

Innovations: new ways to deliver social value through archaeology

The theme of the 2021 *Client guide* is ‘Innovations: new ways to deliver social value through archaeology’ and it focuses on how archaeology can deliver public benefit and make a positive difference to individuals, to communities and to society. The delivery of public benefit is closely aligned with the United Nations’ 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development and with the wider definition of value set out in the UK Government’s Construction Playbook.

The benefits from archaeology can be direct and tangible: participating in an archaeological excavation can help individuals build confidence, develop new skills or enhance their understanding. They can also be indirect, intangible and harder to measure. Using information about the past to shape development in the future, for example, can create places which have greater meaning and are valued more highly as a result.

Archaeologists work for a wide range of clients from multi-national companies to private individuals and from conservation charities to housing developers. The case studies in this guide illustrate just a few of the ways archaeology can add value and help to deliver the client’s goals, whether they are focused on delivering sustainable development, enhancing well-being, supporting communities or connecting new audiences with the past. Clients looking for further inspiration and examples can visit our public benefit webpages at <https://bit.ly/3yamnal>. and for those seeking more detailed information on the contribution of archaeology to sustainable development, the CIRIA *Archaeology and construction: good practice guidance* will be published later this year.



Hollis Croft: a matter of time



Powering and protecting Scottish heritage



Public engagement in our everyday work



Excavation for wellbeing

Hollis Croft: a matter of time – archaeological comic book



'Sheffield, mid-19th century, the peak of the steel industry that both built and scarred the city. Dark streets and darker attitudes smother life in the grimy tenements and back streets. A young woman, Neive, leaves the poverty of her parents' home in West Ireland to seek work in the industrial cities of Northern England. She finds herself in Sheffield, having to hide her femininity to get work in steel cementation factories, she must also hide her forbidden love.'

An unlikely salvation occurs to her in the shape of a famous circus impresario...'

Hollis Croft: a matter of time is a unique comic book, published as a final excavation report, which aims to engage new audiences with a tale of history, female identity and the survival of people who lived and worked in the UK's industrial towns and cities during the 19th century. It is a thought-provoking look at both untold queer history and the universal experiences of many people living in harsh and difficult conditions in Victorian Sheffield.

Archaeologist and comic book enthusiast Mili Rajic weaves a human story into the archaeological remnants and artefacts uncovered by Wessex Archaeology on a site in Sheffield in 2017. The author uses the factual historical and archaeological evidence from an excavation she managed at Hollis Croft, Ordnance Survey maps and written records to reconstruct the site and the local landscape and to inform the story.

The comic features a cast of historical characters including Pablo Fanque, the circus owner who brought his show to Sheffield, and Madame Naomi, a palmist who lived on nearby West Street.

The story itself follows an imagined young woman, Neive, who leaves Ireland to seek work and finds herself having to hide her femininity to work in the steel cementation factories in Sheffield. She must also hide her forbidden love for Liz.

The comic is imagined as a different way of connecting people with the past and its archive, in a way that is hopefully easier to understand and more accessible. Technical archaeological reports rarely reach the wider



public at the best of times, and when they do, they can be complicated and sometimes very dry. *Hollis Croft: a matter of time* was created out of a need to get more people excited and engaged in archaeology, because the stories and potential stories are just sitting there in archives, waiting to be explored.

A digital version of the comic, hosted by *Internet Archaeology*, links the historic Hollis Croft with its archaeological archive and historical records of the area and the time. Just as grey literature directly links with the actual site archive, an X on the 12 full-page illustrations in the online viewer marks the 'clickable spot'. When selected, these take the reader straight to the archive or other documents and images concerning the site and the project.

The book is available free online on *Internet Archaeology* (<https://bit.ly/3cF84Co>) and to order from Oxbow Books (<https://bit.ly/2RXdGB2>).

Mili Rajic, Wessex Archaeology



Powering and protecting Scottish Heritage



Coll ©WSP

Along the west coast of Scotland lies a chain of more than 136 islands that are home to some of the UK's most remote communities. For thousands of years, farming and fishing have forged a deep connection between the islanders, the land and the sea.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) serves 59 of these western islands, ensuring these communities are connected to vital power supplies.

Some 280 miles (450km) of SSEN cables link the islands to the mainland electricity system. The network of cables stretches from Lewis and Harris in the northern Outer Hebrides, to Jura and Islay in the Inner Hebrides further south, powering homes, businesses, schools – every aspect of daily life.

With such an integral role to play in these island communities, SSEN aims to do more than provide energy safely and reliably. Working in partnership with Cifa Registered Organisation WSP, SSEN wants to help celebrate, and protect, the heritage of these

beautiful islands, ensuring their unique character is preserved for generations to come.

Here are just a few examples of projects where WSP is supporting SSEN to fulfil this ambition.

