

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

**Photography**

**On Site And Artefactual**

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## Introduction

Photographs can illustrate complex visual information. They are not a substitute for written records or drawings, but they supplement the archive.

## General Procedures

- For official photographs, only an approved BAHS camera should be used.
- The camera should be set to take the correct image formats, and to have the correct time and date.
- The camera image number should be set as a continuous series.
- The BAHS digital photography record sheet should be completed for every shot taken.
- Ideally, two people should work on photography together, the photographer and a record-taker.

## Site Photography

### Choosing subjects

- The photographic record should enhance the recording of contexts, and relationships between contexts. It should parallel the drawn record, so that drawings and photographs can be compared.
- Photographs that record the progress of the work should show the overall site, general views, before/during/after photos of the trenches and work in progress.
- Photographs taken as archaeological record shots should record contexts, pre- and post-excavated features, any details thought to be particularly significant or unclear, details that would be hard to adequately record by drawing, in situ special finds or groups of finds, animal bone groups.
- There are special considerations for photographing human remains and cremation finds. See the BAHS guide on human remains.
- Photographs taken for outreach and dissemination should record images for illustrating lectures, specialist activities and images for publication.
- A record shot should be taken of every section or feature, using the completed board (site code, section number, context number, shot number, north arrow) and appropriately sized scale.
- A photograph should be taken with the completed board and one without the board. Photograph the board separately as well if it is difficult to read in the photo.

### Taking The Photograph

- Consider the purpose of the photograph.
- Ensure that light, weather conditions, other people working, etc are optimal for the photograph.
- Clean the area, removing tools and spoils.

- Compose the shot by being clear what should be in it, not recording too wide an area, always using appropriate scales, avoiding hi-vis clothing, avoiding shadows.
- Trench photos should be taken from one end or from each end if there is a great deal of archaeology. A T-shape scale pointing towards the photographer should be used. Consider photographing the trench in its wider context.
- If photographing a trench section, clean a minimum one-metre section. Clear spoil from the foreground. Avoid looking down at the section. Avoid shadows and glare.
- The scale must be placed horizontally or vertically. If at an angle, it will be distorted.
- A north arrow should be included in the photograph where appropriate.
- Make sure main subject is in focus.
- Review the photo after taking. Do not delete. Take an additional photo if necessary.
- If a photograph needs detailed location information, this is done by including photo targets in the photograph, and surveying their location.

### The Photographic Record

- Each photo has a photo record number, to be recorded on the BAHS digital photography record sheet.
- If starting a new record sheet, complete site info, date and sheet number.
- The View section is the compass direction that the photographer is facing.
- Ensure photo number and file number agree.

### Finds Photography – Finds In Situ

- Photographs are taken to record fragile artefacts, their relationship with the context, relationship with other finds, to show condition and to record method of removing them.
- Some finds always need in situ photography: human remains (see separate guide on human remains) and grave goods, groups of animal bones and industrial debris.
- Grave goods should be clearly defined and cleaned and left in situ for photographs. Photographs of entire burial remains should be photographed as one entity.
- Pyre debris (external to the grave): pre-excavation shot and a shot of half-excavated section should be taken.

## Finds Photography – Finds After Excavation

- Photographs are often taken of anything particularly interesting or unusual, or when the photos are to be sent to specialists.
- Consider the background carefully to best show the find.
- Some finds need to be photographed from different angles.
- When a find is being photographed, there should be one photo of the find alone, and one photo of the find with a scale and finds label.
- Review the photo and take another if necessary. Do not delete photographs.
- Record the photograph number.

## Photography And The Project Database

Ensure that when photographs are imported into the project database, they are stored in the correct place in the project database.