. You are likely to be on a highly productive site & may well uncover more finds than you normally would.

If you are like me it's the finding & recording that matters & hopefully the finds will end up on display for the benefit of others. I do like to take a picture of what I find to look back on though when possible.

The following two pages show how to get involved in archaeology & are extracted, with the kind permission of David Connolly from the BAJR Guide 24 where much more useful information can be found.

There are many ways of getting involved and subsequent pages show some areas that I have personally been involved with & thoroughly enjoyed.

So if you are interested, contact your local; Archaeology Group (see over), Historical Society (see over), Museum, Finds liaison Officer, Seek Council Advice & let them know that you are available & eager to get involved.

Also keep your eye open for events such as the Festival of British Archaeology when it comes around again next year.

Please support UK Detector Net & record your finds with The Portable Antiquities Scheme for the benefit of future generations & the hobby

Introduction

Over the years, BAJR has been contacted by various groups and individuals ranging through schoolchildren to students, interested amateurs to people who are wanting to retrain from their current employment and those who are already archaeologists wanting to broaden their range of skills. Providing the answers to the questions produced a list of options for everyone to follow to find a suitable solution. This is not meant to be a definitive guide, as archaeology has limitless possibilities, however, it can be used as a starting point, depending on who you are, and what you want to do. There are other resources, which are listed at the end of the guide, but the final outcome depends on you, and the effort you want to put into it. One thing to remember is that whatever you do, and however you do it.... Archaeology should be fun.

The guide is divided into sections, and provides comment, ideas and suggestions on what you can do, how to do it, and what you will need to know.

WHAT IS ARCHAEOLOGY?

Best to start with what archaeology actually is – (and it does not have anything to do with Dinosaurs or Fossils – interesting as they might be) Archaeology is the study of the material remains and environmental effects of human behaviour. It is based on the study of evidence which can range from study of entire civilisations to DNA strands that tell us about genetic makeup. The period of time it covers is from the origins of hominds some 10 million years ago to the remains of 20th century, such as Pillboxes and Trenches or Factories and Cinemas.

It often provides us with the only source of information about aspects of our development, such as agriculture, the origin of civilisation, or the discovery of metals, that can only be understood through the examination of physical evidence. Archaeology also provides the only evidence for periods of the past where written records do not survive.

Archaeology links with subjects such as geography, social sciences, maths, physics, biology, chemistry, art, technology and of course history. This is an art and a science, it is one that stretches the mind, and is also pure fun. Often archaeology is seen as a hobby, a career for adventurous individuals, or as a broad based degree that will help with whatever you want to do in another career. It is whatever you want it to be. No matter who you are, how old you are, and what your interests or job is, archaeology is open to you, here is how.



As a hobby

LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETIES

There are many local History and Archaeology Societies across the UK, and once again, you need to know where to go to find them. The best place to go is your Local History Centre, often found in the main Library, where they should have details of the groups in the area.

A full list of these can be found here:

<http://www.bajr.org/whosewho/localhistory.asp>

Examples of active groups are

Kent Archaeological Society

<http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk>

Essex Amateur Archaeology Association

<http://www.ages-aaa.co.uk/projects.htm>

Avon Valley Archaeological Society

<http://www.avas.org.uk>

Biggar Archaeology Group

<http://www.biggararchaeology.org.uk>

Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society

<http://www.eafs.org.uk>

Huddersfield & District Archaeological Society

<http://www.huddarch.org.uk/index.htm>



A group walk around a historic town



Society carrying out Geophysical survey

There are many many more of course, so you should be able to find one in your area.

BAJR has collected an extensive list of active societies here:

<http://www.bajr.org/WhoseWho/ArchSoc.asp>

and **Current Archaeology** has an excellent list here:

<http://www.archaeology.co.uk/local-societies/>

Many of the local societies have excavations and fieldtrips during the summer while the rest of the time they put together lectures and talks, though be aware, that a large proportion of local groups no longer actively engage in fieldwork or research.

