Volunteers wanted for one of North East's largest



A new project, Belief in the North East, will attempt to explore the heritage of religion, from pre-history to the present day.

Headed by Durham University's world-leading Department of Archaeology, the project is funded by a £180,000 National Lottery Heritage Fund grant.

Belief in the North East is scheduled to run until summer 2021 and is appealing for hundreds of volunteers to make the ambitious project happen.

An army of archaeological explorers needed

Experts leading the project are keen to hear from people across the North East, whether amateur archaeologists or complete newcomers, to create an army of archaeological explorers. They will undertake much of the fascinating and specialist work themselves, right from shaping the project through to field excavation and analysis.

There will be lots of exciting opportunities to get involved including:

- site excavation
- digital photography

- geophysical site mapping
- recording findings



A community excavation project at Harehaugh, Northumberland

A richness of religious heritage

Belief in the North East will be led by Dr. David Petts, Associate Professor in Durham University’s Department of Archaeology.

He said: “From Neolithic rock art, through stunning medieval churches, and right to the present day, the North East of England has a richness of religious heritage to rival anywhere in the world.

"But while many people have studied particular aspects or places, such as Lindisfarne or Durham Cathedral, no project has ever tried to capture an overview, right from pre-history to the present. That’s the task we’ve set ourselves for Belief in the North East."

He added:

“While academic staff and students from Durham University will be closely involved, community engagement with the project will be vital if it is to succeed."



Excavating Roman baths at Binchester

Getting communities involved

David Renwick, Director of England, North, said: “This is an exciting large-scale archaeology project led by Durham University that aims to recruit volunteers of all ages.

"Thanks to National Lottery players, there will be lots of opportunities for communities to get involved to explore themes from Neolithic Rock art to Bronze Age burial mounds, Early Christianity to Medieval and Post-medieval monastic granges and we very much look forward to the findings of their research in a few years’ time.”

Initial workshops will be followed by fieldwork scheduled to run from summer 2019 to summer 2020.

Final workshops in autumn 2021 will be followed by a major conference. Schools across the North East will also benefit for years to come with an online education pack while an exhibition presenting the project’s findings will tour the region.

Find out more

For more information or to register as a volunteer, visit the Belief in the North East website.