

Archaeology Handbook



This FREE booklet has been put together by our Young Archaeologists to help visitors explore archaeology. It will help you complete the dig in the exhibition and is full of facts to help you discover more.



**MUSEUM of
RICHMOND**



The John and Ruth Howard
Charitable Trust



What is an Archaeologist?

- An Archaeologist is a person who investigates human history, by looking at the things people from the past have left behind.
- Some archaeologists focus on a single period of history so they can learn as much detail as they can.
- Some archaeologists will focus on excavating sites, so will learn about several time periods.
- They don't study dinosaurs! Palaeontologists study dinosaurs.
- They don't study rocks either - that is the work of a Geologist.
- Archaeologists DO NOT treasure hunt, grave-rob, loot, steal, or sell archaeological materials. When people hunt for treasure without knowing what they are doing, they destroy a lot of the important clues archaeologists use. They're gone forever and all that knowledge will never be found again.
- When archaeologists excavate sites they do disturb the remains, but they record every single detail along the way so no information is lost.



Have a go!

- We have set up a small dig so you can have a go at the work of an archaeologist.
- Read through the **Guidelines for Excavating** so you know how to use the tools.
- Once you have found an object, record it using the **Record Cards** in this booklet, to make sure no information about the object is lost, including exactly where it was found, material, colour, size and any other important details.
- Archaeologists also do **Observational Drawings** of the objects to help record details that might not show up very well in a photo.

Guidelines for Excavating

When archaeologists excavate a site, they search a layer at a time. This is because each layer will contain objects from a single time period. Those closest to the surface will be newer objects. Those found in deeper layers will be older.



The tools and how to use them

- Big trowels: These are used for moving lots of the top layers of soil or sand in an excavation, after the JCB or digger has been used to dig the hole. As we have a small sandpit for you to excavate, we aren't using these today.
- Small trowels: for moving the soil or sand away from the objects when you start to uncover them. You **use the side** of the trowel, **not the point**, to gently scrape away the sand from around the object. If you stab the trowel into the sand using the point, you could damage or even destroy the object hiding underneath the surface.
- Brushes: to gently brush the sand off the object when it is nearly uncovered.



Caring for the objects

- Once they have been revealed lift the objects up **CAREFULLY** with 2 hands and place them on the tray next to the sand pit.
- The objects are all original, recently found by a local archaeologist, so please handle them with care.
- Sometimes, the Museum also uses replica objects. A replica is a new copy of the original. It will be made using the original as a template. It could even be made in the same way, using the same materials. Replicas get made when the original is too delicate to be handled. People can use replicas to get a sense of what the object looked and felt like, without damaging the original.

Record Cards

Circle your answers and write down any important details about your find.

Describe how the object feels: rough smooth shiny matt heavy light

What colour is the object?

red yellow orange green blue purple black white brown black

Any other colours or patterns?

What is it made of? Clay Metal Bone Fabric Glass

Any other materials?

Measure the size of your object and record the results below:

Width:mm Height:mm Depth:mm

Is it a complete object, most of an object, or a small part of an object?

