

THE TIME TRUCK: GETTING ARCHAEOLOGY OUT ON THE ROAD

July 29, 2016 MOLA Day of Archaeology
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By Magnus Cops from [MOLA](#).

My main role at MOLA is the management of the Time Truck project. The [Time Truck](#) is a mobile community engagement and event space that we use to share our findings and make the most of the research that we do with our development clients and independently.

Today, I am testing out our dig-boxes in preparation for an event at [Earls Court on the 13 August](#). We use rubber gravel as a (slightly) less messy substitute to real dirt, and in this case, as we are looking at the post-medieval history of the area, this will be filled with animal bone, glass and ceramics from the 17th to 19th centuries.



Magnus Cops laying out a Time Truck dig-box

Our handling collections see a lot of use in dig-boxes, both at public events like Earls Court and as part of our schools programme. Along with Paige and Steve from our Time Truck Support Team I went out

to [Kender Primary in Lewisham](#) last week to deliver our *Cleaning up History* session, sponsored by Thames Water.



Time Truck Cleaning up History workshop at Kender Primary

Repeated excavation and re-burying can be tough on the finds, especially given that for many of the children we work with this is their very first experience of 'archaeology', and it takes a while to learn how to dig carefully. Fortunately we can maintain a ready supply of post-medieval material for handling collections simply by visiting the Thames Foreshore once every few months to find as many tobacco pipes, ceramic fragments and bottle necks as we are likely to need.



MOLA's object handling collection

It's not all hands-on work today, particularly with the busy job of planning the Time Truck events programme for the autumn. My desk-based work can be anything from securing sponsorship to finding a site for the Truck to pitch up for a particular event, or going through monographs, finds lists, and [ADS](#) reports to plan content and write captions for finds displays. Running the Time Truck is a really diverse job, and perhaps one of the best things about it is the way that I come into contact with the full range of specialisms that exist in a big archaeological organisation like MOLA, from the field team right through to post-excavation specialists. As well as the amazing finds we uncover, we try to showcase as much of the archaeological process as we can via the Time Truck.