THE ISLE OF COLL

Like many of the west coast isles, there are no gas mains on the Isle of Coll. Just 13 miles long and 4 miles wide, Coll is served by a single 11KV subsea electricity cable. Everyone on the island is dependent on electricity for power, including heating and lighting their homes.

Coll's first cable was installed in 1987 running from the neighbouring island of Mull under the sea to the Bay of Sorisdale on Coll. After just 14 years (in 2001) SSEN's inspection regime revealed damage to the cable – a result of strong currents moving the cable over the rocky seabed as well as from trawler fishing boats dragging nets.

A new cable was installed and monitored using remotely operated subsea inspection tools. But by November 2018,

this connection was also in need of repair. A project is now under way to lay a new, double-armoured cable in a nearby new location, away from intense fishing activity.

SSEN is consulting with local communities, local businesses, elected members and other key stakeholders to help minimise disruption. But the company wants to achieve more than a consensus on how to approach the project; SSEN is taking the opportunity to talk to people on Coll about what life is like on the island and form an audio library of local experience. The project has been delayed by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the community's experience of the pandemic will now also form part of the stories the project seeks to tell.

Katy Urquhart, Subsea Projects Environmental Manager at SSEN says, 'A lot of utilities, civil engineering and construction companies parachute into a community, build the project and leave again. We wanted to create a programme that will not only benefit the community for generations to come in terms of a reliable power source, but will also build our relationship with the community, bringing people together to celebrate their historic and proud island traditions.'

Revealing Coll's rich heritage

This oral history project sits alongside SSEN's efforts, working in partnership with WSP, to uncover, and share with the public, new archaeological insights about Coll, as well as other island communities.

Kevin Mooney, Principal Heritage Consultant at WSP, explains: 'Many of the archaeological remains that the team discovered as part of the cable replacement project speak to the sustainable and unique way of life in this part

of the world, which centred on crofting.

'The northern portion of Coll is an emotive landscape with very few inhabitants in it and dispersed, isolated communities. Crofting as a way of life is dying out, but there is still a small crofting community on Coll which is situated around the Bay – where the cable emerges from the sea. It's important that any project recognises this and minimises its impact on this traditional way of life.

'Evidence of a rich crofting tradition on Coll was very clear,' says Kevin. 'We know that in prehistory – six or seven thousand years ago – the inhabitants of Coll were harvesting and processing grains and vegetables. Our investigations also show there has been very little development in the area, which means the land has not been disturbed much over the centuries.'

Archaeological discoveries

Interesting discoveries to date include 'byers' (small kelp kilns), and two small 'nausts' (boathouses). WSP also uncovered a small number of previously unrecorded cairns located on hills across the assessment area. These are wayfaring piles of stones (now grassed over), which potentially allowed the crofting community to navigate their way around the area. They may have also helped the crew of fishing boats along the bay to work out and triangulate where exactly they were.

The archaeological team also uncovered a 'fish trap' – a small wall of stones on the coast used to trap seawater (and fish) when the tide came in. While it has not been possible to date the structure, it is possibly prehistoric and was in use all the way up to the medieval period and beyond.

Mull ©WSP






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Episode 2 podcast ©WSP

THE ISLE OF LEWIS AND HARRIS

Another island community that has experienced major change, most recently during the Covid-19 pandemic, and over the centuries, is the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. It is the most northern of all of the Western Isles with a population of around 18,500.

A mainland electricity link was first established in 1991 and it is vital that this infrastructure is maintained and updated. Stornoway's substation operated for 30 years but needed to be replaced in 2018 as part of the project to improve the power connection between Stornoway and the other islands.

Simon Hall, consents and environment manager at SSEN, explains: 'Replacement isn't as simple as removing the old substation and installing the new one. This would leave the island without power, so SSEN had to be creative with its plans for replacement. In simple terms it had to build a new one next door to the existing substation and, only when it was completely finished, switch all of the cable connections over to the new unit.'

Protecting and preserving peatland

Creating the new substation involved another challenge for the team. A challenge that had been gathering for hundreds, if not thousands of years – the presence of peat deposits.

Peatlands are the largest natural terrestrial carbon store and the restoration and protection of peatland is a priority for the Scottish government as it seeks to reduce its carbon footprint. It follows that SSEN with support from WSP needed to minimise disturbance to Harris and Lewis's rich and ancient peatlands, and also consider peat restoration projects.

Although the site of the existing substation was already fixed, the team was able to position the new substation in a way that minimised the amount of peat that was disturbed from about 10,000 cubic metres to 4,000 cubic metres. Furthermore, the team made sure that the deepest layers were not affected. This was achieved primarily by looking at the size and orientation of the compound.

