

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Archives

Collections Access:

External Loans and Research Guidance

Last Updated: April 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Who are we?

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) have collected archaeological archives from the county of Suffolk since 1974. These archives derive from commercial, research and amateur fieldwork of all kinds conducted in Suffolk. All elements of archaeological archives are collected, including digital, paper and finds archives.

1.2 Collections Access

SCCAS curates Suffolk's archaeological material for public benefit on behalf of the people of Suffolk. As SCCAS does not have an exhibition area it encourages loans from its collections to local museums and other public bodies including libraries, other archives and educational institutions. It seeks to allow members of the public and a wider audience the opportunity to engage with Suffolk's archaeological heritage.

SCCAS also encourages researchers of all types to use its collections and is keen that the results of any research are fed back into the archive and any exhibitions.

1.3 How do we decide what to loan?

All loans and research requests are assessed by the archives team at SCCAS. Assessments are made on a case by case basis and take into consideration: the object(s) requested, individual circumstances of the museum or researcher and the nature of the loan or research. All borrowers must maintain high standards of care for loaned objects and not jeopardise their long-term survival.

All loans are subject to a Loan Agreement, which must be completed and signed both by SCCAS and the borrower.

1.4 Cost of loans and research

Access to our collections for loans and research is free of charge.

The borrower is responsible for all costs relating to the display of loaned material, including insurance, transportation, display mounts and any special conservation.

If an object is damaged or lost during a loan, then the borrower is liable for the cost of conservation work to rectify any damage or for the compensation of any losses.

2. General Archive Enquiries

General archive enquiries can be made to the SCCAS archives team by e-mail, who will answer any enquiries as promptly as possible.

2.1. Photographs for Publications

SCCAS do allow the use of photographs for use in publications, please request the photograph via email. There is no charge for this service.

2.2. Site reports and records

Enquiries for small amounts of paper records can often be fulfilled digitally. Copies of these can be requested via email to the SCCAS archives team. There is no charge for this service.

If a large amount of paper archive is required, then a research visit can be booked to look at the material needed. Copies can be made on site.

2.3. Copyright

Any material being replicated in a report or publication needs to be accompanied by the statement: *copyright of Suffolk County Council*

3. Exhibition Loans

3.1. Who do we loan to?

SCCAS predominantly loans items out to museums, but will also consider loans to other public institutions, such as record offices, libraries and educational institutions.

3.2. What can we lend?

SCCAS will consider lending material for exhibitions and for object handling workshops.

Approval is based upon:

- The material/objects requested being in a stable condition and able to travel
- That a good case has been made by the borrower for the loan, including public benefit
- Sufficient time is available for SCCAS to consider and prepare the loan
- Suitable display, environmental and security conditions are provided by the borrower
- Whether or not the requested objects have been already promised to another museum.
- SCCAS conditions of loan being met (see below 5)

SCCAS will consider loaning human remains for display purposes on the condition that the appropriate ethical considerations and following guidance are adhered to:

Guidance for the Care of Human remains in Museum Collections
(DCMS 2005)

*Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains
Excavated From Christian Burial Grounds in England* (The Church
of England/English Heritage 2005)

3.3. How long do we loan to museums for?

SCCAS offer a flexible approach to the length of a loan to suit the individual museums circumstances. Both short-term (up to 6 month) and long-term (up to 5 years) loans are available, along with the option of loan renewals.

Loans of more than one-year duration will be checked periodically by the SCCAS archive team at intervals to be agreed with the borrower in advance.

The exact length of the loan will be negotiated taking into consideration issues such as the fragility and vulnerability of the objects requested, the planned length of the exhibition, winter closures of the borrowing museum, and subsequent changes in environmental conditions.

3.4. How to request a loan

Loans are to be requested in writing to the SCCAS archives team for consideration with as much notice as possible. Ideally with 3-6 months' notice.

SCCAS need information including:

- Title of exhibition or display
- Exhibition venue and dates
- Name and contact details of exhibition organiser
- Purpose of the exhibition
- List of the objects requested
- Reasons why these objects are needed
- The public benefit of the loan
- Information on the security and environmental conditions of both the display cases, storage areas, and the building itself.

4. Collections Research

4.1. Who can conduct research on our collections?

SCCAS collections are open to anyone who wishes to view them, this not only includes academics and professional archaeologists but also members of the public. Collections access for research is by appointment only.

All researcher access to our collections is free, in return for a copy of any research reports created. Research results are added to the SCCAS archive for future reference.

SCCAS offers both research visits and loans. Many of our researchers visit our archives so that they can benefit from not only having access to the material archive, but also the corresponding documentary archive.

Loans will be considered for researchers, situations in which the loan might be offered include but are not limited to: those who need to look at large volumes of material, those who require many repeat visits or those who need to take samples away for scientific analysis.

SCCAS offer research loans to suit the individual borrower's needs, but these are usually short term (1-6 months).

4.2. Destructive Sampling

SCCAS will consider requests to undertake destructive sampling on our collections, including human remains, if there is a clear research benefit in doing so. Destructive sampling is usually requested from universities and taken for scientific analysis such as isotopic analysis or radio-carbon dating.

