Archaeological Test Pit Digs

Over two days at the end of June, all our Year 6 and Year 7 pupils were involved in archaeological test pit digging in Little Waldingfield. Part of the Heritage Lottery funded Managing a Masterpiece project, the digs were led by Dr Carenza Lewis from Cambridge University’s archaeology department and well known from Channel 4’s Time Team series, and coordinated by Mr Wheeler and Mr Flute. The test pit digging involved digging pits up to a metre deep, in stages of 10cm at a time, in five residents’ gardens. Some local residents and friends of the school assisted this community event. We used the parish church as a base where Mrs Barnes also led art based activities, including taking brass rubbings.

Our pupils had a thoroughly enjoyable experience which involved hard physical work, but also cleaning, sorting and analysing finds and developing skills of teamwork. They learned about the techniques, vocabulary, systems of operation, and safety aspects of archaeology and they learned about aspects of history and forensic science. It was also about sowing the seeds of aspiration for the future. Additionally, their work assists Dr Lewis in building up a picture of the changing patterns of settlement over the centuries in East Anglia and beyond.

We found many remains of clay pipes and animal bones. We also found fragments of pottery, some going back to medieval times. One mum reported that her son could not stop talking about the experience for six hours until he had to go to bed. The boys and girls were a credit to themselves, their families and the school and we were highly complimented by the property owners. The finds are now at Cambridge University. We will do our best to find ways of reporting on the analysis of the finds when this is completed.

Mr R Wheeler, Deputy Headteacher