Archaeology – it’s anything but the pits

MEDIEVAL Spanish pottery and stone age flints were just some of the discoveries made in West Mersea by a team of wannabe archaeologists.

Led by archaeologist and Time Team presenter Carenza Lewis, pupils from five schools carried out small scale digs as part of a Cambridge University project.

The pupils were put into teams and each given a metre square “test pit” to excavate.

Any finds were recorded and they will attend a follow-up session at the university today.

Carenza said: “There have been some really interesting finds – the Spanish pottery shows there were trading connections in West Mersea, which we would expect to find. The idea of the project is to dig as many test pits as possible, in as many places.

“Then we’ll have a map of the town and show what was found.”

So far, she said the team found items from the Roman, Stone Age, Prehistoric Age and Iron Age but had not discovered anything Saxon.

The schools taking part were Thomas, Lord Audley School and Language College and St Helena School in Colchester, along with Manningtree High School, Colbays High School in Clacton and Tendring Technology College, Frinton.

• Sifting through – Carenza Lewis helps Andrew Smith and Yolanda Leask search for clues to times past in one of the test pits dug on West Mersea.

Picture: NIGEL BROWN (76548-1)