

## **Roman Wales Archaeology Workshop Outline – Year 7**

**(Pilot Talk for Archaeology Club)**

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Fitzalan High School**

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### *Synopsis*

The workshop is designed to introduce year 7 pupils into the study and practical application of archaeology through the case study of Caerleon Roman Legionary Fort. Through communal learning and hands-on practical activities it is hoped that the pupils will gain a greater understanding of just how multi-disciplinary the study of archaeology is, how it often employs cutting edge research and technology in a practical manner and how many useful skills that they can gain. Part I of the workshop will begin with a PowerPoint presentation on key concepts of the archaeological excavation process with examples from the Cardiff University and UCL recent 2010 excavations at Caerleon Roman Fort Priory Field. It will conclude with some of the most recent important new finds as a result of the geophysical surveys and excavations. In Part II, students will be asked to imagine that they are responsible for the post-excavation recording of the finds at an archaeological site. The students will be briefed on object handling, drawing, describing and recording objects. Through an object handling session using the teaching collections at Cardiff University, the students will be invited to discuss the importance of the study of archaeological finds and think about the implications of excavation, removing artefacts from their original contexts e.g. skeletons, religious items, and whether archaeologists should be allowed to do so.

### *Part 1:*

PowerPoint “Excavating the Lost City of the Legion”

1. *How archaeologists survey and plan potential excavations*, using evidence such as unnatural “human-made” topography, maps, aerial photography, geophysical survey and researching previous excavations.
2. *How archaeologists excavate*, what tools that they use, how they lay out trenches and the importance of stratigraphy.
3. *How archaeologists plan and record what they excavate*, recording features, fills and deposits in context sheets, drawing features, photography, planning their feature in relation to the rest of the site. The importance of recording as feature cannot be excavated in same manner again.
4. *Details of Caerleon excavations*, including the important new finds of armour (plate and ceremonial), evidence of quayside and suburbs suggesting Caerleon was in line to be one of the biggest Roman sites in Roman Britain.

## Part 2:

### Practical "Post-excavation recording" (in pairs)

1. *Object handling session*, students will be briefed on the fragility of the items (not lifting things by handles, weak spots etc), importance of not talking whilst holding object, holding object at all times over foam support, using both hands to hold object, only holding object when necessary.

Students are divided into small groups or pairs.

2. *How to draw, record and plan artefacts*, demonstrator explains how archaeologists describe what object is made from (fabric), colour, texture, decoration, and then what they think the object is for (function and interpretation). Next, how to draw objects such as pottery is explained, how to use the rim chart to work out the radius of pottery sherd (drawing pottery), and the use of scale bars (2:1 for drawing artefacts, scale sheet), and perception (looking and observing sheet)

Students are then given an object to handle and describe.

3. *Finds Reporting*, using the worksheets (finds report), pencil and ruler provided the pupils are asked to describe the object and make a scaled drawing of it. Pupils are to be encouraged to talk to their partner and to ask any questions.
4. *Reporting back on work*, students are then asked to bring their completed drawing object worksheets together to discuss how they have chosen to describe their object, which angle they selected to draw the object from, whether angle creates a problem.

## Part III

### Archaeology Discussion (group)

The students are asked to reflect upon what they have learnt about archaeology and the new skills that they have developed.

Students should gain an understanding that:

1. Archaeology is more than just excavation
2. The importance of recording every aspect of each find and feature both during and post-excavation
3. Archaeologists have to apply a range of knowledge from a variety of subjects including; geology, geography, history, mathematics, drawing, photography, physics, biology, ICT, and chemistry.
4. Archaeologists have to develop a range of skills including (but not limited to), surveying, geometry, drawing, planning, photography, interpreting, analytical thinking, first aid, practical skills such as trowelling and mattocking correctly.