



RENDLESHAM REVEALED

ANGLO-SAXON LIFE IN SOUTH-EAST SUFFOLK

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY

January 2020 – September 2024

Rendlesham Revealed is a noteworthy success story that has considerably exceeded its aims and all targets and measures of success.

As a community archaeology project, it is an exemplar of its type.





1,565,996 participations

540 individual volunteers



313 general public, 122 schoolchildren, 15 teachers, 28 clients from Suffolk Mind, 28 young people aged 12-17 years and 5 staff from Suffolk Family Carers, 10 Mentors from the local amateur group, 10 undergraduate students and 3 staff from UCL, and 29 volunteers bringing specialist expertise.

178 individuals from priority audiences



1,222 volunteer participations exceeding target of 600



£438,605



23,672 hours over 530 days of activity



 **90** days excavation

41 days fieldwalking 

39 days GPS and geophysical survey

 **5** days river valley survey and **8** sites surveyed

472 volunteer participations

207 schoolchildren 

239 participants took part in

36 volunteers engaged

131 people from priority audiences took part in additional workshops

**141 POST-EXCAVATION
FINDS PROCESSING
SESSIONS**

**22 POST-EXCAVATION
SPECIALIST
WORKSHOPS**

 **1 EXPERIMENTAL
ARCHAEOLOGY
KILN**





259,283 wider
outreach



Digital audiences for the virtual exhibition,
walking trail, videos, and booklet total

263,516



Wider digital audiences across all social
platforms, blog, e-newsletter, and website
totalled

1,042,287



Outcomes for Heritage

Rendlesham Revealed has investigated and enhanced the understanding of Anglo-Saxon archaeological heritage in the Deben Valley, promoting better management and protection, and ensuring lasting public access to it.

Rendlesham Revealed **has enhanced understanding of known sites** and has the added benefit of setting the major Anglo-Saxon sites at Rendlesham and Sutton Hoo in their broader context.

Rendlesham Revealed has been **successful in establishing a baseline** for monitoring the long-term condition of the buried archaeology at Rendlesham.

The Project has **successfully raised awareness** among landowners, land managers and farmers, using the new evidence to promote appropriate and sustainable management of the archaeological resources.

A **legacy** of understanding and appreciation that will empower local communities to value and protect their archaeological heritage.

- new best practice guidance
- all project archives, artefacts and other finds will remain fully accessible for the future as they are conserved, catalogued and curated according to best practice
- training has left a legacy of skilled individuals and organisational networks, supported by SCCAS, that will enable local community groups to take forward future investigation and interpretation of their archaeological heritage.



Outcomes for People

Rendlesham Revealed has provided structured training opportunities in archaeological investigation, offered diverse programs to encourage engagement with heritage, and had a positive impact on the mental and physical health of young people.

Through the programme of archaeological fieldwork, the Project provided **structured training opportunities for volunteers** who learned new skills for the future and connected with their archaeological heritage.

The Project was **successful in prioritising audiences** who were less likely to engage with archaeology, and in engaging young people, especially young adults, in ways which could contribute to enhancing positive mental health and wellbeing and provide insights into future careers by teaching them new skills.

Rendlesham Revealed offered a **diverse, accessible and flexible programme of activities and digital content**, which engaged new and existing audiences.

This **ambitious citizen science project** has delivered better understanding and interpretation of internationally important Anglo-Saxon archaeological heritage.

Prioritising volunteering opportunities in community fieldwork resulted in **younger audiences being well represented** with the proportion of volunteers aged under 25 exceeding the background population distribution.

Volunteers **worked side by side with an exceedingly high-quality core team** operating at the top of their profession.

Outcomes for People

Rendlesham Revealed has established a sustainable network of local, regional and national partners, strengthened by the continuation of the Project's Partnership Advisory Group.

This has developed a network of heritage professionals and universities that have brought a range of expertise, supported the delivery of Project activities, and enabled knowledge and skills sharing.

Through partnerships with community organisations like the Suffolk Archaeological Field Group (SAFG), the Project provided high-quality training and development opportunities, building a skilled volunteer workforce.

Throughout the Project, there was also a constructive relationship between the archaeological expertise of the core team and the fieldwork volunteers who brought other skills and expertise to the Project

Volunteers from Anglian Potters provided expertise in ceramics but were new to archaeology, making links to their contemporary practice and skills and working collaboratively with other skilled experimental archaeology professionals to produce an output.

Volunteer drone operators are now involved with other archaeological projects, and trained volunteers from the local amateur group have found their geophysical survey skills in demand at other sites.

Volunteers from Anglian Potters will continue with their experimental archaeology, this was a rich and mutually beneficial exchange of expertise and knowledge that will continue into the future.