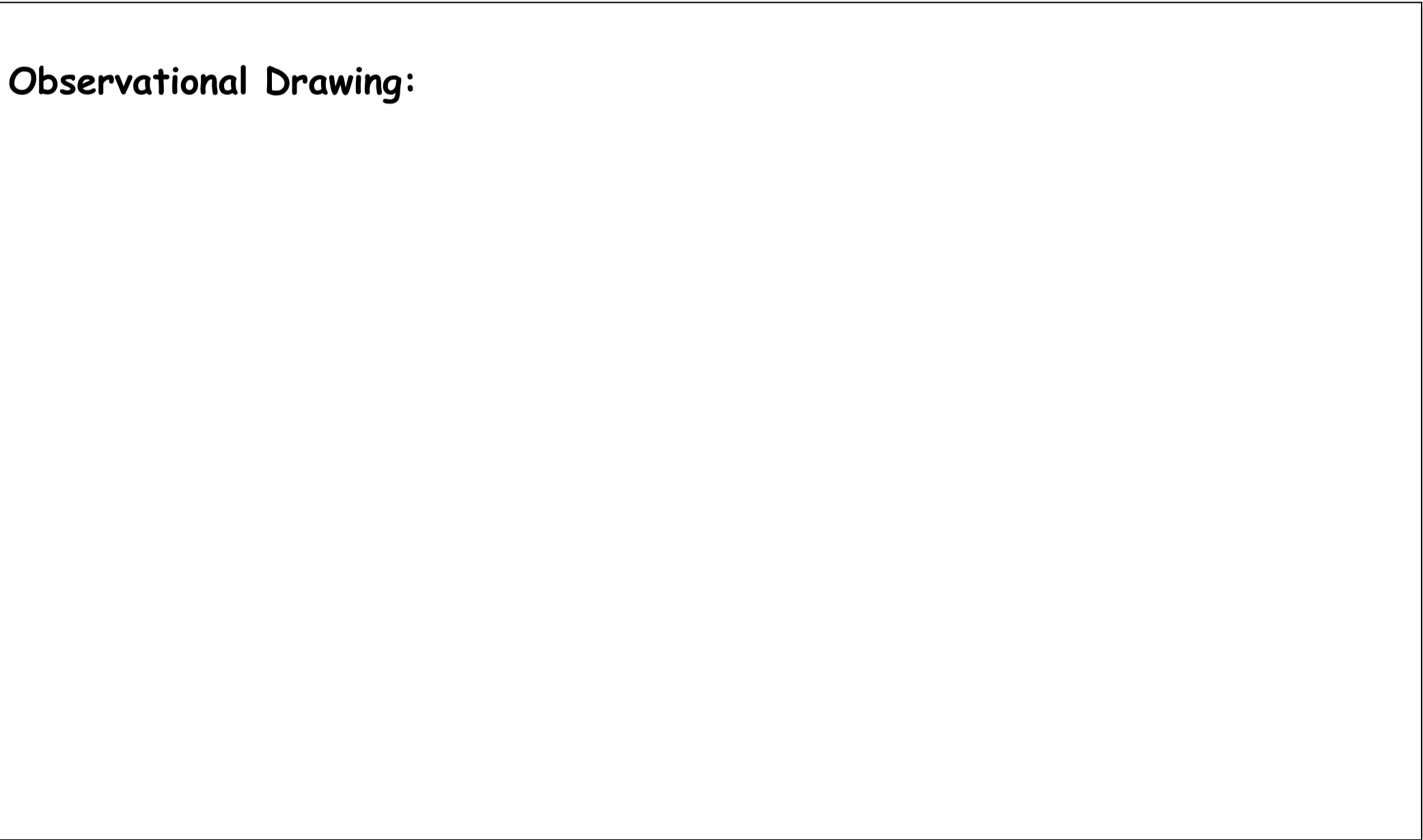
A complete object Most of an object A small part of an object

Any other observations or thoughts?

.....

What do you think the object could be?

Observational Drawing:



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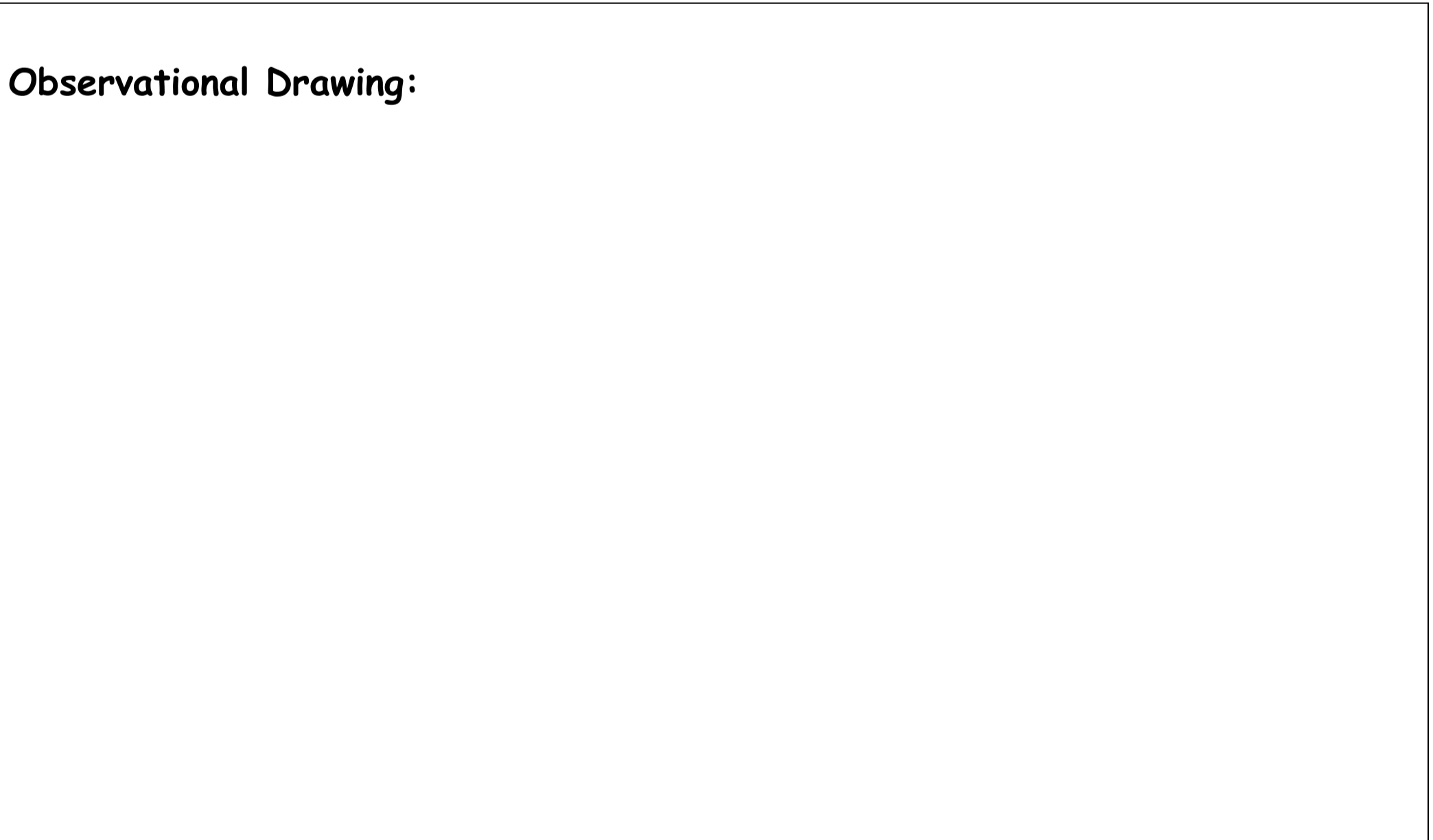
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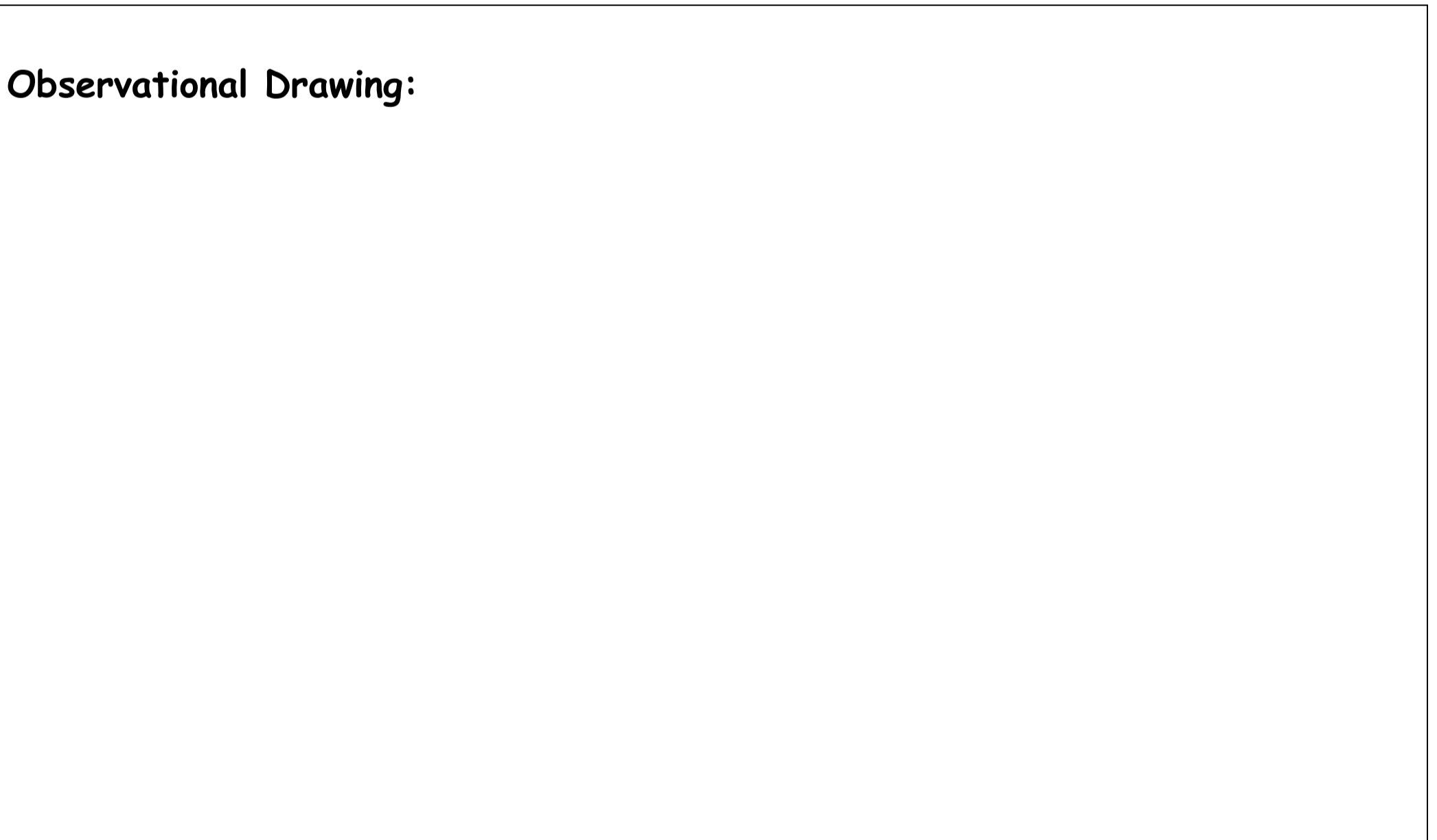
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Photos of the Finds

