



■ Fig. 1 Stacks of CAT KITS ready to go.



■ Fig. 2 Teachers using CAT KITS.

# Canterbury Archaeological Trust celebrates its 30th birthday giving 'CAT KIT' to local schools

**The Canterbury Archaeological Trust's Education Service prepared handling kits of archaeological objects for local schools with support through website and training sessions for teachers.**

■ Marion GREEN  
Canterbury Archaeological Trust, UK



## Happy Birthday!

This year is the 30th anniversary of the founding of Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT), a registered charity initially set up to excavate and survey sites in the Canterbury district threatened by redevelopment. Three decades later the Trust has expanded, having 'rescued' numerous significant sites in the county of Kent and in so doing, recovered tonnes of material dating from prehistoric times onward.

## Working in the community

The CAT Education Service evolved from a desire to help local schools meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and in particular the primary schools, where a need for subject knowledge and teaching resources were considered to be a priority. The Service, run by Marion Green, has formed partnerships with other local and national educationalists and together we have facilitated access to the results of the Trust's work through a variety of means including publications, specially designed excavation visits, teaching, annual events and an extensive educational website supported by the National Grid for Learning (NGfL).

## A new educational venture

Learning is easier for all of us when we are motivated and for young people, learning through practical activity is a most effective way to literally get to grips with new skills and knowledge. For many years Ian Coulson, History Adviser for Kent schools, promoted this approach using a portable museum carried in an old toolbox. It was this idea that was adopted for the 'CAT KIT'.

In early 2005 the Education Service attracted funding and permission to embark on a new hands-on venture - to build handling kits of archaeological objects for local schools by utilizing excavated material considered to be superfluous to further academic study. The 'CAT KIT' project is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund providing valuable resources for 55 maintained and independent primary, secondary and special schools in the Canterbury District (Canterbury city, Whitstable, Herne Bay and the rural hinterland).

Tessa Hilder, HLF Regional Manager, said: "HLF is delighted to have been able to award Canterbury Archaeological Trust £13,000 to fund the 'CAT KIT' project. It is vital that children can learn about, access and enjoy their heritage and this project is a fantastic example of how this is possible".

Each kit contains

- original pottery sherds, animal bone and building materials of Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date
- a booklet identifying the finds and with teaching ideas for the classroom
- special pottery measuring chart – as used by archaeologists

- 'Feely Bag' for added excitement!

## Added value!

A further dimension to the 'CAT KIT' project was the creation of new 'CAT KIT' pages on our website (with links from the booklet). The new galleries enable 'CAT KIT' investigators to put the fragments into context - and get some IT practice at the same time.

The 'Building Homes' gallery shows examples of excavated structures from local sites together with colourful reconstruction images (executed in-house) of local prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval buildings and landscapes based on the archaeological and historical evidence. The 'Pots and Pans' gallery illustrates complete vessels, their uses and foods of the time; it also links to an illustrated diary of an experi-



■ Fig. 3 Brown English earthenware pottery.

mental kiln firing carried out with a local school as part of their annual 'Enrichment Week'; **'Boney Bits'** shows examples of how animal bones have been utilized over the centuries to make domestic items and features a horn lantern made on site during a recent Time Team visit to Canterbury.

### Training the troops

In September, a series of special 'CAT KIT' training sessions were held in Canterbury. Teachers had the opportunity to discover the kits for themselves and their excellent educational potential. Everyone had a lot of fun! Each of them then went away with a 'CAT KIT', inspired and motivated and the schools will keep the kits on permanent loan, for use at their convenience. Contact will be maintained with teachers over the following academic year allowing evaluation of how the kits are being used and already, feedback is coming in.

A teacher from St Philip Howard Catholic Primary School, Herne Bay said: *"Wanted to say a big THANK YOU from Class MH3...As soon as I saw the box I was excited. I selected finds that...fit perfectly with my History/Creative theme. You gave the children a first hand experience that they will always remember, really bringing history to life for them."*



■ Fig. 4 A lantern made from flattened sheaths of horn.

St Alphege C of E Infant School at Whitstable has been inspired to start an Archaeology Club. The club leader said *"Their interest in archaeology has really been wonderful to watch...we got out the clay and made a Roman mosaic...next week we are acting out a burial! Great stuff!"*

And *"The pupils at Canterbury High thoroughly enjoyed handling the different local artefacts... (they) also looked at the photographs and reconstruction pictures that I downloaded from the internet. The pupils left the session buzzing with enthusiasm for history."*

We are hopeful of further feedback as teachers get to grips with their new resource. The project has the full support of the owners of the objects, Kent County Council Schools Advisory Service, Canterbury Museums and the Kent Archaeological Society, the latter having supported the work of the Trust for many years.

For more about the 'CAT KIT' project and the work of the Trust see [www.canterbury-trust.co.uk](http://www.canterbury-trust.co.uk)

### Summary

**Die Archäologische Stiftung Canterbury schenkt aus Anlass ihres dreißigjährigen Bestehens archäologische Bausätze an örtliche Schulen**

Die pädagogische Abteilung der Archäologischen Stiftung Canterbury entstand durch die Nachfrage, die bei örtlichen Schulen bestand. Zu Beginn des Jahres 2005 erhielt die pädagogische Abteilung eine finanzielle Förderung und die Möglichkeit, neue interaktive Bausätze zu archäologischen Objekten zu entwickeln, die gleichzeitig auch als neue Rubriken auf der Internetseite der Stiftung aufgenommen werden sollten. Besondere Fortbildungen für Lehrkräfte wurden durchgeführt, um diesen die Möglichkeit zu geben, diese Bausätze und ihr pädagogisches Potenzial kennen zu lernen.



■ Fig. 5 Building an Iron Age pottery kiln.



■ Fig. 6 The walls of Anglo-Saxon houses were made with wattle (woven branches) and daub (clay).

**Offrant „CAT KIT“ aux écoles de la région, trust archéologique de Canterbury fête son 30e anniversaire**

Le service d'éducation du trust archéologique de Canterbury a été fondé en vue d'aider les écoles de la région. Au début de l'année 2005, il a obtenu de l'argent et la permission de démarrer une autre activité pratique - élaboration des ensembles d'objets archéologiques que les enfants puissent toucher et essayer. En plus, on a préparé les pages „CAT KIT“ sur le web du trust pour accompagner l'usage de ces ensembles. Le trust a encore organisé un cours pratique pour les maîtres où les derniers ont pu essayer eux-mêmes ces outils et découvrir les possibilités de leur utilisation.

■ **Marion Green** originally trained as a primary school teacher but was lured into Archaeology by a flyer asking for volunteer diggers

on a local site. Most of her archaeological experience has been working with finds, Roman pottery in particular. As Education Officer with Canterbury Archaeological Trust, she has written educational resources, was integral to the setting up of the CAT website, works with student teachers and young people and has represented the Trust both locally and on European projects.



■ Fig. 7 The CAT KIT.