Outcomes for People

Rendlesham Revealed has had a positive impact on the mental and physical health of young people by providing a new, rewarding, hands-on experience

Project Team have **consistently and passionately demonstrated a commitment** to working with young people and with young adults with mental health illnesses.

They have prioritised **breaking down barriers to inclusion and participation**, ensuring that activity suited the priority audiences and met their needs and interests.

“It made it possible for me to be myself and do things outside that I love, not just focusing on mental health but other things that I enjoy and am interested in.” **Client, Suffolk Mind**

All volunteers have benefited from their involvement with Rendlesham Revealed in ways that are likely to have contributed to improvements in mental and physical health and wellbeing.

The young carers and Suffolk Mind clients who volunteered report clear improvements across a range of wellbeing indicators, which can be confidently attributed to taking part in the Project.

Suffolk Mind clients valued feeling and being treated as part of the team, as opposed to ‘a diagnosis’, the same as other members of the public working alongside professionals.

A break from caring responsibilities, new friendships, and new experiences created a welcoming, supportive and structured environment that contributed to the Young Carers’ overall enjoyment – they gained confidence and realised they could achieve something new.



Outcomes for Communities

Rendlesham Revealed has empowered communities to research, explore and celebrate their heritage at a local level.

The Project has provided opportunities for people to volunteer with every aspect of the archaeological process and in all these ways they have been empowered to make a meaningful contribution to live archaeological research..

Volunteers have been vital to the success of the archaeological fieldwork and post-excavation work, exchanging their time and dedication for on-the-job training in new skills and an enjoyable experience.

Rendlesham Primary school children have been empowered to do the digging, hunting, touching, picking, sieving, and washing, and empowered to the intellectual task of being curious. School teachers have made a huge personal effort, including working on their days off, to ensure the school children maximise the opportunity for engagement with the Project.

“It was wonderful to feel so involved in such a unique and important site.” Client, Suffolk Mind

“Being invited to Cambridge University labs was overwhelming for them, and they couldn’t believe they were being allowed to do it.” Staff Member, Suffolk Mind

The volunteers from Rendlesham Primary School have ‘grown up’ with the Project, with the same class attending every year. The archaeology at Rendlesham is an important discovery for these schoolchildren, bringing history even closer to home, increasing their understanding and appreciation of their local area.

Outcomes for Communities

Rendlesham Revealed has built a network of resources that can be sustained beyond the lifetime of the Project, and increased awareness about the negative impacts of agricultural practices on buried archaeology.

A **network of resources** has built up for communities to use, which can be sustained by SCCAS beyond the lifetime of the Project.

Rendlesham Revealed has **raised awareness about the negative impacts** of agricultural practices on buried archaeology to encourage better management.

Rendlesham Revealed has **raised awareness of the decision-making processes** affecting local heritage through presentations, open days and site visits.

The Project has **enhanced the shared understanding and distinctiveness of local heritage and promoted its international importance**. It is clear the sheer importance and profile of the archaeology was a significant motivator to take part.

The Project Team have provided detailed advice on farming practices that will allow for better protection of the below-ground archaeological remains in the future. **Over the course of the Project, all subsoiling has ceased and most of the land is now ‘min-till’.**

Volunteers understood the importance of the Project both in terms of the academic research and from the point of view of having “the chance of a lifetime” to be part of that.

“I lived there! I was overwhelmed. I joined the Suffolk Archaeological Field Group and did bits, but to be on a dig that had a beginning, middle and end was joyous!” **Volunteer Mentor**

Outcomes for Communities

The Project has increased national awareness of the important Anglo-Saxon archaeology in south-east Suffolk, which will help boost tourism in the area and publicity for heritage visitor attractions in Suffolk.

The discoveries change perceptions of Anglo-Saxon England and contribute to Suffolk's identity and sense of place. They build on the understanding of known sites like Sutton Hoo and puts it into the context of the wider landscape.

Sutton Hoo is already a draw to the area as a famous visitor attraction and now the story of Rendlesham adds to the special quality of the local area, which will benefit heritage visitor attractions in Suffolk, and increase national awareness of the important Anglo-Saxon archaeology in south-east Suffolk.

Archaeology projects can have a profound social, environmental, economic and cultural impact on the development of communities.



Success Criteria and Lessons Learned

The model for community fieldwork an excellent model for future projects

Making space for priority audiences the project's stand out achievement

Landowner Engagement must be collaborative

Partnerships vital to project success

Skilled and well-resourced project team sufficient project staffing is essential

A large host organisation adds value through expertise and staff resource

Publication an obligation to publish the full fieldwork results

Generating public enthusiasm the challenge of meeting expectations long term

Digital provision an important element for future projects



The Project Team has **curated an impressive legacy for the future**, of archaeological research, developing partnerships, skilled volunteers, physical interpretation and online resources.





heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham