

**Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society
(BAHS)**

ARCHAEOLOGY

HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook sets out the information you need whilst engaging in archaeological research or fieldwork with BAHS, and what is expected of you. It also explains what you can expect of us. It provides information about BAHS policies and procedures relevant to archaeological research and fieldwork, whether this is excavation or any other type of fieldwork. It is a term of your volunteering for BAHS that you agree to abide by these principles and procedures.

We believe that that fieldwork should be a pleasant and productive environment in which all volunteers are treated fairly. Our policies and procedures have been designed to comply with both statutory and best professional practice. It is our intention that their application will create an environment that is of mutual benefit to everyone. We value all who volunteer for us, and we want your experience with us to be as rewarding and enjoyable as possible.

This handbook also acts as a pointer to our archaeology guides designed for specific topics, such as excavation or finds processing. These topic specific guides advise on the standards that should be followed and act as a reference point when completing a context sheet, deciding which symbols are appropriate on a section or plan drawings, and so forth. Having an agreed set of standards to work within ensures maximum uniformity across record keeping and makes it much easier for whoever has to interpret the data when writing up reports.

CONDUCT

You can expect us to:

- Provide a safe working environment.
- Provide you with an induction and training to enable you to carry out your volunteering including appropriate health and safety guidance whilst on site.
- Explain what your tasks will be.
- Provide you with a supervisor who will guide and support you in your role.
- Explain the standards that we expect and encourage you to maintain them.
- Try and resolve fairly any problems or difficulties you may have while volunteering.
- Welcome feedback so we can improve what we do.

We ask you to:

- Work safely for your own sake and others.
- Respect our standards and values.
- Perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability.
- Maintain good relations with other volunteers, our supervisors and others.
- Adhere to policies and procedures brought to your attention.
- Avoid subconscious bias towards others on site.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We are committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all our volunteers. We will provide you with all the appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training to ensure that you and others work safely while volunteering with BAHS. As a volunteer you must:

- Make yourself familiar with the health and safety procedures and your health and safety duties and responsibilities, as outlined in this handbook.
- Follow the health and safety procedures of BAHS. You must not do anything that could threaten the health or safety of yourself, other volunteers or members of the public.
- Report any health and safety concerns you may have.

The archaeological site is the responsibility of BAHS, not the owners of the land on which we are working. BAHS will have done everything it can to make the fieldwork project as safe and enjoyable as possible. A risk assessment is carried out before any work starts and is made available to all participants. However, all participants are responsible for looking after their own safety and that of those around them. These rules have been prepared to detail those responsibilities. Through your Fieldwork Registration Form and by signing in to the site each day, you indicate that you accept these rules and responsibilities.

BAHS will accept no liability for accidents unless negligence is established, and cannot accept liability for loss or damage to the property of volunteers.

Failure to follow our safety rules or other reasonable instructions from site or trench supervisors may result in termination of your participation in the project.

General Site Rules

- No one is permitted to enter the areas of excavation (or other fieldwork) or to undertake work on them, unless under BAHS supervision.
- Fencing and other safety barriers will be employed to contain areas that have drops of more than 30 cm or are considered a risk to anyone who may venture on site.
- Trenches deeper than 1m will be shored or stepped and you must wear a hard hat within.
- Fencing and other safety barriers must not be moved or altered without consent or instruction from the site supervisor.
- To ensure that instructions can be heard and concentration maintained, no radios or other sound equipment are permitted (this includes headphones attached to a mobile phone or other music device).
- Where your voluntary work requires you to wear protective clothing or specialist kit as a Health and Safety Requirement, this will be provided by us and must be worn as directed.
- Spoil from excavation must only be placed in the areas instructed.
- Smoking is not permitted on site.
- Alcohol may not be consumed on the site during working hours. Anyone whose capability to work is, in the opinion of the supervisory staff, impaired through consumption of alcohol or other substances will be asked to leave the site.
- Do not throw tools around.

- Avoid running on site.
- If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious infection, disease or illness, you must not volunteer until you are medically clear.
- In respect of any endemic or pandemic disease you must abide by the guidelines as set out by the Government or other relevant authority that are in force at the time, paying particular attention to social distancing, quarantine and self-isolation requirements. We will ensure our sites and operating procedures are fully compliant with any regulations in force at the time.
- Children under the age of 18 years must at all times be accompanied by an adult member responsible for their actions.

Tools and Equipment

Correct methods of using tools and equipment will be explained and these must always be followed. If unsure about the correct use of a tool it should not be used. If you find a tool or piece of equipment to be faulty, it must no longer be used and reported to a supervisor. Buckets and barrows must not be overloaded. All tools and equipment must be left in a safe way, as instructed, and stored away at the end of any period of work.

Accidents and Injuries

A qualified **First Aider** will always be on site and a first aid kit will be available. Persons with mobile phones and use of cars will also be available if help is needed.

You must rapidly report any accidents or incidents you have while volunteering to one of the supervisors on site.

