

DAY OF ARCHAEOLOGY – LAARC LOTTERY PART 5 (TEXTILE FINDS)

June 29, 2012 Andrew Fetherston Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Finds, Museum Archaeology Archaeological sub-disciplines, Bioarchaeology, Drying, Finds, Freeze drying, LAARC, Leather, London, museum, Museum's Centre, Museum's Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, Roman London, Shoe, Textiles

Day of Archaeology: Blog 5 – Textiles

Moving onto and into our Leather & Textile store, we have two classic objects chosen by you, completely at random.

Our first randomly selected object, from shelf number 876, is a Roman leather shoe, [excavated from site BUC87](#) – once the heart of *Londinium*. The LAARC holds over 5000 Roman and medieval shoes (we are the largest Archeological Archive in the world after all) and this artefact is a fine example of its type. The leather sole of the shoe has been preserved through waterlogged conditions but once exposed would quickly dry and shrink. Luckily the Museum of London's conservation department owns a magic machine called a freeze-dryer which, through the process of sublimation, leaves these leather objects in a very stable condition.



Roman leather shoe from BUC87 – and shelf 876

A common comment on archaeological Roman shoes is that they always seem very small. The leather may have shrunk somewhat after two millennia in the ground and the freeze-drying process may add minimally to this, but on the whole our Roman Londoners seem to have small feet...Perhaps a comparative study should be conducted with the many Roman skeletal remains held at the Museum's [Centre for Human Bioarchaeology!](#)

Our second object is a piece of post-medieval textile [from site EAG87](#) (and shelf 809), excavated by the Department of Urban Archaeology (DUA) back in the late 1980s. Archaeological textiles suffer from damage to both their texture and colour; however, our Curator of Fashion & Decorative Arts gets particularly excited about brown bits of wool!



Post-medieval cloth from EAG87 – and shelf 809

Again our textile much like other organics and inorganic, such as metal, has survived through waterlogged but anaerobic conditions. This fragmentary piece was probably part of the C18th backfill of a well excavated on this site.

Our last major store section holds our Environmental finds. These are typically extremely small objects that take up little space (hence the small shelf range) and include objects such as seeds, pollen and small animal bones etc. Tweet using **#dayofarch** or **#LAARC**, or message us a number below, between 1 and 44 to discover, completely at random, what that shelf holds...