

SMALL FINDS

Small Finds - an **archaeological** term for artefacts discovered on excavations which are somewhat special compared with the common finds for that type of site. As the name implies small finds tend on the whole to be small items. Larger items occurring in quantity are termed **bulk finds** and this category will include pottery sherds, ceramic building material (CBM) and animal bone.

NB the above is the general rule and there will be exceptions where an artefact is deemed worthy of being recorded as a small find even though it would normally be regarded as a bulk find. An example of this would be a decorated samian sherd bearing the potters stamp or a decorated piece of glass. IF IN DOUBT ASK.

An **artefact** is something made or given shape by humans, such as a tool or a work of art, especially an object of **archaeological** interest. Thus the definition includes objects fashioned from naturally occurring material e.g flint tools as well as those made, for example, from metallic ores e.g coins and brooches. Bone and antler is another source of raw material from which objects such as pins, gaming counters and combs have been fashioned in the past.

To illustrate further how the categorisation of an artefact may differ using animal bone as an example, an unmodified animal bone, even if it bears chop and/or cut marks will be treated as a bulk find whereas a bone pin or gaming counter will be treated as a small find.

Similarly pottery sherds will ordinarily be treated as bulk finds but there will be exceptions such as the example of the stamped samian cited above. Where a potsherd has been re-worked to form a spindle whorl, for example, this would also be treated as a small find. **AGAIN IF IN DOUBT ASK.**

Crummy classification of Small Finds (Colchester Archaeological Report 2 : The Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester 1971-9)

Category 1 : Objects of personal adornment or dress.

Category 2: Toilet, surgical or pharmaceutical instruments

Category 3: Objects used in the manufacture or working of textiles

Category 4: Household utensils and furniture

Category 5: Objects used for recreational purposes

Category 6: Objects employed in weighing and measuring

Category 7: Objects used for or associated with written communications

Category 8: Objects associated with transport

Category 9: Buildings and services

Category 10: Tools

Category 11: Fasteners and fittings

Category 12: Objects associated with agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry

Category 13: Military equipment

Category 14: Objects associated with religious beliefs and practices

Category 15: Objects and waste material associated with metal working

Category 16: Objects and waste material associated with antler, horn, bone and tooth working

Category 17: Objects and waste material associated with the manufacture of pottery vessels
or pipeclay objects

Category 18: Objects the function or identification of which is unknown

Categorizing Finds