

THIN SECTIONS & SAMPLES

GLOSSARY

Thin sections: glass slides containing mounted samples (e.g. sediments, rocks, minerals, slags, concrete, mudbrick, and plaster, fired clays).

STORAGE

- ◆ Individually wrap slides in Four Flap Envelopes (100% cotton paper, available from conservation suppliers) for long-term storage. Store them in archive boxes.
- ◆ Metal slides may benefit from lower humidity, although this is not always ideal for the glass and mounting adhesive.

LABELLING AND MARKING

Mark both the slide and its packaging.

- ◆ Undertake a documentation check to ensure that the information is correct before remains are marked.
- ◆ Ensure that marking is clear and legible.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

- ◆ Temperature: 16–22°C.
- ◆ Humidity: 45–65%.
- ◆ Illuminance: 200 lux maximum.
- ◆ UV Radiation: 0–10 microwatts per lumen ideal. 75 microwatts per lumen maximum.

INDICATORS OF DECAY

- ◆ Broken glass.
- ◆ Bloom or foxing on surfaces.
- ◆ Corrosion.
- ◆ Separation of parts.
- ◆ Yellowed or failed adhesive.



Thin section © Bristol Culture

WHERE YOU WILL COME ACROSS THIN SECTIONS & SAMPLES

- ◆ In archaeological excavation archives.
- ◆ Thin sections taken from stone tools.
- ◆ In petrology and geology collections.
- ◆ Samples from individual objects for identification.

HANDLING

- ◆ Use nitrile gloves when handling.
- ◆ Slides are fragile, keep handling to the minimum.
- ◆ Handle by the edges, not surfaces.

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LOOK OUT FOR

- ◆ Be aware that thin sections can be a variety of ages (some around 100 years old). The slide is only as stable as the mounting adhesive.
- ◆ Some past adhesives may not have been stable and may have perished.
- ◆ Slides are composite objects – keep this in mind.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Slides can have sharp edges and broken glass. Handle with care!

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

Brown, D.H. (2011a) *Archaeological Archives – A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation* (Second Edition). Archaeological Archives Forum (AAF)

Brown, D.H. (2011b) *Safeguarding Archaeological Information – Procedures for Minimising Risk to Un-deposited Archaeological Archives*. English Heritage