

Jigsaw Cambridgeshire

Short description of the project

Jigsaw Cambridgeshire is a Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) five year project delivered by a partnership of Oxford Archaeology East, Cambridgeshire County Council, Council for British Archaeology (CBA) East and Huntingdonshire District Council. It supports local archaeology and history groups across the county, and reaching new audiences by creating new archaeology groups. At the time of writing, Jigsaw has 20 affiliated groups. The main aims and objectives of the project are to support groups through free training, equipment and advice and to ensure that sites are recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER).

The project was set up to address the great interest in archaeology in the local area which was previously only met on an *ad hoc* basis when time and funding allowed; Jigsaw provides a systematic means of supporting the voluntary sector. The project runs until August 2016, and we are now three years in. Jigsaw is not a top-down project: it seeks to facilitate groups to conduct their own research projects rather than imposing research agendas.



Warboys Archaeology Group © Oxford Archaeology

What would have happened without this project?

Many groups would have continued to operate, but with low skill-sets and limited access to equipment. High-level training and Best Practice Users' Guides provided by Jigsaw have helped societies conduct research projects that they were unable to consider before the project. New audiences have been engaged through six new Archaeology Action Groups; before Jigsaw interested parties would have had to travel to their nearest group rather than researching their local patch, and it would have been difficult to find the information in the first place. Inter-group co-operation and mutual support would not have happened without instigation by Jigsaw.

What has the project achieved, or difference has it made?

New community links, friendships and collaborations have been formed in the creation of new groups and through increased publicity of existing groups. Individuals have enjoyed learning new skills at the Jigsaw training courses.

What were the main lessons learnt or challenges overcome?

Setting up new groups in areas where there is no previous known interest in archaeology was challenging, but worthwhile with six new groups now thriving.

What is the future of the project?

Jigsaw ends in August 2016. The partners intend to maintain the current Advisory Group of representatives from each group as an entity uniting the affiliated Jigsaw groups after the project ends. The Best Practice Users' Guides to archaeological techniques will continue to be available for download, and the Equipment Resource will continue to be available for groups to borrow. Information learnt will stay with the group members. The Advisory Group hopes to find funding to continue a smaller-scale Jigsaw.



Examining finds from an excavation © Oxford Archaeology

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