Permission to undertake destructive sampling is judged on a case-by-case basis by the SCCAS archive team and is dependent on the research questions being asked, how much of a sample is required and which specific objects are being requested for sampling.

Permission will be granted in return for a copy of the results to hold in the archive for future reference.

Permission for destructive sampling may be refused if it is not ethically sound, the object requested holds particular significance or the objects have already been sampled using the same techniques and we hold the results of the previous analysis.

4.3. Human Skeletal Remains

Our human remains collections are available for research on the condition that any work undertaken meets ethical standards. An additional request form will be required outlining the research questions, whether destructive sampling is required, and the ethical considerations taken. Any storage and sampling of human remains must be ethically considerate and comply with the following guidance:

Guidance for the Care of Human remains in Museum Collections
(DCMS 2005)

Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated From Christian Burial Grounds in England (The Church of England/English Heritage 2005)

4.4. Conditions a research visit or loan

Research requests are to be made in writing to the SCCAS archives team for consideration, with as much notice as possible (ideally 3-6 months). Any additional forms required will be supplied to the researcher as necessary.

SCCAS need information including:

- Name and contact details of researcher
- A proposal on why the material requested is needed and the purpose of any research from the researcher, if this is a student, we also need written confirmation from their supervisor
- List of the material requested
- The research benefit of the research and/or loan

- Information on the security and environmental conditions of the storage and study areas.

5. Loan Conditions

Our general loan conditions are listed below, please note in special cases there may be additional conditions.

5.1. General Loan Conditions

- 5.1.1. The borrower will notify SCCAS, in writing, of any change of contact details.
- 5.1.2. SCCAS will complete a condition assessment of all material for loan, which is provided to the borrower.
- 5.1.3. The borrower will take all reasonable steps to keep any loaned objects in the same condition in which they were received.
- 5.1.4. Any apparent changes in the condition of the objects during the loan period must be reported to SCCAS immediately.
- 5.1.5. The borrower will notify SCCAS, by phone and in writing, of any damage, theft or loss of an object borrowed.
- 5.1.6. The borrower is liable for any costs incurred to repair damage or to compensate for the loss of an object.
- 5.1.7. The borrower shall not carry out any restoration, cleaning, conservation or other work on the object unless otherwise requested or authorised to do so by SCCAS.
- 5.1.8. All third-party requests relating to the loan object(s) will be referred to SCCAS unless specific license is given to the Borrower, including but not limited to copyright. The Borrower will not lend the objects to any third party.
- 5.1.9. This loan may be renewed subject to satisfactory review prior to the end of the loan date. The Lender will contact the Borrower three months prior to the end date to arrange a review, or to arrange return of the object(s).
- 5.1.10. SCCAS is to be credited for the loan of the objects within the same case as the objects.
- 5.1.11. SCCAS will pack any loans for transit.

- 5.1.12. SCCAS would expect their staff to accompany the loan and place, or witness the placing of the loan, in its final display location, if it is a museum display loan.
- 5.1.13. If the museum loan is outside the county of Suffolk the borrower will cover all SCCAS staff travel and associated costs relating to the above.
- 5.1.14. Research loans are expected to be couriered by the borrower.
- 5.1.15. Unless requested by the borrower, loaned objects must not be photographed apart from for internal use.
- 5.1.16. The borrower should inform SCCAS of any events or publicity associated with the loan of any material.

5.2. Environmental Conditions

- 5.2.1. The borrower must ensure that all objects are housed, displayed or stored in suitably stable environmental conditions (as per the object's material type), avoiding direct sunlight and with stable humidity and temperature.
- 5.2.2. **Methods of display and display materials will be agreed in advance.**
- 5.2.3. SCCAS will not ask the borrower for more stringent environmental conditions than in our own stores.
- 5.2.4. SCCAS will only stipulate environmental conditions required for materials being borrowed.
- 5.2.5. SCCAS will work with, and provide advice to, the borrower to ensure the displays are as environmentally stable as possible to allow for the loan to go ahead.
- 5.2.6. The borrower is liable for the cost of any silica gel required in the display cases to ensure environmental stability.

5.3. Touring Exhibitions

- 5.3.1. The organiser requesting the objects is considered the borrower and is the body accountable for the objects.
- 5.3.2. The borrower must sign the loan agreement; this will be one loan agreement to cover all museums involved in the tour.

- 5.3.3. It is the borrower's responsibility to ensure that the museums meet all the loan conditions for the loan.
- 5.3.4. The borrower must notify SCCAS in any schedule or venue changes in the museum tour.

5.4. Security and Insurance

- 5.4.1. The borrower must ensure that loaned objects are always kept securely whether on display or in storage, SCCAS will need to be provided with details of security before a loan goes ahead.
- 5.4.2. The borrower is responsible for arranging insurance cover at their own expense and must provide written confirmation that loaned material is covered before it is loaned.

5.5 Right to withdraw

- 5.5.1. SCCAS reserves the right to withdraw objects/ material from an agreed loan list or to recall objects at any time if it is SCCAS opinion that the borrower has not complied with the SCCAS loan conditions.

6. Contact Details

SCCAS archive team can be contacted via the following details:

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