



AACAI NSW & ACT Wine, Cheese & Chat

Wednesday 18 May 2016

National Archaeology Week at The Big Dig Centre

Time: 6 – 8pm

Topic: Sieving in Sydney

AACAI NSW are pleased to present speakers intended to promote discussion on the methodologies used by consulting archaeologists when sieving. After a series of brief presentations (10-15 minutes each) a discussion of current practice and preferences will be held and guests are encouraged to discuss the issues over wine and some cheese.



‘Wet or dry sieving through 3mm or 5mm mesh: Are we in the right place and how did we get here?’ - Oliver Brown

How we undertake test excavation in NSW is typically a matter of us following the best archaeological practice that we can, influenced by the requirements of the Code and practical considerations of the best return of data for our time and effort (which equates to cost). Over the last six years, this has led to the widespread use of 5mm mesh only (where nested 3mm and 5mm was more common) and a seeming increased return to dry sieving, where in some areas the activity has been synonymous with the sound of a water truck's pump.

The provisions for dry sieving through 5mm mesh were amendments to the original draft Code that proposed a maximum 3mm mesh and compulsory wet-sieving. This came about because of an AACAI submission at the time of the 2010 reforms opposing such rigid restrictions. Oliver will explain how we came to that position and how the consequences were not necessarily as envisaged. It is argued that dry sieving through 5mm mesh is completely fine for most of the type of testing for which the Code was intended. However, are they proper methods for all of the times they are used? Has the lengthy seven month process and full-blown ACHAR required for an AHIP to undertake excavation outside of the Code driven us to take methods intended to test for potential and apply them to more detailed assessments than we should?

These are questions which Oliver will offer some views on but necessarily answer. The intention, most importantly is to open the discussion to the floor.

“Amphibious advantage - reticulated wet sieving in NSW archaeological consulting” – Jillian Comber

One of Sydney's finest archaeologists will be on hand to discuss the merits of wet sieving through a reticulated sieve system (without giving away too many secrets!) Jillian will present a few examples of the comber sieve in action and explain why it is a preferred method by clients and archaeologists alike.

Is it the case that additional time spent in wet sieving can be largely offset by greater efficiency in recording and analysis? Or does dry sieving has its place in the field? This may not be answered, but please feel free to discuss!

As always, expect great company, good wine and some nibbles to keep the chat up.

Location: The Big Dig Centre
110 Cumberland Street,
The Rocks,
Sydney NSW 2000

Time: 6 – 8pm

Cost: Members & Students FREE,
Non-members \$10.

Students should provide
appropriate proof of enrolment/
student status.



RSVP: 11 May 2016 to dianacowie@gmail.com

For a little background reading, the latest Journal of Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists (Vol. 2) has an article co-authored by A. Dias, F. Hook, M. Jimenez-Lozano & H. Tierney entitled:

‘Time and efficiency in data recovery: an experiment comparing wet and dry sieving in Pilbara rockshelter excavations’

Link here:

http://www.academia.edu/6677094/Time_and_efficiency_in_data_recovery_an_experiment_comparing_wet_and_dry_sieving_in_Pilbara_rockshelter_excavations