This is a photo of all the objects which could be found in the sand pit.

Circle or tick the ones you found.



About the Finds

To help them identify the objects they find, archaeologists spend time researching as well as digging - they learn about the objects that tend to be found for different time periods, so they can easily identify what they find, when they find it, and work out the date of the layer they are excavating.

These objects have all been found on the foreshore (muddy banks) of the Thames. People who look for archaeological materials and objects on the foreshore are called Mudlarkers.

Mudlarking dates back to the 1700s and 1800s, when people would search in the mud banks for anything that could be sold. People would throw rubbish in the Thames back then, as there were no bin men to take it away. Another way people used to get rid of rubbish was by burying it in their gardens. This is why when digging in the gardens of Georgian and Victorian houses you sometimes find broken bottles and ceramics.

Today, you must have a permit to go Mudlarking. If you don't, you are breaking the law. If you do find an object you would like identified, the best place to take it to is the Museum of London, where there are specialists who will be able to help.



Pottery is an important type of evidence because, unlike baskets, blankets, wooden tools, ropes and clothing, it survives under the soil for thousands of years. Even when pottery is broken into tiny pieces, it can still tell us something about the past. The kind of clay it is made from can tell us where it was made and the decoration can help tell us when it was made, and date the layer of soil in which it was found.



This piece is known as blue and white, a style of decoration from China. The Chinese started making pottery with this style of design for European markets from the 1600s. However, this is probably a much later example as this style of decoration has been popular for such a long time.



This piece is an example of Staffordshire Slipware, from around 1680 to 1750. The clay fabric is usually a pale buff colour, decorated with thin brown stripes and a yellow glaze, or yellow stripes and a brown glaze. This was the first pottery to be made in moulds in Britain since Roman times, and the main products were flat dishes and plates, but cups were also made.



