



**FRIDAY IN THE
OFFICE. JAKE
STREATFEILD-
JAMES, FIELD
ARCHAEOLOGIST,
AOC ARCHAEOLOGY
GROUP – NORTH**

June 29, 2012 transit_monkey Conservation, Day of Archaeology 2012, Finds, Roman, Romano-British Anthropology, AOC Archaeology Group, Archaeology, Excavation, field archaeologist, Jake Streatfeild-James, personal protective equipment, Roman Fort, Roman Gaul, Scotland, site assistant, University Arena, watching brief

I was in to work early this morning. The sun was out as I headed around the bypass to the office. As soon as the key is in the door it starts to tip down outside, so I'm glad that, whereas I'm usually in the field, today I am helping out the conservation department process a large assemblage of Roman ceramics. The finds come from Roman fort in central Scotland, near the Antonine Wall. During the last four days I've been labelling pot, some of which I remember from last summer's excavation.

I will have worked for AOC in their Edinburgh office for a year this July, first as a site assistant and now as a field archaeologist. In my first year I've learnt a lot: what it means to do a 'watching brief,' what to look for during an evaluation and the art of report writing, even picking up some experience of community archaeology along the way.



Carrying on from where I left off yesterday afternoon, I'm continuing to excavate the material left inside a Roman bowl. The bowl was lifted from ground in one piece, and was discovered in the backfill of a pit which contained other Roman material. On Roman sites, pots like this often contain human or animal remains- burials or ritual deposits, but in this case there is only the backfill of the pit, suggesting that the bowl had outlived its use and was discarded.

Next there is a collection of Samian, high status pottery from Roman Gaul. This group of sherds was discovered in a concentrated area of the site, and might make an entire vessel: time to break out the adhesive! This is a first for me and my only comparable experience is gluing a mug back together. This is a tad more complicated.

It nearly goes back together, and I don't have any bits left over. The conservators agree it's a success. Would they lie to protect my feelings?

Finally there's some preparation to do for a watching brief on Monday morning. My site box, spade, and personal protective equipment all need gathering together and checked before I leave for the weekend.

Hope it doesn't rain on Monday.