

Location:

Leicester, United Kingdom

Client:

Alcester Roman Museum

Dates:

January – May 2004

Present Status:

Completed

Project Type:

Artifact conservation

Major Project Elements:

Artifact Conservation of:

Organics (wood, leather)

Ferrous objects

Silver objects

Jet

Ceramics

Tile

Roman Fort of Alcester Artifact Curation

A Jackson Group team member curated artifacts recovered from the Roman settlement of Alcester, United Kingdom. Due to the acidic waterlogged nature of the site, the principal objective was to stabilize the state of deterioration of plant based organic materials and extract salts from the metallic objects

recovered. Artifacts consisted of a wide array of materials predominately wood, jet, iron, silver, ceramics and terracotta. The project was done in conjunction with The University of Leicester and the Alcester Roman Museum.

The project was carried out by the Alcester Roman Museum. Excavation was conducted by a combination of research institutions and more recently an outside CRM firm. The curation of recovered materials was undertaken by staff of Leicester University and Jackson Group team members. Some materials curated were part of a move to stabilize materials removed during the Victorian era and have been in storage. Various methods were utilized for preservation of materials. An alcohol replacement method using vacuum extraction was used for organic materials. For ferrous materials, once deemed safe by radiographic investigation, manual removal of corrosion using blown glass beads, and organic picks preceded vacuum extraction of salt. Once it was determined that the majority of salts were extracted a reverse stabilization treatment was conducted to prevent further deterioration. Due to the stratigraphic nature of jet objects, two approaches were conducted. For more recently excavated objects, a stabilization treatment was applied to prevent the “drying” and subsequent splitting of the material. For materials in poor state of preservation, and attempted to infuse oil based adhesives by vacuum treatment to prevent further and in some cases reverse the splitting of the layers of jet.