WAS & WORTHING MUSEUM
Highdown Big Dig – 19th July – 1st Aug
Site Code: HBD.25

FINDS PROCEDURE FOR TEST PITS

BULK FINDS:

Finds recovered from each 10 cm layer should be placed in a finds bag labelled appropriately for each depth (i.e. the first bag will be 0-10 cm). This procedure should continue until the Test Pit is completed. The finds bags should be returned to the Finds Tent.

SMALL FINDS:

If a special find is discovered ***in situ,*** for example: a **coin, any precious or significant metal item or worked flint (i.e. an axe or arrowhead) or dateable stamped or decorated pottery or glass (but not modern) or any other interesting item, such as worked bone or worked stone,** this should be regarded as a **SMALL FIND** and the following procedure should apply:

- When a find is located, **DO NOT MOVE THIS**, mark with point of trowel and notify the Site Director or Supervisor.
- You will then be asked to lift the find for verification, keeping the find spot marked.
- Once verified, mark the find spot with a nail.
- The coordinates should be measured using tapes to record Eastings and Northings or with a handheld GPS.
- The find should be placed in a bag labelled with the Site Code, Test Pit No., the depth found and coordinates.
- Return the SF bag to the Finds Tent with the Bulk Finds.

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FINDS PROCEDURE FOR TRENCHES

BULK FINDS:

Finds recovered from each context should be placed in the labelled finds tray and returned to the Finds Tent at appropriate intervals.

SMALL FINDS:

If a special find is discovered ***in situ,*** for example: a **coin, any precious or significant metal item or worked flint (i.e. an axe or arrowhead) or dateable stamped or decorated pottery or glass (but not modern) or any other interesting item, such as worked bone or worked stone,** this should be regarded as a **SMALL FIND** and the following procedure should apply:

- When a find is located, **DO NOT MOVE THIS**, mark with point of trowel and notify the Site Director or Supervisor.
- You will then be asked to lift the find for verification, keeping the find spot marked.
- Once verified, a label marked with the Trench ID, Context, SF number and a nail will be handed to you.
- Insert nail and label in find spot.

- **DO NOT REMOVE NAIL AND LABEL** until the find has been 3-D recorded.

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FINDS PROCEDURE FOR FINDS SUPERVISORS AND TEAM

BULK FINDS

TRENCHES:

- Ensure each finds tray has a label marked with the Site Code, Tr. ID and Context No.
- Add Finds Procedure when required.
- Check and empty trays at regular interval.s
- If fragile objects are identified, ensure that separate marked bags are placed in the tray to avoid damage.

TEST PITS:

- Label a finds tray with Site Code and TP No. and add TP Finds Procedure, Recording Form, Supervisor's Check List, the document 'How to Dig a Test Pit', if this is required, and a writing pen.
- Also add to TP tray: a magnetic compass, hand tape, string and 4 nails.
- Prepare a large finds bag, marked with Site Code & TP No. containing 5 medium bags, similarly marked, with each bag also marked with the depth starting at 0-10 cm up to 40-50 cm. Add spare bags in assorted sizes & permanent marker pen. Add bags to TP tray.
- Start the Finds Test Pit Tracker & add to TP Recording Folder.
- Prepare labelled carrier bag with Site Code & TP No. for returned finds.

PROCESSING ON SITE:

TRENCHES:

- When a tray is returned, sort those finds that should not be washed, i.e. metal, mortar, plaster, slag, fragile pot, glass or bone and place these in marked finds bags for later recording.
- Return finds to the appropriate finds bag for washing, ensuring that metal and fragile items are properly conserved
- After the washed finds are dry, sort the finds into categories and re-bag
- Quantify, weigh, record and discard any Fire-cracked Flint and Chalk
- If a decision is made to discard certain material other than above, select a representative sample from the context to retain but **do not record this.**

- **ONLY QUANTIFY, WEIGH AND RECORD BULK FINDS TO BE DISCARDED**
- Ascertain from Site Director(s) where discarded material should be deposited on site.

