

Always endeavour to keep the cutting or the area allotted to you as tidy as possible. To do this, see that the edges of the cutting are kept sharp, the sides straight, and good angles kept at the corners. The spade or an edging tool are the best tools to do this. A tidy cutting is attractive and looks interesting.

A very common weakness with excavators is failing to keep the sides of their cutting vertical. Very often a cutting loses a foot in breadth and length of its original size after no more than 48 inches of material has been excavated. The sides of cuttings which are not dug beyond 4 feet in depth can generally be kept vertical. Beyond this it is advisable to keep a "batter" on the sides to ensure safety, but the material in which one is digging is largely the determining factor. Clay fillings can be very tricky as also can a very loosely packed filling.

Another common error due to the beginner's eagerness to discover something is that he loosens up too much material at each stroke of the pick, fork, or whatever tool he happens to be using with the result that he treads the material under his feet. This is a serious failing. The material should be loosened, and examined in small quantities. Great care should be taken to ensure that you are not digging in two different materials or layers at the same time, which can so easily be done if the loose material is not kept cleaned up.

If you are working with a friend in the same cutting it is best to take turns in loosening the material, and shovelling it up. It is also part of your job to see that the "dump" or spoil heap is kept reasonably tidy, and levelled at times, to stop the excavated material from falling back into the trench. The ideal method is to take the excavated material some way from the cutting, but for the sake of economy this is not very often possible.

If you make a "small find" such as a bronze fibula never shift any material until it has been duly recorded on the 'small find' card, and you have also made sure that you have recovered the whole of the 'find'. It often happens that an excavator, in the excitement of his find, does not notice that the pin of the brooch is missing, and that it is a "new break" until it is too late to recover it. Another important item when you locate a "find" is the need to work carefully around it with the trowel, to avoid putting any force or pressure on it, and to isolate it. You will then find it can be carefully examined and eventually lifted.

Always ensure that you have a separate find tray or box suitably labelled for every different layer. Never leave fragments of pottery etc. on the sides of your cutting. Always keep the director or supervisor informed of any new layers or new features of your cutting.

W. J. TEDDLAKE

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Rush Job - 5000 A.D.

The time - a Sunday afternoon in May, 5000 A.D. The place - a small plot of land adjoining Habitation Area (Human) A/123/4/K. The personnel - Excavation Club C/67/43, on a rush investigation of the last open space in the kingdom (A 299 storey prefabricated office block for the Ministry of Counter-Adverse Criticism was due for erection there next day).

The majority of the party arrived by beta-ray-gyro, the rest by atomic pedocARRIER (3 strides to the mile). As they unpacked the equipment, they fervently blessed the complete success of the Document Total Annihilation Movement (3001 - 3023 A.D.) which had saved the world for archaeologists. The ultra-maroon dextra-ray detector/plotter was wheeled into position.

The first archaeogram ("small find" to us) showed clearly on the screen.