

## 10 An Etiquette Guide to... Fieldwork

Khadija McBain (mailto:secretary@theposthole.org)

A guide to fieldwork, or as you will come to know it; digging for stuff!

1) Three weeks of being outside and not having lectures or seminars – make the most of it!

2) This may seem a little daunting at first but suggest to your group a pub outing after fieldwork, just so that you get to know them better and start to build a rapport. Most importantly invite your supervisor!



Figure 1 – Pick Your Supervisor! Will it Be...? Top Left: The Thinker. Top Right: The Sunbather. Bottom Left: The Fisherman. Bottom Right: The Drinker. (Image Copyright – Mark Simpson (Top Left; Bottom Right); Khadija McBain (Top Right); Jonathan Finch (Bottom Left))

3) Supervisors can really add to your excavation experience. Hopefully you will get one that:

- Swears a lot.
- Does not take it too seriously (even though it is their job).
- Likes to chat about anything, especially during the breaks.
- Is funny.
- Is approachable about your trench queries.
- And most importantly, likes to partake in going to the pub after fieldwork.

## 4) Excavation fashion:

- Do expect the weather to be down right awful! It is England after all, so bring warm clothes and waterproofs all the time.
- However, there is always going to be a few who like to show of their 'excavation chic' you will know who I am talking about.
- Girls **do not** wear boob tubes! Seriously! Or low cut tops for obvious reasons.
- Boys do not think bare chests (even if it is warm) is a good look, it really is not – everyone will think you are a show-off.
- If it is 'hot' make sure you bring a shirt to cover your shoulders and neck... sunburn is not a good excuse for a sickie.



Figure 2 – Weather Forecast. Top Left: Warm and Sunny. Top Right: Overcast and Cold. Bottom Left: Rain. Bottom Right: Hail. (Image Copyright – Mark Simpson (Top Left; Top Right; Bottom Right); Khadija McBain (Bottom Left))

5) Trench terminology look out for these key words, they will not mean anything to you in the first week (so pretend and nod) but work up the courage to ask your supervisor 'what on earth they are talking about?!'

- Ditch.
- Edge(s).
- Trowel back.
- And the favourite one: *feature*.



*Figure 3 – Feature Roulette! Which will you get? Top Left: The Modern Pipe Trench. Top Right: The ‘Interesting’ Cobbled Area. Bottom Left: The Barren Zone. Bottom Right: The Water Feature. (Image Copyright – Mark Simpson (All))*

6) Excavations are where you see two groups emerge – the ‘real’ archaeologists and the ones that do not like getting their hands dirty at all!

7) Every group will have a few moaners, but the best way to deal with them is to **AVOID THEM** as best as you can. They will only do your head in.

8) A few people will do a few sickies. Try not to do this – excavation is all about team work, and you do not want to let your team down.



*Figure 4 – Beware of... Left: Students with Water Sprayers. Centre: Supervisors with Cake. Right: Mattocking Through Archaeology. (Image Copyright – Khadija McBain (Left & Right); Jonathan Finch (Centre))*

9) Hope that you have a good group you will be the envy of all the other trenches, especially if you are able to make working in the rain fun.

10) Yes you still have to work in the rain!

11) These experiences will turn you into an alcoholic – but obviously not while you are doing fieldwork!

12) Be prepared for some disappointments. The Gateway to Atlantis is not likely to lie at the bottom of your trench.

13) Avoid envy if possible. The next trench along may look like it has much more stuff, but yours may well have the quality finds.

14) But above all: Have fun!

## About The Post Hole

The Post Hole is a student run journal for all those interested in archaeology. It aims to promote discussion and the flow of ideas in the department of Archaeology for the University of York and the wider archaeological community. If you would like to get involved with the editorial process, writing articles or photography then please get in touch via email – (<mailto:editor@theposthole.org>).

Follow The Post Hole online Facebook - <http://goo.gl/S3fXl> Twitter - <http://goo.gl/mwAV8> Google+ - <http://goo.gl/sE5cT>