These objects are sections of clay pipes for smoking tobacco. The earliest clay pipes had tiny bowls which used no more than a pinch of tobacco because it was so expensive. As smoking became more popular after 1620, more tobacco crops were planted to meet demand. The price of tobacco fell and the potters began to make pipes with bigger bowls. Throughout the 1800s pipe bowls got bigger and the stems longer as makers became more confident and local fashions encouraged more bowl styles.

By looking at the size and design of the bowl and stem, you can roughly date when the pipe was made and used, which means you can date the layer of soil where you found it.



This is probably the base of a glass bottle.

The slightly oval instead of round shape of the bottle, and the fact that there is no seam, shows it was hand-blown and not cast moulded like modern day ones.

The double AA on the base may be a maker's seal or a wine merchant's mark.

What the finds tell us about the past

Looking back at what you have found and what you have discovered about the objects, answer the questions below to piece together what the objects tell us about the past

| Questions | Answers circle what you think is the right answer | Evidence Make notes explaining your answers if you like |
|--|--|--|
| What were the objects used for? | Domestic items - used in people's homes Military items - used by soldiers Agricultural - used by farmers Industrial - used in factories | |
| Do you think the people who owned these objects were rich or poor? | Rich Poor Both rich and poor Neither rich or poor Not sure | |
| Why were the objects there? | Accidentally buried when they were dropped Placed there as ritual offerings Rubbish thrown in the River Thames | |
| When do you think these objects are from? | Tudor (1485 - 1603) Stuart (1603 - 1714) Georgian (1715 - 1830) Victorian (1830 - 1901) 20 th Century (1901 - 1999) | |

Find Out More



Young Archaeologists Club: <http://www.yac-uk.org/>

There are almost 70 Young Archaeologists' Club Branches all over the UK. Most meet once a month, usually on a Saturday, and they are a great way for young people over 8 and under 17 to learn more about archaeology in their area and make new friends.



The Port of London Authority -

(The authority which issues permits for Mudlarking)

<https://www.pla.co.uk/Environment/Thames-foreshore-access-including-metal-detecting-searching-and-digging>



Thames Mudlarking Society

<http://www.thamesandfield.com/home>

You need to be a member of this society if you want the more advanced level of permit. You must meet certain criteria, which include: having held a Standard Permit for two years and having a record of reporting finds to the Museum of London.



Museum of London: <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk>

The Museum of London tells the story of London from pre-historic times to the modern day. Their specialist staff can help with the identification of objects made or found in Greater London.



Museum of London Archaeology: <https://www.mola.org.uk>

MOLA is an experienced and innovative archaeology and built heritage practice, which aims to inspire people to be curious about their heritage. Although it is associated with the Museum of London, it has its own site in North London.



Portable Antiquities Scheme: <https://finds.org.uk>

A partnership project which records archaeological objects found by the public in order to advance our understanding of the past.

Archaeology Workshops for Families



Using a mix of real and replica historical objects from the Museum's handling collection, our workshops provide families with a hands on experience where they learn more about the history of the local area and develop new skills by having a go at arts and craft activities.

£5.50 per child, booking is essential as places are limited
Visit www.museumofrichmond.com to book and find out more

Tuesday 3 April to Friday 6 April, 10am to 12noon
Stone Age Jewellery



Tuesday 10 April to Friday 13 April, 10am to 12noon
Bronze Age Beakers

Tuesday 29 May to Friday 1 June, 10am to 12noon
Archaeology: A Murder Mystery!

Tuesday 24 July to Friday 27 July, 10am to 12noon
Roman Mosaics



Tuesday 7 August to Friday 10 August, 10am to 12noon
Anglo Saxons Weaving and Braiding

Tuesday 21 August to Friday 24 August, 10am to 12noon
Viking Runes

Ancient Art and Archaeology Summer Schools



Monday 30 July to Friday 3 August, 9.30am to 4:30pm

Monday 13 August to Friday 17 August, 9.30am to 4:30pm

A week long course looking at art and craft in Britain before the Norman conquest of 1066. For students age 11 and above:
£150 per student

Visit www.museumofrichmond.com to book your place