

## 8 An Etiquette Guide to... Fieldwalking

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A guide to one of the most important aspects of archaeological field work:

- 1) Turn up!
- 2) Turn up to the second day as well.
- 3) At first it seems really exciting traipsing around a field looking for surface finds, but after lunch it will wear off. Make sure you pack a can of red bull for lunch, this will keep you going and give you that keen/hype pretence of caring.
- 4) Hope that you have a really good group, so that there is enough solid banter for two days.
- 5) Feel enthusiastic about every rock you find, hoping it might be pottery or bone.
- 6) Do not complain about the weather, be it rain or shine, too hot or too cold – it is always better than lectures and essays.
- 7) Try to keep looking down most of the time. Of course you want to look up to talk to the person next to you, but finds are at ground level. Your supervisor may not be happy if you walk right past a Roman coin hoard because you are discussing X Factor with the next person in line!



*Figure 1 – Students fieldwalking (Roman coin hoard not shown) (Image copyright – Mark Simpson)*

- 8) Watch your feet! This might seem obvious, but you do need to concentrate both on the ground in front of you and where you are walking. Twisting your ankle puts you on the sidelines for the rest of the day.

9) Everything is important... until it gets discarded. Do not feel downhearted if the 78 bits of clay pipe you found go onto the 'spoil heap', because that one fragment of Samian Ware or flint blade you spotted right at the end will likely be the big find of the day.

10) Also obvious, but listen to what the module leader says about dressing for the conditions. Warm clothes will be needed; remember it is grim up north (no time for north/south debate) so it *will* be cold, muddy and rainy (or even snowy!). Wellies or boots, a coat and possibly a hat will make you feel much more comfortable.

11) Before you go fieldwalking, make sure you actually go and look at the find examples that Cath will have on a tray (usually after a fieldwalking lecture). Not looking at the finds means that Cath will be inundated on the day with find bags filled with pebbles, sticks and chewing gum.

12) If you find something exciting make sure to make a big fuss and wave it about noisily. Not only will your peers be jealous, but they will be determined to find one themselves, therefore motivating everyone. However, make sure it is not a pebble, stick or bit of chewing gum, because that would be just embarrassing.



Figure 2 – Happy Harry has found something... (Image Copyright – Mark Simpson)

13) Have fun! Non-archaeology students will be jealous you were walking around a field for the day, and that it is *actually* part of your course.

## 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

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