

## Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Archaeology

ARCH2 (Section B) June 2009:

- Candidate Responses and Examiner Comments



The following responses are not 'model' answers, but are intended to illustrate the application of the mark scheme for this unit. These responses should be read in conjunction with the ARCH2 Question Paper, Sources Booklet and Mark Scheme.

Copies of the paper and are available from e-AQA or the AQA Archaeology Department.

E-mail: [archaeology@aqa.org.uk](mailto:archaeology@aqa.org.uk)

## Candidate 1

## Section B

- 10 Explain how an understanding of site formation processes can enhance knowledge of sites such as Boxgrove. (30 marks)

By discovering how a site has been formed, archaeologists can enhance their knowledge of other similar sites. For example Boxgrove Man would have had to develop tools he could use for the appropriate environment. His tools would have to withstand the elements and be able to deal with the tasks that are needed from it.

By examining natural occurrences, archaeologists can estimate the structure and appearance of the land which would aid ~~examine~~ them in finding out how ~~the~~ <sup>people</sup> lived, hunted etc. From the landscape they can determine the animals present at the time and so what ~~the~~ <sup>people's</sup> diet consisted of.

By linking similar sites together problems and mistakes can be avoided and mysteries from one site may be solved by another. The location of the site itself and the depth at which it ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> found may also assist professionals in studying sites like Boxgrove by giving them a clue as to the date of the site.

Also by discovering how and where the site was found, archaeologists can determine the age of the site, the environment, the habitats and many other things that overall increase their knowledge of many sites, not just Boxgrove.

## Examiner's Comments

A weak response. The candidate shows no real awareness of site formation processes. It is possible to give some credit for discussion of development of tools, but little else.

L1 / 3 marks

## Candidate 2

## Section B

- 11 How useful are desk-top research and pre-excitation techniques when preparing to excavate a site such as Boxgrove that until recently was deeply buried? (30 marks)

Desk top study and pre excavation techniques are useful when preparing to excavate a site such as Boxgrove that was deeply buried until recently as they allow for archaeologists to learn as much as they can before actually excavating a site. Surveying, studying documents and the type of site all ~~play a~~ ~~role~~ are all useful when ~~are~~ preparing to excavate.

Desktop study may show the use of a site over time and the location of the site. Old maps and antiquarian sources can reveal the changes in the landscape over a long period of time and may show monuments that no longer exist. Also, by looking at the National Sites and Monuments Record it may be possible to find archaeological reports from previous excavations on a site. Norton Priory has changed over a number of years and this is shown by antiquarian engravings and maps and ~~the use of~~ therefore shows that desktop

study is useful when preparing to excavate a site. However, for some sites such as Boxgrove, maps and documents may not be ~~are~~ available and so desktop research is not of use for these sites.

The use of surveys may overcome the problem of the lack of written documents. Field walking is useful on recently ploughed arable land and can indicate particular areas that should be excavated from the ~~area~~ amount of finds in a certain area. However, as shown in the Shapwick Project, different fieldwalkers are better at identifying certain materials than others and so some finds may be missed.

Aerial photography may be used if there are earthworks or cropmarks but this is quite expensive and only works at certain times of year whilst metal detecting is only useful for metal at shallow depths. Geophysical survey on the other hand may reveal features in particular areas that may require excavation. This has proved useful at Wroxeter.

At Wroxeter, no excavation has been needed as most information can be learned from aerial photography, desktop study and geophysical survey. From the results of the resistivity and magnetometry surveys, archaeologists have been able to work out the layout of the site, identified features such as streets and a church and also interpreted a magnetic anomaly at one corner of the town as a result of a fire. Sampling pits have proved this and so surveying techniques are very useful when preparing to excavate a site as at sites

such as Wroxeter, enough information has been gained without the need to excavate.

The type of site affects the preparation to excavate and therefore the usefulness of desktop research & pre excavation techniques. Sites in the countryside and in rural areas mean that planning can be done & wide areas excavated. However, urban sites prevent a range of surveying techniques used and also the excavation may be limited. In wetland and submerged sites such as Star Carr or the Mary Rose, pre excavation techniques may not be viable or relevant and therefore will not be useful. For ancient sites, written documents may not be available so desktop research is not useful. Also, in salvage excavations, research & pre excavation techniques can't be used and so aren't that useful.

Desktop research and pre excavation techniques are quite useful when preparing to excavate a site that until recently was buried such as Boxgrove as desktop study can reveal any information found in previous excavations, previous land use and monuments that may no longer exist. Surveying techniques also prove useful as these can provide more information as to where to excavate and if a site is worth excavating. Surveys may also provide enough evidence about a site that excavation is not needed such as at Wroxeter. However, very old sites may not have documents available for desktop study such as at

Boxgrove & Stop Carr or survey techniques may not be viable at urban sites or submerged sites. Desktop research & pre-excavation techniques are very useful for preparing to excavate a site except at ~~a~~ very old sites and at urban, wetland and submerged sites.

**Examiner's Comments**

A very good response. Extensive coverage of both desk-top and pre-excavation techniques. Several good examples cited. There is even an attempt to consider strengths and weaknesses of the various techniques and their relevance to Boxgrove is broached.

L5 / 30 marks

## Candidate 3

## Section B

- 9 Boxgrove is a research project. Using examples, explain the similarities and differences between rescue and research projects. (30 marks)

Rescue and research excavations are similar but also extremely different. A major difference is funding. In research archaeology, there is no funding given and funds usually have to be generated by universities, large archaeological companies or the general public. At ~~the~~ the ~~the~~ Shipwreck project, it was greatly varied on the repeated work of universities and the generosity of the general public for work to keep going. Whereas, rescue excavation projects get the funding from the building companies who want to develop an archaeological

sites. They must file a PPG16, and then if archaeologists decide to excavate and record sites the the developers fund projects as they simply want to get on with developing the land.



That is also another factor that differentiated the two. Research excavations we done over many years sometimes and we are going for as long as archaeologists feel necessary. At Roman Wroxeter, evidence has been collected over many years to create a huge database for one of the most well preserved Romano-British settlements in Britain.

Rescue excavation is done under the time limit of the developer. At the Channel Tunnel, this was one of the largest excavations ever carried out in England. But it had to be done quickly. Developers needed to proceed with work so after excavation archaeologists were allowed to stand by developments and look in the disturbed soil for artefacts - ~~Artefacts~~ ~~which is important~~ Time given to dig is important as it could determine the difference between a huge find or small bits of evidence.

However, the same questions are posed to archaeologists. Although ~~less~~ research is done to answer questions, both are left with the decision of whether

to excavate, where sites, or just record where there have been features detected. At Boxgrove, only small trenches were dug in comparison to the vast area, ~~at~~ and at Empingham, part 2. The decision had to be made whether to excavate or not as development was looming. It all depends on the results of pre-excavation ~~and~~ analysis such as desk-top study and geophysical survey. These indicate where it is best for archaeologists to dig with the greater possibility of finding ~~the~~ artefacts. At ~~Wroxeter~~ Wroxeter, extensive geophysical survey had been completed to create an idea of the layout of the settlement.

Both rescue and research can conduct detailed planning before going on to excavation, which is a huge advantage for both.

Especially for the research excavation of the Mary Rose, which is underwater archaeology and receives much more ~~attention~~ precautions and safety factors to be taken into account.

### Examiner's Comments

A good response. Covers both research and rescue, supplies examples of both and does attempt to structure around similarity and difference. Might be more precise in use of technical language and could cover more ground. Tendency to see excavation as being driven solely by artefact retrieval.

L4 / 22 marks

## Candidate 4

## Section B

- 9 Boxgrove is a research project. Using examples, explain the similarities and differences between rescue and research projects. (30 marks)

Research projects are often undertaken for a long period of time and have been well planned out before the excavation was undertaken. Research digs/projects are usually done in order to answer specific questions about the site, lifestyle of the inhabitants and even information of the surrounding area. Research projects are usually funded by a local university or private organisation and is not usually funded by the public. ~~Rescue~~ Rescue projects however usually occur prior to construction of an area or possibly road works and maintenance, and archaeology is uncovered unexpectedly. These digs are often funded by the developers and any techniques undergone by an archaeologist either happen or they don't. Time is a very big issue in a ~~rescue~~ rescue dig as an archaeologist is under great pressure from the developer.

Research digs are planned in detail and are a good way of getting amateurs involved in archaeology. For example Lathom hall has been under ~~an~~ a research dig for a number of years and is a place that is continually re-opened for the purpose of education. Cotterstock villa is another example of research archaeology because that too is continually being re opened and finding new things about the villa. Stonehenge is an example of a research dig because for a number of years archaeologists have wondered what it was and was used for, and only recently on a time team episode answers have been given that it was a mortuary feature standing very close to the 'living' henge (made from wood) where the majority of settlers were gathered. Research digs enable further use of reconstruction archaeology as finds are being excavated because there is no time limit to the dig. This means a number of theories can be tested while some can be discarded when others are proved wrong by the finds found.

In contrast, research digs are often very rushed having a period of months to save as much archaeology as possible on a (frequently) low budget as developers may not wish to pay much money towards a <sup>contractor</sup> ~~survey~~ archaeologist producing his/her survey of the site. This archaeologist may be under serious pressure from the developer to say that there is no archaeology present, so they can go along with construction. PPG 16 has brought many developers to be aware of archaeology because otherwise they could have been compromising anything found, now they must have planning permission and the advice of a county archaeologist or curator ~~to~~ in order to be able to build on their site. Despite this, many developers are not concerned with archaeology and do not want to pay for site excavation. Because of the time limit, there is a strong chance that not everything can be found and excavated in that space.

of time, meaning that some answers can be missed. On ~~the~~ <sup>some</sup> sites, it has been known that archaeologists are pulling finds out of the ground, just as cement is being put into the trench. Lab access would need to be agreed fast, and also preservation techniques such as PEG for wet sites would need to be ready as soon as the finds are excavated to ~~to~~ prevent the rate of decay from increasing again. As a result, reconstructive archaeology can only take place after the dig so new theories cannot develop from what is found, as this answer may be lost. Reconstructive archaeology does still take place ~~after~~ on a research dig, and many answers can be gathered from ~~excavated~~ <sup>rescue</sup> digs.

In conclusion, research archaeology is very useful to an archaeologist because it enables them to take great care with what they are doing, provides a great experience for students and amateurs and also takes time to uncover new answers to important questions. Where as rescue archaeology contrasts this when it is done in very little time and may compromise the archaeology found if the archaeologist is not careful. Despite this many answers can be found to the way things were done from the items found on the rescue dig.

**Examiner's Comments**

*A very good response. Recognises that the importance of excavation lies in being able to answer questions. Covers rescue and research, but only has exemplars for research.*

L5 / 25 marks

## Candidate 5

## Section B

- 11 How useful are desk-top research and pre-excavation techniques when preparing to excavate a site such as Boxgrove that until recently was deeply buried? (30 marks)

or

1. Desk top research allows archaeologists to find if there is any already work done at a site and also whether there have been any other similar sites to look at techniques used at that excavation. Desk top research also lets us see how old or roughly what is thought to be at a site so excavation techniques could be based around that. Many other techniques could be used as well to accompany desk top there could be aerial photography to see if there are any obvious ground deformations in the area or marks.

Although not used in a site like box grove crop marks can be used to show the buildings etc. Another useful pre excavation technique is geophysics which includes ground resistivity and magnetism. This also might not be so useful here but if the bones are in a grave some geophysics could be used possibly. The aerial photographs will allow us to plan where and how large pits are going to be. Another possible technique is doing a test pit for some samples and possibly to tell us what something might be.

Due to the site being deeply buried not much information would have been accessed because no one would have known about it. so it would be better to do more research on



a different site but that is similar to the one we want to excavate. Also more hands on research such as aerial photography and test pits. This will then make excavating things a lot easier.

**Examiner's Comments**

A sound response. A number of points are made about desk-top and pre-excavation techniques. Does not use exemplars and not much detailed development offered.

L3 / 13 marks