Given the island's long history and rich cultural heritage assets, WSP was also asked to carry out an archaeological assessment of the site, which encountered evidence of prehistoric funerary activity in the area. WSP's Kevin Mooney explains:

'This took the form of a stone circle, which was identified and scheduled in 1992. It was completely obscured by around two metres of peat so the potential existed for further archaeological remains where peat deposits were present. So we introduced a phased approach of archaeological monitoring during the construction of the substation.'

It also became apparent that very little radiocarbon dating had been done of peat deposits across Lewis so SSEN agreed to carry out a paleo-environmental survey, which involved drilling out a core sample of the peat to ascertain its age at various depths.

'We found peat dating to the Mesolithic, Bronze Age and medieval times,' says Kevin. 'So from these early dates, right to the current period, we had a fully preserved stratigraphic sequence, or what we call an environmental baseline on Lewis. Ultimately, the results of this work will be put on record allowing for further research at the University of the Highlands and Islands.'

Kevin Mooney MCIfA, WSP

Public engagement in our everyday work

Farriers Way, Warboys, Cambridgeshire



Warboys Archaeology Group volunteers taking part in the evaluation in May 2018 ©Oxford Archaeology

In 2018–19 Oxford Archaeology’s East office, based near Cambridge, undertook the archaeological evaluation and excavation of a 3.5-hectare site on the outskirts of Warboys, Cambridgeshire. The work was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP), on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited (Northern Home Counties) ahead of residential

development of the site. The excavation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Cambridgeshire County Council which required a strategy for site presentation, to include the issue of press releases/articles, an open day for visitors (where appropriate) and/or a parish-based presentation of the excavated remains.



A final team photograph with OA East archaeologists and volunteers in winter 2019 © Oxford Archaeology



Above and below: The site presentation event at Warboys Methodist Church in July 2019 © Oxford Archaeology



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

OA East already had strong links with the local community. It helped to establish the Warboys Archaeology Group, a sub-group of the Warboys Local History Society, as part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded Jigsaw community archaeology project in 2011.

During the three weeks of evaluation trenching in May 2019, nine members of the Warboys Archaeology Group took part alongside OA East's professional team. Permission was granted by EDP and Bellway Homes, and OA East followed ClfA's guidance on the use of volunteers and students on archaeological projects.

In August 2019, OA East returned to excavate the site and 15 individuals volunteered over 200 days over a period of four months. EDP and Bellways gave support and PPE (hard hats and hi-vis vests) for the volunteers taking part. One of the volunteers was a locally based university student, looking for experience during a 'sandwich' placement year during their degree course at Bournemouth University, and is now employed by OA East following graduation. Some of the other volunteers were members of the Warboys Archaeology Group who had also taken part in the evaluation. The group also undertook a geophysical survey of a neighbouring sports field out of their own interest, borrowing geophysical survey equipment held by OA East as part of the Jigsaw community archaeology project.

All those who completed a feedback form rated the experience as 'Excellent' or 'Good' and said they would recommend it to others. Here is a selection of comments:

'This was a great opportunity to work in Warboys and being involved led to a geophysical survey of the sports field which would just not have happened, but which has the potential to add to the village's knowledge about its heritage.'

'Thank you and I very much appreciate the opportunity to carry on diggin'! Whilst this time of the year may not be the easiest weatherwise, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and look forward in continuing my learning with OAE in the near future. Steve and his team have been very welcoming and helped whenever I've required any guidance – so a big thanks to them!'

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The excavation finished in February 2019 and site conditions were very poor. Warboys Archaeology Group was consulted by OA East about whether a site-based open day should be held during the winter months. Together with the clients, all agreed to postpone a public site presentation event to the summer. A free drop-in exhibition was held at Warboys Methodist Church for local residents to meet the archaeologists involved and see a selection of the finds in July 2019, coinciding with the Festival of Archaeology. Warboys Archaeology Group was consulted about where and when to host the event and was on hand to help during the day, and members of the church congregation put on refreshments. A school student, as part of their work experience placement with OA East, was involved in helping to put together information and photos for the display boards, selecting finds for display and helping to prepare the object labels.

Over 140 residents dropped by to meet the team and see the finds. All of the visitors who completed feedback forms rated the event as ‘Excellent’ for interest, information and enjoyment and here are a selection of comments:

‘Fantastic. Friendly staff, wonderful.’

‘Needed a bit longer. Experts on hand were most informative. Amazed at range of items and also have been told of quantity found. All exciting.’

‘Excellent presentation. Would like more.’

OA East returned to the village in the autumn to give a talk to the Warboys Local History Society, open to the whole community, and also gave a talk and display at the Cambridge Antiquarian Society’s annual conference on local archaeological discoveries in November 2019, attended by over 100 people.

