

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY...

July 28, 2013 Lorna Richardson Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2013, Education, Public Archaeology Archaeological sub-disciplines, Community Archaeology, digital communications, Public archaeology, Social Media, Waveney Archaeology Group, Waveney Valley

I guess this is my Day of Archaeology Reloaded. My original [contribution from Friday](#) of the film I made whilst working at the Cambridge University Museum of Zoology doesn't really reflect the present realities of my archaeological life, which are taking interesting turns. As you probably know, the Day of Archaeology project is mine and Matt Law's baby, and so Friday was spent checking and uploading new contributions, answering email, tweeting and generally drowning in social media. Much like the last two years... I won't bore you with the details, but Team Day of Archaeology are an ace bunch of people to work with, and it all went smoothly without any major hitches, although it was a long day.

Saturday gets a little bit more interesting as far as an actual Day of Archaeology...

In 2012, I made the difficult decision to move out of my beloved Hackney after 16 years, and head back home to the Norfolk/Suffolk border where I grew up and where my family are. The prospect of a country life after living in London for so long was terrifying, not least because I couldn't drive, and knew I'd be reliant on rural public transport and my bike. But I had been nursing the plan to set up a community archaeology group in the Waveney area, so what I lost in easy access to the British Museum and Stoke Newington pubs, I planned to make up in creating exactly the type of archaeology group I would want to join...

Thanks to Twitter (again) I met a fellow Norfolkian, Andrew, who was keen to set a group up, and so we launched the [Waveney Valley Community Archaeology Group](#) in April 2013. We planned from the beginning that this group would be the antithesis of formal structure and hierarchy – that the group would work together, valuing equally people's experience and interest, and actively avoid having committees and job titles. Rather, we would work on the basis of inclusion, shared ownership and supporting people to explore their own local heritage and personal interests.



If you know me well enough, nothing above should surprise you. I don't get called Comrade Lornaski for nothing...

So four months down the line, after expecting 20 or so people to join up, we have nearly 180 people involved with the group. We are slowly developing our programme of activities, based on what the group members want to do, and are offering a range of events from digging test pits, to finds identification sessions, archival research and going to the pub. We've also set up a Young Archaeologists Club,

something that was missing from the Waveney area when I was growing up here in the 1980's and desperate to be an archaeologist...

One of the most popular projects for the group is our work with the [Norfolk Medieval Graffiti](#) project, and this returns me to my Day of Archaeology. On Saturday, the Waveney Archaeology Group went on a very informal expedition around some beautiful South Norfolk churches, pootling about and looking for graffiti. We didn't expect to find much, but were more than pleasantly surprised.. [Andrew's post](#) will fill you in on that..



There is nothing I love more than the landscape of the Waveney Valley. It's not dramatic, or majestic. It's flat, and wound through by streams and rivers, with vast skies, birdsong and the wind whistling through the wheat fields. And of course, some of the most beautiful medieval churches in the country. The possibility of exploring these churches for graffiti is a wonderful excuse to indulge my love of the landscape, and return, albeit briefly, to the world of medieval archaeology.

The rest of my Day of Archaeology is perhaps less exciting. My work at Cambridge University Museums ends this week, so I had to finish writing up a short report for the project co-ordinator – about the impact of social media on the museum staff and their attempts to encourage public participation. I re-read an article I am submitting for the Papers from the Institute for Archaeology on Wednesday, on the issue of the impact of digital communications on Public Archaeology. Took a short break to bang my head repeatedly on my desk, whilst trying to finish the Waveney Archaeology Group newsletter, what feels like a Sisyphian task. And I started to make notes for a proposed conference session on digital technologies for the Institute of Field Archaeologists Information Management Group, of which I am a committee member. I'm back to my PhD writing from next week, so life is changing again. I am passionate, if that is the right word, that as many people as possible can explore and enjoy their shared pasts, either IRL or through digital means... by any means necessary. So whether it's advocacy through the Waveney Group, or high-falutin' theorising in my thesis, I want to walk the walk on this.