

Countryside Management Association Gordon Miller Award 2016



Project D

Name of individual, organisation or project being nominated: Peeling Back The Layers Project
Where is the activity/project being carried out? (location & region) Under Whittle Farm Dove Valley Centre Sheen Staffordshire

Nominee Contact details – CMA needs to be able to contact someone about this nomination (NB personal details these will not be published without explicit permission)

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About the activity/work/project

<p>Overview (150 words max) Please summarise the activity/work/project, being clear about what was achieved and explaining why the nomination has been made</p>	<p>Peeling Back the Layers, is a community project, that explores archaeological features at Under Whittle Farm, Sheen, to discover if they connect to Tudor documents relating to a farm here more than 400 years ago.</p> <p>The project involved people, young and old, in an archaeological survey and excavation under the guidance of professional archaeologists. Schools, groups and individuals “peeled back the layers”, discovering what lies beneath the turf and how it fits into the wider landscape. Participants received training in archaeology and also worked with a professional historian to research documents at local record offices. They also learnt how to process finds and interpret survey data. Soon, local children will working with artists to create a children’s comic based on the findings of the excavation.</p> <p>I’ve nominated the project because of the exceptional commitment of local volunteers in delivering this project, their dedication and countless hours of work they contributed.</p>
<p>What was done (500 words max) Please describe activity/work/project in more detail</p>	<p>This project, run by the Tudor Farming Interpretation Group (a not for profit community group), obtained funding from HLF, the Mick Aston Archaeology Fund, and the Peak District’s Sustainable Development Fund to deliver a community archaeology project aiming to inspire, train and engage local people in the heritage around them. They appointed a</p>

project manager and professional team and together they engaged a wide number of volunteers from the local community in the project. These volunteers were crucial in delivering the project and in helping students, aged 4 to 20, in an educational experience that could not be delivered in the classroom.

In December 2015 volunteers commenced the history research, attending training workshops with a professional historian and visiting local records offices, learning how to access records, read them, record them and even transcribe them. The interim historical report produced is presently on the website.

The group commissioned a LiDAR survey of the area by the Environment Agency.

The project manager and a volunteer delivered in-school workshops to a secondary school special needs class, providing an introduction to archaeology and archaeological surveying.

An 8 day geological survey took place in March 2016, and local groups like Derbyshire Young Archaeologists, teaching staff and 2 local secondary schools came out to learn surveying techniques in geophysical, resistivity, tape and offset survey and interpreting the LiDAR survey. Approximately 30 volunteers came out to learn these techniques and carried out all the different elements of surveying including drawing the final plans.

In July the project manager and various volunteers delivered school workshops to 10 local primary schools (approximately 120 children) to explain about archaeology and its techniques, they also interpreted the survey data. 2 Senior School groups had in-school sessions to look at the results of the survey and analyse where they thought the excavation trenches should be sited.

3 week excavation took place with training for 34 volunteers and 17 teaching staff in excavation techniques, and then all the school children, young archaeologists and various other community groups came to carry out the excavation, clean and record finds, interpret archaeology. Week long work experience placements were provided for Year 10 and Year 12 students and University students were also involved. An Open event and tours also took place delivered by volunteers.

All reports are due by end October 2016 and in November and December further workshops with primary schools will take place and the archaeologist and heritage interpreter will work with children to develop a comic relating to the heritage of Under Whitle.

A website and regular blog is kept by the project, storing all data and discoveries. Interpretation signs on a new concessionary route will be created for the wider public and a series of talks will be delivered to local community groups – the first booking is at Derbyshire Archaeological Day.

