

## TEST PIT METHODOLOGY

PLEASE ENSURE YOU RETURN ALL THE ITEMS IN THE KIT SO THEY CAN BE USED AGAIN.

The Big Village Dig is a serious project to investigate the history of North Duffield using the medium of a 'random' sample of test pits. The test pits will, we hope, give us a 'snapshot' of the villages' history.

In order that the Project fulfils its purpose, it is necessary to lay down a few Rules so that we all do the same thing in the same way. We have tried to keep the Rules to a minimum so that they do not spoil the event but ensure consistency across the sampling process. Remember that two days have been allocated to allow a slow and careful excavation and so that nothing will be missed. We do hope that you make some good 'finds', perhaps of pottery, glass or bone. You could, just as easily, find a Roman coin, as several have already been found in the village but, to do so, you will have to be very thorough in your search as Roman coins are usually smaller than a 5p piece and soil coloured at best. Some Roman coins were made of gold or silver but most were made of bronze or alloys.

Please place the poster supplied in a conspicuous position so that it can be seen from the road. If you have one and the soil is reasonably dry, a garden type riddle or sieve is useful for separating out the small things you might easily miss

Having chosen the site for your 1m x 1m test pit, mark out the square using the 1m cane provided with string and pegs. The square should contain a right angle at each corner as near as you can make it. Insert the supplied marker sign showing the unique reference number of your test pit Place the 40cm scale bar so that it is clearly visible in the photo and also align the North sign with Magnetic North. A compass will be available at Dig HQ.

- Complete the Context Sheet using the notes provided.
- Take photograph of area and enter photo details on the Photo Recording Sheet.
- You will have an experienced excavator to assist you or to do the digging if you are unable to do so. He/she may have responsibility for another pit close by so, be patient and await the arrival of your 'expert'.
- Place the tray close to the test pit to receive any 'finds' you make. The tray should also contain one of the large plastic bags carefully marked in permanent ink with the Project Code BVD11 the Pit No. and the Spit letter you are working in(see later) It should also contain 2 of the white labels each marked with the Site Code, Pit number and Spit Letter.
- It is also a good idea to lay out on old carpet or sheet of plastic or several sheets of old newspaper not too far from the hole, to put the excavated soil on, to keep things tidy.
- If the site you have chosen is in a lawn or covered with grass, carefully remove the turf exactly on the lines of the stringed area and put to one side so that it can be replaced at the conclusion of the 'dig' in the same order that you took it out. The turf should be no thicker than is necessary to allow removal without breaking. Now add the Spit letter (see below) to the sign and again photograph the test pit. (Enter on Photo Sheet)
- If you have chosen a soil area mark the sign with the Spit letter(see below) and photograph the area . (Enter on Photo Sheet)

- Now carefully remove the soil from within the stringed area trying to maintain a level working surface. Do not try to take off too much soil with the trowel, scraping with the side of trowel to a depth of about 1cm is ideal. Place the soil you have removed in a bucket or similar keeping a close eye on anything the soil might contain. If you have a garden sieve it is good idea to place the sieve on top of the bucket so that you can sieve the soil as it goes in to the bucket. When full, empty the bucket onto the laid out sheeting.
- Remove soil to a depth of 20cm below the ground surface using the marked cane provided as a measure. We refer to this 20cm area as a 'Spit'. There will be 5 x 20cm Spits starting with the top one 'A' and last and bottom one 'E'
- Place any 'finds' in this Spit you make in the tray. This is crucial as it is the only record of where an item was found(which Test Pit and which Spit)
- Watch out for changes in the colour/texture/make-up of the soil as this might indicate a 'feature'. In case of doubt speak to your designated helper. You may also find submerged brick or stonework
- Try at all times to keep the walls of the test pit vertical to prevent sidewall collapse or a reduction of the digging area.
- Having excavated 20cm, that comprises Spit A - any finds should now be in the tray with the marked plastic bag. The finds should now be washed in the plastic tray of water with the toothbrush and placed on a sheet of newspaper to soak up excess water or patted dry.

#### PLEASE DO NOT WASH METAL OBJECTS.

- Now place the 'finds from Spit A in the plastic bag. Make sure the bag is clearly marked in permanent marker with the Pit and Spit details. Please remember that it is of the utmost importance that 'finds' from each Spit are kept together and not mixed up with 'finds' from other Spits.
- Take the plastic bag of 'finds' to the Control Centre in the Kings Arms public house where they will be identified by a professional archaeologist.
- Once completed, take the bag of finds to the marquee on the village green where they will be recorded, and, where appropriate, displayed.
- Return to your test pit and change the Spit letter to B and repeat the process as for Spit A. Carefully remove the next 20cm of Spit B. Place two new labels in the finds tray reflecting the fact that you are now excavating Spit B and place all 'finds' in the tray as before.
- This process should be repeated until you completed a total 5 x 20cm spits and excavated to a depth of 1 metre. This is the maximum allowable depth for Health and Safety reasons, for a test pit 1 metre square.
- As you excavate, your helper will be able to answer any queries you may have. The contact number for the HQ is 07938206354. You may call this number at any time for assistance/advice.

It only remains for us to hope that the weather holds, that you enjoy your Time Team type event and that you find loads and loads of interesting items.

Once your test pit is completely excavated please inform Project Control so that we can keep our records up-to-date. We would also like copies of all the photographs you took. If they are digital photos, we can process these for you free of charge. We have created a Feedback form so that we can hear how you felt the project went and any suggestions for improving it are most welcome.

Anything that is found in your Test Pit belongs to you or the landowner if that is not you. We would, however, ask to retain all the items until the Project is complete, for research purposes. We will be happy to provide you with a photograph of any/all the items found in the meantime