



CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD GROUP

Guidelines for Fieldwork

Issue 1.8

June 2021

General Policy

The Group was formed for the purposes of active participation in archaeology. The committee has considered the risks which may be involved, and feels that the Group is properly structured for the activities it undertakes. The following represents the basis on which the Group is run to ensure the safety and well-being of all members, and outlines the most important steps that have been taken to enable members to enjoy the activities safely, and to maintain the good name of the Group amongst landowners, farmers, professional archaeologists and others with whom we come into contact.

Members are responsible for their own safety, and should take care neither to endanger others, nor to damage property.

Nevertheless, for each and any excavation site a risk assessment will be carried out and a document created setting out any risks for the attention of participants, who will be required to confirm that they have read and understood it.

Persons under the age of 18 may only take part in fieldwork if they are accompanied by a parent member, who will remain responsible for them at all times.

Access to Land

We rely upon the goodwill of landowners and farmers. Considerable effort is required to gain access to land, and this is often granted for a short space of time, dependent upon the state of the crop, rainfall, etc. To build a complete picture of even a small area it is normally necessary to have the co-operation of several neighbouring landowners. Failure to comply with the wishes of any one of them could result in permission to work the whole area being withdrawn, with the result that a project would not be brought to a successful conclusion.

Permission granted by a landowner for the Group to work on land (typically on a Sunday morning) does not give a member the right to enter onto that, or any other, land at any other time.

Fieldwork is almost always conducted on land which is under cultivation. Care must be taken at all times to avoid damaging standing crops. Do not disturb markers present on the field, however crude, which may have been placed by the farmer. At the end of the session ensure that no equipment is unintentionally left on the field. Apart from the loss to the Group, it could cause damage to agricultural equipment, or endanger stock: plastic bags in particular must not be allowed to blow around. Adverse weather conditions, for example causing flooded field conditions or frosted standing crops, may cause abandonment of field walking for that day.

Field Officer

At the Annual General Meeting, a member of the Group is elected as Field Officer/Coordinator. All outdoor Group activities (eg field walking, excavation, etc) will be under the direction of the Field Officer or his/her nominated deputy. The committee sees the election as an endorsement by the whole membership of their respect for the experience, judgement and discretion of the person elected to the post.

The Field Officer will maintain a Field Book indicating date and place of working, those present, and all relevant archaeological information. In addition it will be used to record any known or potential hazards (eg treatment by spraying), and any accident (see below).

If it is known in advance that the Field Officer will not be present at an activity, then (s)he will pass the Field Book to another member of the Group who will act as deputy; otherwise the Field Officer's duties will be undertaken by a senior member of the Group present at the activity, notes taken, and logged in the Field Book as soon as is practicable.

Accident or Unusual Occurrences

All accidents must be reported to the Field Officer or deputy immediately.

The Field Officer will be aware of the nearest public telephone and will have access to a mobile telephone. There is not a requirement for the Group to provide first-aid cover.

Similarly all unusual incidents, damage to property, etc, should be brought to the notice of the Field Officer. If damage appears recent, and the Group might mistakenly be thought responsible, this too should be reported.

The Field Officer will note in the Field Book the circumstances of the accident/incident, and will report it to the landowner/farmer if (s)he considers it necessary.

Health

Members should be aware that modern agricultural practice may mean that fields have been treated with chemicals. Normal hygiene should be observed before eating; avoid rubbing the eyes, etc with dirty hands.

Members should recognise the inherent risk of exposure to infectious diseases. Health professionals normally recommend vaccination against tetanus.

Should Members feel unwell and need to consult their doctor, it would be wise to mention an active participation in fieldwork.

Insurance

The Group is covered by an insurance scheme covering Public Liability and Employers' Liability.

This provides cover for legal liability to third parties for personal injury or property damage, including liability to persons taking part in excavations, fieldwork, excursions, meetings, site visits and other bona fide activities of the organisation, including liability of member to member and legal liability to landlords. Public Liability is limited to £5,000,000 per claim, with an excess of £100 for damage to property, and Employers' Liability to £10,000,000.

The policy *excludes*:

- 1) liability in respect of any vehicle except in specific circumstances;
- 2) damage to property owned or in the care of the Group
- 3) liability for pollution.
- 4) loss, damage or destruction of electronic data
- 5) Asbestos

We have *not* got cover for

- 1) personal accident (ie self-inflicted injuries) - members should take out their own cover for this, *nor*
- 2) loss (eg by theft) of equipment, tools, etc - members should check household insurance in this respect

For the insurance to be legally effective all activities should be structured as described above; those involved must be paid-up members of the Group. The policy does not cover members whilst involved in non-Group activities.

Above is the Group's philosophy on insurance, and a resume of the policy.

The full policy is held by the Treasurer.