The age of members can often be high, but not always, with many groups having active membership in their 20s and 30s and they are always more than welcoming of young members, though if you are under 16, you will have to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. This however, does allow you to have fun as a group or family, and the adult will be having as much fun as you. If you join a society, you will be able to be one step ahead should you go to university, as you will have experience, and that is one of the most important elements in archaeology. Even if you don't want to pursue archaeology as a career, the fun to be had as an amateur is just as rewarding, and indeed, there is more chance of carrying out fascinating unhurried research on real sites with a society. It is important to check you are joining an active archaeology society though, so ensure this is not 'just' a lecture society.



There is even a special project run by Carenza Lewis (of Time Team fame), the **HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD ACADEMY (HEFA)** that brings together young people and groups, such as local history societies, to carry out archaeological and documentary investigations into the historical development of villages and hamlets across the country, as part of a widening participation programme for higher education.

<http://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/aca/fa>

Finds Handling Days at the Yorkshire Museum 28th January & 25th February 2009



Palaeolithic to Roman Finds Handling Day - yours truly holding a Bronze Age sword, on the right is 'Assistant Curator of Community Archaeology' David Evans who along with 'Assistant Curator of Archaeology Learning' Kelly Powell (not shown) gave excellent descriptions of the artefacts and their use as they were passed around and answered all the questions raised. Everyone found the 'Finds Handling Days' most interesting and informative and it was great to be able to see and to hold such wonderful historical objects.



Palaeolithic flint hand axes, stone axe, Bronze Age axe & sword, Iron Age lynch pin, terret rings & beads, gold staters, Roman Samian ware, tiles, oil lamp & Roman shoe.



The pot is a Bronze Age collared beaker and the brooch is an Iron Age Dragonesque type. The gloves were required for handling metal objects. Each of the two sessions was scheduled for two hours but was allowed to overrun a little for those who wished to remain for a little more information and to ask further questions.



It was great to hold the flint and polished stone hand axes and learn how they were used in the past and I've never seen so many flint scrapers, blades and arrow heads in my life, Dave gave a detailed explanation of how the scrapers were fashioned by knapping and how to tell if a flint had been knapped.



Viking and Medieval Finds Handling Day - Kelly Powell demonstrating the use of the Spindle Whorl while 3rd Year PhD Student Hilary Patterson looks on. Kelly gave an excellent description of the artefacts and their use as they were passed around and Hilary helped with the questions raised.



There was lots of Medieval 'Greenware' pottery, a purse bar, Pilgrim's ampulla, traders tokens and spindle whorls made from lead, stone and bone. Beautifully made Viking combs made from deer antler, floor tiles, cremation urns and what was thought to be bone ice skates which you could try out on a smooth area of carpet if you so fancied.



This Medieval pot told an interesting tale, apparently they were kept under the tables for toilet purposes when entertaining guests as it was considered bad manners for guests to leave the table to go to the toilet.



An intricately made and decorated comb demonstrating the skills of the maker. Alongside it is an Anglian cremation urn dated 5th to 6th century AD. Viking pottery has been found in York in domestic contexts, but for both cultures it seems that when it came to dishes, such as plates, bowls and cups, they relied more on organic materials such as wood or horn than pottery.



The Viking bone ice skate, the bones were tied to the bottom of the shoes using leather thongs, the holes for the thongs are in the sides of the skates at the front and the back. The front of the skate has been formed into a wedge to pass easily over minor bumps.



The ingenious medieval object on the left is dual purpose, it can be filled with oil and used as a lamp or can be inverted and a candle inserted in the hole in the bottom . The now flattened object on the right is a medieval Pilgrim's Ampulla which would have been obtained on a pilgrimage and filled with holy water.

I would like to thank the York Museums Trust (Yorkshire Museum) for allowing me to publish the images which cannot be reproduced without their permission.

**The Heslington East Community Archaeology Dig
York & District Metal Detecting Club Members taking part**
Press Release [click here](#)



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Battlefield Archaeology



Helping the Time Team