	<p>Volunteers were so enthusiastic that they have also independently commenced a graveyard survey of Sheen Parish Church to support the history research.</p>
<p>Outputs/Outcomes (300 words max) Please provide some facts and figures (e.g. no of schools / vols engaged, events delivered, acres improved/linked, partners/joint working), how the activity/work / project was innovative or demonstrates best practice. Sell your project!</p>	<p>Training workshops 9 history 1 accessibility 2 surveying 2 excavation</p> <p>In-school workshops Archaeology and surveying – 1 secondary school Archaeology and excavation – 2 secondary, 10 primary schools</p> <p>On-site school days/group visits 2 secondary schools (1 special needs group) 2 visits 10 junior schools 1 visit 1 group home educators Derbyshire Young Archaeologists 4 visits Escape project (adults with learning difficulties) Hunter Society Farming & Countryside Education Work experience opportunity for 3 senior school students 33 adult volunteers participated (survey) 60 adult volunteers participated (excavation)</p> <p>Reports Interim historical report LiDAR Tape & offset Geophysics</p> <p>Open Events public welcome event 34 participants Survey 54 participants Excavation 80 participants</p> <p>Sharing Website, blog, twitter and facebook posts Discoveries uploaded to website 2 x “A Pint of Archaeology” Evenings in local pubs</p> <p>Number of volunteers involved increased steadily as the project progressed, but more importantly they moved from being receivers of knowledge and training, to carrying out research, surveying and excavating; contributing interpretation of the landscape and now delivering the Sheen Churchyard survey, engaging local villagers in their history and landscape. This is a triumph: the learners become the sharers of knowledge.</p> <p>The project aimed to be as inclusive as possible. Adjustments made included creating a textured map of site for visually impaired visitors; erecting talking tiles listening posts at appropriate points, making physical access improvements, amending all aspects of the project to be suitable for people with a variety of learning difficulties.</p>

	<p>Because the main focus of the project was on learning and engagement processes, rather than simply archaeological investigation, the professionals and project management team provided a welcoming learning environment where everyone felt valued and able to contribute, including news from the trenches blogs, poetry, Archaeology evenings in the pub to video logs by children. It was a truly communal exploration of heritage.</p>
<p>Learning (300 words max) What was key to the success of the activity?</p>	<p>The experience. The enthusiasm of volunteers and groups and their excitement at the opportunity to work with a professional historian and archaeologists, learning the skills of historical research, and archaeological surveying and excavation was overwhelming. It was this experience that inspired people – the location of the project could be anywhere. These transferable skills can be carried forwards, helping people to interpret the landscape and gain deep understanding of their heritage.</p> <p>The welcome. This project was intended as a learning experience. The professionals understood that they would be working with unskilled volunteers, and they made time to share their skills and knowledge, delivering training and workshops, but more importantly continually teaching and explaining. One archaeologist mentioned it was an unusual but rewarding experience - on most digs, time constraints mean volunteers are often left out of decisions and gain little understanding of what is happening. In addition, the Management team volunteers went out of their way to welcome new volunteers and ensure their thoughts and ideas were valued.</p> <p>Child friendliness and learning. Many children couldn't believe they were actually allowed to "dig" in the trenches –part of a real excavation! This was, without a doubt, the most exciting part of their visit. Although one of the trenches was probably more important from an archaeological perspective (because it potentially linked to a Medieval house platform), priority was given to trenches that revealed a lot of finds, so children had the opportunity to actually find a genuine archaeological artefact, learn how to clean, process and record it and ensure that their enthusiasm could be inspired. We wonder how many of the children will develop a long lasting interest in archaeology and their heritage. In-school workshops, this Autumn, should consolidate learning and help children to evaluate and interpret the heritage for themselves.</p>
<p>Downloads, videos, images <i>(please add links or attach documents/2 -3 images for use on the CMA website and wider promotion eg press releases).</i></p>	<p>Website with lots of images, blogs, etc: http://www.peelingbackthelayers.org</p>

<p>Quote from nominee One / two sentences describing value of project/successes from someone directly involved</p>	<p>Peeling Back the Layers gave the local community public access to learning with professional archaeologists and a historian. This experience enabled those involved to go forward with knowledge and understanding that enables them to read, understand and truly value their landscape and history in the future.</p>
<p>Quote from someone who has benefitted (100 words max)</p>	<p>This excerpt from an e-mail from Head Teacher at Earl Sterndale School:</p> <p>“I should tell you that one of our Y3 boys went home and carefully removed a layer of turf from his garden, then began scraping away layers of soil. He has a jar with fragments of pottery about which he is beside himself with excitement. Not sure how deep he has gone yet but he was in full archaeology mode.....”</p>

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Date 24/09/2016