

The New Educational Project

**Archaeology
for All at
Upper Row
Farm. The
first year of
HLF funding**

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As most members will no doubt be aware, 2008 was an extremely successful year for the Society's Educational Project, exceeding all our expectations. In the spring the Project committee recruited an Educational Officer, Tavis Walker, who hit the ground running producing lesson plans and material ready for presenting to primary school children. From the first allocation of funds we were able to purchase a laptop and digital projector, necessary equipment for Tavis to use both in schools and in the Museum Barn.

After an extensive publicity campaign, the first teaching sessions took place in June rapidly followed in July by National Archaeology Open Day. We had 136 visitors including 42 children who all took part in the Upper Row Farm Challenge; an archaeological trail devised by Tavis, consisting of various activities including surveying the villa footprint, geophysics, excavating spoil heaps, pot washing and finds identification. We had tours of the Blacklands site and the Roman garden along with displays and activities in the Museum Barn complimented by an array of tea and cakes.

In July the new RM15 resistivity meter arrived in time for the training excavation, see John Oswin's article, while the Educational Project took a break for school holidays.

The Excavation Open Day took place in September and we had 140 visitors despite the foul weather of the preceding days and 43 children braved the mud to complete the Upper Row Challenge2. We had tours of the trenches, unfortunately filled with water and again the Roman garden. The rain held off until mid-afternoon and the visitors retired to the Museum Barn to look around the displays and sample the cakes on offer.

Teaching sessions restarted in September continuing throughout the autumn term as word spread of the great service BACAS was offering, see Tavis Walker's article.

In October the Bartington arrived, and in November BACAS embarked on experimental archaeology for the first time, with an Iron Age Open Day. We had 126 visitors, mainly children, who took part in building the walls of a roundhouse with authentic wattle and daub, throwing slingshots at a model of a Roman soldier, foraging for and pressing apples, weaving with authentic materials and constructing mini-roundhouses out of paper! The experimental clamp kiln was a huge success with reconstructions of Iron Age pots placed in a kiln the day before and opened in the morning and another kiln built on the day, opened in the afternoon. Most of the pots survived intact and one was immediately put to use with the juice from the pressed apples! Experimental food was also a big part of the day with tea and cakes alongside delicacies such as 'ox-tongue broth', 'lamb and lentil stew' and 'lentil broth' with accompanying spelt rolls, all of which had gone by the afternoon. A further kiln in the field produced fresh bread samples with a special ingredient – beer! The day was a resounding success despite the freezing weather and one which we shall repeat, albeit at a warmer time of year.

In November the Society had a great finish to the year with the award of *The Graham Webster Laurels* for the amateur project which contributes most to education in archaeology.

During 2008 the Educational Project engaged over 1000 members of the public and 49 BACAS members gave their time and effort. This has resulted in over 2800 volunteer hours giving us fund matching of £59,973.21 towards our target of £62,400. A huge thank you to everyone.

More primary school visits are scheduled for 2009 with a planned expansion into secondary schools and interest groups. There are also plans to utilise the space within the Museum Barn, with a classroom area and a kitchen and we are looking at providing a disabled toilet alongside our existing facility. The Project committee will also be applying for a further grant to extend the duration of the project beyond August 2010.