


<b>Name of project/group</b>
Longstone Local History Group
<b>Type of project</b>
Social Action/Community Empowerment
<b>Location</b>
Fin Cop Hill Fort in the Peak District National Park, East Midlands
<b>What was involved</b> January to November 2009, fieldwork took place in the summer.
<p>This was an exciting community archaeology project that enabled school children and other interested people to take part in an excavation at Fin Cop Hill Fort. Fin Cop is an Iron Age Hill Fort, Scheduled Monument, thought to be late Bronze Age or early Iron Age. The scheduled site at Monsal Head near Bakewell contains a wealth of historical information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a round cairn thought to be from the Bronze Age</li> <li>• lead mining thought to be medieval and post medieval</li> <li>• a Lime kiln thought to be post medieval.</li> </ul> <p>There are other earthworks on the eastern down slope of the site and part of the area lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).</p> <p>The project was organised by the Longstone Local History Group, an organisation comprising of over 50 volunteers, who worked in partnership with Archaeological Research Services Ltd. The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It aimed to get as many people involved in the recording of the site, in particular, to provide opportunities for young people to be trained in film production, research and archaeological techniques as part of the investigation. There were opportunities for work placements, on-line educational resources and a programme of on and off site activities for all ages.</p> <p>The fieldwork proved to be extremely popular, surpassing expectations, which has led to a second phase of excavation involving many more schools.</p>

<b>Achievements</b>
<p>Without this project information about the present extent and preservation of the archaeological remains would not have been collated, thereby hampering future decisions about how best to conserve the monuments. There would also have been a missed opportunity to involve the local community in investigating and preserving their heritage, and the momentum of the local society would have been lost.</p>

This community project allowed almost 200 school children to take part in an excavation. They recorded vital evidence for the construction and date of the earthworks, and they learned, first hand, archaeological skills and the importance of post-excavation analysis. They also unexpectedly found the skeleton of a young woman within the collapsed rampart, leading to a lively discussion about how and why she died.

Fin Cop helped bring the knowledge and excitement that archaeology can provide to an entire community. The investigation also showed how amateur and professional archaeologists can work together to further our knowledge and understanding of the past, without losing precious evidence and without diminishing the enjoyment of all those involved. 78 volunteers worked on site for a total of 411 volunteer days and a site open day allowed visits by local people and other archaeologists to find out more about the projects discoveries first hand.

A Youth DVD was produced and has been used by the Tourist Information Centre in Bakewell in their video rotation about the area. The DVD is available for viewing on request.

The project won the 2010 British Archaeological Award for best community archaeology project.



### **Future plans**

There is now better knowledge of the site which could help in deciding the nature and location of any public access arrangements to the monument in the future. The information from the digs has been used in interpretation material around the site and has generated information on where further archaeological investigations could be based.

The project generated a wealth of local interest and support for the site resulting in more sensitive use of it by land owners and a sense of ownership of it by local people. Any problems on the site in the future are therefore likely to be reported promptly.

### **Lessons Learnt**

- Organising and co-ordinating volunteers is a challenging and demanding job. Sometimes a voluntary group needs much more professional help with all aspects of the managing, funding and organising of its project.
- Volunteer dedication was essential to the success of this project. Their commitment ensured that it was completed to the highest standard though the level of work required of them was demanding.

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