TEST PITS:

- When a tray is returned, ensure all the documents are completed.
- Sort those finds that should not be washed, i.e. metal, mortar, plaster, slag, fragile pot, glass or bone. Ensure that these items are placed in separate bags marked with the Site Code, TP No., depth found (i.e. 0-10 cm). Mark these bags with 'DO NOT WASH' and place in prepared TP carrier bag.
- Return remaining finds to the appropriate TP finds bag(s) and place in TP carrier bag for washing.
- After the washed finds are dry re-bag the finds and place in TP carrier bag for recording.
- Quantify, weigh and record finds from one TP at a time. Discard certain material if appropriate (see above under 'Trenches').
- Return all finds bags to TP carrier bag and mark 'Recorded'.

SMALL FINDS FOR TRENCHES EXCEPT TRENCH G (see below)

All finds found ***in situ***, e.g. a **coin, any precious or significant metal item or worked flint (i.e. an axe or arrowhead) or dateable stamped or decorated pottery or glass (but not modern) or any other interesting item, such as worked bone or worked stone,** this should be regarded as a SF and registered as such. Also any of the above found ***in situ*** in a **disturbed** context could similarly be treated as an SF.

- Once the find is verified, record SF in 3D SF Record, with allocated number, Trench ID, context and description of find.
- Mark label with Side Code, Trench ID, SF number within a triangle and context within a square. If there is space on the label, adding the type of find is also helpful.
- Place find in bag marked with same information.
- Hand SF label and nail to finder to place in find spot.
- Once the find is 3-D recorded, check returned SF label with record and bagged find.
- Cross through returned label and retain as final check

Finds, such as coins and dateable artefacts or anything special found in **disturbed** contexts but not ***in situ*** should be regarded as **Non 3-D (N3D)** finds and recorded as such in the N3D Record.

TRENCH G – LYNCHET EXCAVATION;

A Finds Team member will be required to assist the Specialist Geoarchaeologist on site, as all **individual finds *in situ*** will be 2-D or ideally 3-D recorded stratigraphically in section using raffle tickets as markers, one pinned to the section and the exact corresponding ticket with the find placed in a bag marked with the Site Code, Trench G. and any added information required.

The individual finds will then be registered in a separate list from the main excavation records.

All necessary finds equipment required for recording Tr. G on site will be contained in separate marked finds box.

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FINDS WASHING

DO NOT WASH:

Metal
Mortar
Wall Plaster
Chalk
Fragile Pottery
Fragile Glass
Fragile Bone

Wash items one at a time and ensure that all surfaces are clean, particularly the broken edges of pottery sherds.

Change the water regularly.

Place washed finds in a blue plastic basket for drying. Ensure that finds from only one Trench context are put in a basket or one Test Pit number with one level.

Wipe the inside of the bag with kitchen paper and tuck this securely in the side of the basket next to the finds.

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FINDS MARKING

Work on finds from one Trench context or Test Pit at a time.

Mark each find from a Trench with the Site Code and the context within a square, e.g.

HBD.25 34

Or in the case of a Test Pit mark with the Site Code and Test Pit number, for example:

HBD.25 TP 6

- **Marking should be as SMALL as possible but legible.**
- **It should be unobtrusive**
- **If possible, mark pottery on the inner surface and flint on the cortex (if present)**
- **Never mark pottery on broken edges or too near an edge and especially not on flint, as edges could have secondary working or retouch**
- **Black or white ink should be used where appropriate**
- **If the find is too small to write the full Site Code, only write the context within a square or Test Pit number.**
- **Use nail varnish sparingly on porous material or glass but allow this to dry before marking.**
- **Any marking errors can be removed on ceramic material by gently using a scalpel and on flint by wiping with a damp cloth.**
- **Make sure the ink is dry before bagging the finds**

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TRENCH BULK FINDS SORTING:

Once the washed Bulk Finds in the blue basket from one context are dry, sort into the following categories:

- **Pottery**
- **CBM – retained examples**
- **Foreign Stone including Horsham Stone and Slate**
- **Worked Flint**
- **Animal Bone**
- **Shell**

Bag the categories in separate bags marked with the Site Code, Trench ID, Context No. and type of find, e.g. 'Foreign Stone – Slate' or add to bags from the same context already containing the same type of find.