

# LEICESTERSHIRE'S 2 MONTH OLD ARCHAEOLOGY OFFICER

July 5, 2012 Helen Sharp Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Iron Age, Museum Archaeology, Roman fantastic network, Rutland

It's two months since I started as Archaeology Officer for Leicestershire County Council and I'm finally starting to find my feet. It's the job I've always dreamed of and I feel very lucky to be doing something I love but have to admit to feeling overwhelmed with how much I have to learn!

I was previously working exclusively with the a collection of Late Iron Age and Roman material known as the [Hallaton Treasure](#) and was based at [Harborough Museum](#) in the beautiful town of Market Harborough, Leicestershire. This was an amazing job promoting and interpreting a mysterious collection of objects including over 5000 [Iron Age and Roman coins](#) and a [Roman cavalry helmet](#). However, as it was an externally funded project I knew it wouldn't last forever and so when the opportunity came up to apply for a new post, I jumped at it.

I am now responsible for the county's [archaeology collections](#), so although I still get to play with the Treasure, there is a huge amount of material I need to get to know a whole lot better which is fun and daunting at the same time. My role also includes [community archaeology](#) – promoting best practice, providing support and linking community groups with the collections which we hold. Thankfully my previous role brought me into contact with many of these wonderful local groups and so there are many friendly faces who have been helping me out during these first two months. I am also lucky to be working with our [Finds Liaison Officer, Wendy Scott](#), who has been helping me settle into my new job.

Today I've been doing run of the mill stuff: checking emails, liaising with archaeological contractors, preparing for a launch event for the [Leicestershire and Rutland Festival of](#)

[Archaeology](#) (the biggest regional contribution to the [Council for British Archaeology's](#) nationwide event thanks to a fantastic network of heritage groups and enthusiastic individuals), working on press releases, trying to make time to do a bit of sorting in the store.



*A small area of the archaeology section of our museum store.*

Something cropped up which I haven't dealt with before and sent me into a temporary panic. An archaeological contractor (we are a repository for archaeological archives created as a result of the planning process) had found a human cremation and needed to know some details for the exhumation notice – what would happen to the remains after they had been studied. The result was that we would make a decision on the merits of retaining the remains in our collection after the whole site had been studied and we could assess their importance. The ethics of the treatment of human remains from archaeological excavations is an interesting area and one which I need to learn more about, fast!

My day also included a very geeky conversation with two colleagues regarding how to allocate accession numbers to the Hallaton Roman helmet which is actually at least four helmets from one

deposit. Many parts are still in the British Museum's [Department of Conservation and Scientific Research](#) as they have been analysing and conserving the parts for us. A very boring conversation but important nonetheless.

My day ended with lugging a huge display case into my car, ready for a display at [Burrough Hill Iron Age hillfort](#) on Sunday. This is a University of Leicester dig at the highest point in Leicestershire, an amazing spot. I'm providing a display of material we hold in our collection from digs dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, including a massive Iron Age storage jar. Nice to be able to take it back to where it came from for the day!



*Iron Age storage jar found at Burrough Hill hillfort from Leicestershire County Council's archaeology collection.*