



HIRING NOW!

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IMPORTANCE OF POTTERY

As the most common find from sites, pottery is a key resource for interpreting the past and human behaviours.

it can be used for:

- Chronological dating
- Cultural information
- Trade and interaction
- Economy
- Technology and innovation
- Environmental reconstructions



KEY SKILLS

Refit analysis
Quantification - organisational skills
Report writing
Petrology
Fabric, form, and decoration descriptions

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

With the lack of modules at university level, lack of funding, difficulties gaining experience, and the popularity of other specialisms, it can be difficult to advertise for more Pottery Specialists.

This means most Pottery Specialists are overwhelmed with work and a lot of assemblages from excavations are being forgotten and reports are unpublished.

There are many ways to combat this problem. First is to introduce more modules at university level, including for undergraduate students. Universities could also set up workshops and partnerships with specialists.

More funding towards this area of Archaeology help massively, particularly to pay specialists to train up newcomers, such as the Historic England AMP scheme.

More support and training from research groups and other institutions, such as CiFA would be beneficial. CiFA have standardised the work of a Pottery Specialist by updating guidelines and introduction a toolkit that anyone can access.

LACK OF SPECIALISTS

There is a shortage of pottery specialists in the UK at the moment despite the importance of analysing pottery during archaeological investigations. The reasonings are due to many different sectors:

The Commercial Sector:

Archaeological industries have changed a lot over the century, with companies wanting to be more cost effective. This has led to less attention on training new specialists and passing skills down.

It can also be harder now to gain experience through volunteering as this has been made more difficult to do due to more restrictions and rules on sites.

The Curatorial Sector:

It can be harder to get access to pottery, despite the need for students/graduates to familiarise themselves with as many different assemblages as possible to gain the experience and skills needed to become a specialist.

The Academic Sector:

It can take decades to gain all the knowledge and experience needed to be a confident pottery specialist, even in just one given region.

There are not many pottery based teachings or modules at schools or universities. The first module on pottery at the University of Exeter was offered during the Masters course, meaning undergraduates will not get this knowledge. The absence of modules could create a lack of demand, meaning it will be hard to fund the modules, creating a cycle. Universities give more attention and funding to the more popular modules, like forensics, meaning the other important yet less popular will be forgotten.



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