PUBLICITY AND PRESS RELATIONS

An initial press release about the ongoing archaeological investigations came out in November 2018, and another was released about the site’s findings in July 2019, coinciding with the public presentation event. The story was covered online by local news outlets including BBC Cambridgeshire, the *Cambridge News*, *The Hunts Post* and *Peterborough Today*, and by the national newspaper *The Times*. OA East’s archaeologists gave an interview with BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.

An article was subsequently published in the popular archaeology magazine *British Archaeology* in March/April 2020.

Clemency Cooper, Oxford Archaeology



An article about the site published in *British Archaeology* magazine (March/April 2020) ©British Archaeology ©Oxford Archaeology



An initial press release about the excavations (November 2018, screenshot) ©The Hunts Post

Excavation for wellbeing – volunteering in the Covid-19 pandemic



Socially distanced site briefings become the daily norm – and also the time to check in with how everyone feels about procedures and safety. ©CPAT

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has excavated at locations across the Chirk Castle estate near Wrexham in north-east Wales for several years. Investigating landscapes from early medieval linear earthworks to 17th-century workshops and formal gardens, the project has combined research objectives with volunteer opportunities and public outreach to develop a programme of work that is firmly embedded in the local community and the wider region. Volunteers on the project have ranged from undergraduate archaeology students to National Trust volunteers, Young Archaeologists' Club groups to members of local societies. With a broad age range and some diversity in background, the varied volunteer groups have worked well together on tasks across the site

– some working on their Archaeological Skills Passports, others filling CPAT's own Volunteer Skills Handbook, others preferring a less formal approach. By offering a variety of ways to interact with archaeology in this way, the project can accommodate volunteers with different backgrounds, skills and confidence levels.

Volunteers at Chirk Castle excavations have shared the impact of their experiences with CPAT staff through both formal and informal evaluation, and the outreach team observed significant positive wellbeing and health outcomes from working on the project. There were several members of the regular volunteer crew living with chronic or long-term health conditions, who have shared their observations on how working on site has made them feel



The SoDA (Social Distancing for Archaeology) Toolkit by L-P Archaeology and Prospect Union Archaeology Branch is a vital tool for instantly recognisable, clear signage across the site. ©CPAT



Finds labs move outdoors – in this case in what is usually a covered but open air picnic spot – to allow air to circulate for the safety of staff and volunteers. ©CPAT

and how it has impacted them in the short term. As part of a revamped volunteer programme, in 2019 volunteers were invited to fill in an evaluation including wellbeing indicator surveys based on the WEMWEBS scale, both before and after their time on site, to further establish impacts on mental wellbeing. This kind of quantification of wellbeing impact is the type of evidence and research that is urgently needed within archaeology, to bring it to the levels of Museum Studies and other adjacent disciplines when it comes to building evidence bases for public value, impact and economic benefits.

With the lockdown and restrictions of Covid-19, it was apparent that the project would have to shift approach if any volunteers could benefit from being on site and if

further evidence could be gathered towards assessing impact. Many previous volunteers had been in touch citing the excavation as an important part of their year and a way for them to both connect to other people and to get out of their daily routine; some directly referenced the impact on their mental health as a reason they wanted to come onto site.

Several modifications were made to the usual setup – workshops on health and safety, site history, and project briefings were moved online. Paperwork was abandoned in favour of Google forms and other digital methods. Trenches were made into socially distanced outdoor workspaces, with one way systems and hygiene stations. The Volunteer Skills Handbook was not feasible in a time when



Working in a bubble or in their own, socially distanced spot – volunteers found plenty of space in the trench.
© CPAT

contact with surfaces and having ‘dwell time’ at potential pinch points like break spaces and picnic tables was not a possibility. Instead, evaluation was informal with conversations between CPAT staff and volunteers, as well as follow-on surveys sent by email. With numbers limited further by Welsh government restrictions to movement only within counties, a close group of volunteers formed who acted as peer support for each other throughout the two weeks on site. Shared experiences of getting used to the new one way systems, face shields during finds processing, and finding ways to chat and socialise at lunch break in a safely distanced fashion brought the group closer together. Above all, the nature of working on site – going through the careful process of excavation and recording in a methodical fashion, finding a comfortable and effective pace of trowelling or clearing spoil, and sorting finds in a meticulous fashion – is a way of finding a rhythm that some volunteers describe as almost meditative.

CPAT has only begun to explore the impacts of archaeological fieldwork on wellbeing, both short and long term. While staff can see the immediate impact and gather observation-based evidence, the next step is to gather larger, quantifiable datasets on the impact it can have on a diverse range of people, and how archaeological projects can include this important outcome in their planning and delivery across developer-led, research, and project-based excavations. This evidence will help ClfA and other organisations to deliver important messages to policy makers, project partners and other key stakeholders that the value of archaeology and archaeological outreach is more than the impact on knowledge and understanding of the past; it is also deeply embedded in social and economic impacts on local and wider communities.

Penelope Foreman PCIfA, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust