Time put to the test by pupils

PUPILS from eight Essex schools have joined a former Time Team archaeologist to help uncover their county’s medieval history.

Year 10 and 11 students from Clacton County High School, the Colne Community School, Brightlingsea, Tendring Technical College and Manningtree High School dug test pits in West Mersea with Caronza Lewis yesterday to contribute to a Cambridge University research project to identify medieval settlements across the UK.

Four other schools will visit Thorington for a similar exercise early next month.

Ms Lewis, known to many from her appearances on Channel 4’s Time Team, is leading the higher education field academies, which involve the pupils excavating one-metre deep pits to uncover the secrets buried in residents’ gardens.

Residents who have offered their gardens or fields to be used as test sites will see them restored to their original condition by the pupils after any finds have been recorded.

Ms Lewis, who is based at the university’s faculty of geography and anthropology, said: “Archaeology is a great vehicle for making pupils aware of the opportunities offered by studying at university level.

“It captures people’s imagination, covers many academic subject areas, and can make learning about history and the environment exciting.”

The project is being run in conjunction with Aimhigher Essex, the Government-funded initiative to attract a more diverse body of young people into higher education.

WHAT’S THIS THEN?

Bernard Abrahams and Filipe Carvalho, of Colne Community School, dig for timeless treasure at the West Mersea site.

EVIDENCE: Carenza Lewis, a former Time Team archaeologist, with Stacey Cole and Jason Paine, from Manningtree High School, during the dig in West Mersea.

Photographs: CLIFFORD HICKS