Injuries, including minor injuries, and illnesses that develop on site (including headaches) should be reported for entry into the Accident Register, so that they can be reviewed and procedures developed to avoid future occurrences.

Any cut or burn on the hand or arm must be covered with a suitable approved dressing.

If you feel unwell and wish to leave the site, you are, of course able to do so. But please let the site supervisor know before you leave. The supervisor will want to ensure that you can get home safely and will sign you out if you are unable to sign for yourself.

Personal Health and Safety

Stout footwear and other clothing appropriate to the work undertaken must be worn.

It is each individual's responsibility to take appropriate action to avoid sunburn, sunstroke, dehydration or hypothermia. It is a good idea to bring a hat, sun cream, a water bottle and any medication you may require. In adverse weather it is a good idea to bring waterproofs and cold weather clothing.

Instructions concerning correct methods of lifting and carrying will be provided, but you should not attempt to lift or carry anything you feel to be beyond your capability.

You should take advice from your doctor about the need for Tetanus injections and any medical condition that might affect the type of work you undertake. Any such conditions should be reported to a supervisor before work begins.

If you feel threatened or at risk in your working environment, you should immediately report your concerns to a supervisor, a member of the BAHS main committee.

Expectations of Behaviour and Conduct

Please bear in mind there is rarely certainty in archaeological matters and it is usually better to consider your interpretations as suggestions rather than absolute fact. Integral to skills learning, you are welcome to put forward your ideas on the interpretation of archaeological finds or features and we try and encourage this through a regular question and answer session which might form part of the daily briefing at the commencement of the day's work.

If for some reason you feel obliged to provide advice, for example on a tricky piece of excavation, think first whether you are suitably qualified to do so and if in doubt refer the matter to your supervisor or the archaeological advisor to the site.

Everyone participating should be civil towards others. Rudeness will not be tolerated towards other members and volunteers, or members of the public.

Objectionable or insulting behaviour, or bad language, may render you liable to exclusion.

Dealing with Problems and Concerns

We aim to treat all our volunteers with respect. Should you have any concerns then you should speak to your supervisor immediately. If this does not resolve the problem then you should speak to another supervisor, a member of the BAHS main committee, or if appropriate, the Society's Safeguarding Officer (details of our Safeguarding Policy can be found at www.bahsoc.org.uk).

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all and we encourage people from all sections of society to consider volunteering with BAHS. We expect all our volunteers to abide by our equal opportunity policy and to avoid applying subconscious bias. Failure to do so may result in the termination of your participation.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

This section is about the various administrative matters on site. While these may be covered in briefings etc. they are here as a reference for you.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by our insurance whilst participating in archaeological fieldwork for BAHS. However, for practical reasons there is an upper age limit on certain aspects of the insurance.

Induction

Before you start you will be asked to fill in a Fieldwork Registration Form, and you will be given a short induction, which includes health and safety guidance. If you are engaging with excavation or another type of fieldwork you will be issued with a risk assessment report.

Upper and Lower Age Limits for Participants

We do not set an upper age limit for volunteering because we recognise the contribution made by all our volunteers. However, some volunteering opportunities require a degree of physical fitness and it would be irresponsible for us to permit volunteers to continue beyond a point where they could endanger their health and the safety of others. We do not set a minimum age limit for volunteering, but expect a volunteer under 18 to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Who is in Charge?

The following describes BAHS usual practice.

Archaeological Advisor

For each major fieldwork project BAHS appoints an Overseeing Archaeologist. He or she will have worked with the BAHS Fieldwork Subcommittee in overseeing the necessary research before the excavation, setting objectives and usually overseeing the post-excavation analysis work. The Overseeing Archaeologist will not necessarily be on site every day at the excavation. Rather he or she will usually visit the site from time to time and give advice on the way forward as the excavation progresses.

Site Supervisor

The Site Supervisor has overall responsibility for the site during the day and will be on site all the time. The Site Supervisor role is always filled by a qualified and experienced archaeologist. The role may be rotated between various members of the BAHS Fieldwork Subcommittee.

Trench Supervisor

Ideally we try to appoint a Trench Supervisor for each individual trench, when this is not possible a Trench Supervisor may look after two or more trenches. He or she will oversee the work in that trench or trenches and decide on the work patterns of the diggers.

Site Administrator

On most days there will be a Site Administrator. Their task will be to run all administrative and support activities, including providing arrangements for tea and coffee, etc.

Finds Supervisor

We also have a Finds Supervisor. He or she is in charge of the finds processing team.

Site Surveyor and Site Photographer

There is usually also a designated Site Surveyor and Site Photographer. Again these are usually experienced members of the BAHS Fieldwork Subcommittee and the role may be rotated.

TeamWork

The BAHS people in these various roles work as a team and give up considerable time over and above the time on the excavation site. We ask you respect the designated roles and go along with tasks you are allocated. In case of serious disagreement, the Site Supervisor is the ultimate decision-maker.

Task Rotation

Note that the Site Supervisor may, from time to time, ask you to rotate tasks. This may be:

- To ensure that participants on the excavation get a wide experience of the various tasks involved in an excavation. These might include trowelling, wheel-barrowing, finds processing, drawing, assisting the Site Surveyor or helping with site logistics – even making the tea!
- To prioritise a certain aspect of the excavation. This often happens towards the end of an excavation when recording the site (drawing, photography and Total Station survey work) has to be prioritised.
- Because there is hard physical work to be done (particularly when back-filling the site) the Site Supervisor will try to ensure that the workload is evenly spread according to physical and technical ability.

You are asked to make the Site Supervisor aware of any physical problems you might have, and can also indicate preferences. BAHS will always try and meet individual preferences and requirements and give training when possible.

Breaks

Every effort is made to provide regular breaks for everyone, particularly during physical work, although sometimes the timing and duration of the breaks may be adapted according to the prevailing weather conditions.

Time Keeping

As a courtesy to other participants, volunteers are asked to ensure that they arrive on site in good time, and also to start to pack away at the end of the day when requested to do so. While you might be keen to “just spend another ten minutes on this...” be aware that after the site has closed down, the site and trench supervisors will meet to discuss and analyse the day’s work and to plan work patterns for the next day. So starting and closing down promptly is essential. Having said that, it is recognised that not everyone is able to be on site full time due to work or other commitments and so we ask you to make us aware of any limitations you may have before the project begins.

Signing In

When you arrive on site ensure you sign or mark up the Daily Register. This is for Health and Safety reasons. Remember to sign out when you leave at the end of the day.

Leaving the Site during the Day

If you want to leave the site for a short time, please make sure that your Trench or Finds Supervisor, or the Site Supervisor knows where you have gone. This is for Health and Safety reasons. If you leave permanently for the day let them know and remember to sign out.

DISCOVERIES

All archaeological material recovered during work is to be properly recorded. Any records made by you will normally be the property of BAHS in so far as allowed by the legal arrangements under which the work was carried out.

Any finds made are the property of the land owner and it is a condition of your voluntary work with us that you do not keep or seek to retain any archaeological material that you find as a consequence of your work with us.

We will oversee arrangements for archaeological material to be returned to the legal owner or with their agreement transferred to a receiving institution.

In the event of a discovery being made that falls within the terms of the Treasure Act 1996, BAHS will appoint a single person, normally the Site Supervisor or other nominated person, to carry out the required reporting.

Human Remains

BAHS treats human bones and remains with respect. If you do find bone which you think might be human, stop working on it and let your Trench Supervisor or the Site Supervisor know immediately. Please do this quietly.

Before excavation begins, an Exhumation Licence must be obtained to allow us to deal with human remains. There are various procedures BAHS needs to follow when human bones are found to ensure that we stay within our authority.

We take the attitude that they are not bones – they are people. We will debate whether or not to excavate further in that area, and may well close down that part of a site. We ask all BAHS participants to respect human remains, for example by not walking over them.

ARCHAEOLOGY GUIDES

Detailed guides (see below) exist for various activities and these are made available on site. You should take care to refer to these when carrying out particular tasks such as completing context sheets or drawing plans. Copies of the guides are also available on our website at www.bahsoc.org.uk.

- Desk Based assessments
- Landscape survey
- Woodland survey
- Fieldwalking survey
- Geophysical survey
- Excavation
- Finds Processing

BAHS COPYRIGHT

BAHS asserts its right to copyright ownership of any records, drawings, photographs or other works produced by you during the course of your volunteer work on behalf of the society.

If you wish to use any of the copyright material for any purpose, either alone or in association with a third party, then you should apply to the BAHS committee for license to do so at the earliest opportunity. The committee will not seek to inhibit your initiative, but will balance the merits of your application against the society's interest in the material.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Some sites or aspects of sites you work on may be subject to confidentiality agreements and where these exist we will inform you and ask you to respect such agreements.

We expect you to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documents or other material containing confidential information relevant to the project and unless in the course of our business or required by law you must not, either before or after the termination of your voluntary work, disclose such information to any person without our prior written consent. Additionally, on the termination of your volunteer role, or at any other time, upon demand return to us such material in your possession.

Our policies on publicity may vary from site to site and we will give you the appropriate guidance relative to the site you are working on. Until you have received such guidance you should not make any statements to any member or branch of the media or through social media without first seeking permission from the Fieldwork Subcommittee.

As a volunteer you may handle personal and sensitive data. We are committed to confidentiality and therefore it is important that you do not pass this data on to a third party. We will also ensure that all data we hold on you will be confidential and stored according to correct procedures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many sources have been consulted for this handbook and one organisation we would like to thank in particular is WARG, who generously allowed us to use extracts from their handbook. The result is a set of carefully collated data which is of particular relevance to archaeology volunteers.

REVISION HISTORY

This document is revised by the BAHS Fieldwork Subcommittee not later than three years from date of the last review.

Revision History	Amendments
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