Project Florence gains Heritage Lottery Fund support

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Project Florence will run alongside Operation Nightingale, an inspirational scheme in which injured soldiers have been working with archaeologists, using archaeology as a rehabilitation method.

This summer's highlight for Operation Nightingale will be the excavation of a 1400 year-old Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Barrow Clump on Salisbury Plain. Over 100 injured soldiers from the Rifles will take part in the excavations which are being funded by the military and supervised by Salisbury-based Wessex Archaeology. Project Florence will complement this by involving local families and volunteers, many from the garrison communities, in the work at Barrow Clump and helping them explore their local heritage.

A key feature of Project Florence will be the involvement of Salisbury Arts Centre who will document the excavations through a film-making project, training youth volunteers aged 14 to 25 in film productions skills and providing a legacy for the project. In addition there will be a range of different opportunities, events and activities for families and volunteers until Project Florence finishes in February 2013.

Sue Davies OBE, Chief Executive of Wessex Archaeology said: "We are delighted to have received the backing of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Project Florence will introduce the fascinating heritage of Wiltshire to new audiences and a new generation. It will be an excellent partner for the rehabilitation work of Operation Nightingale."

Commenting on the grant award, HLF's acting Head of South West, Richard Bellamy, said: 'We were delighted to be able to support this exciting and innovative initiative by Wessex Archaeology working in partnership with the Armed Forces. The work of Operation Nightingale complements our involvement in previous rehabilitative projects for military personnel in the South West, focusing on art and poetry; Project Nightingale extends the opportunity to the local community, including many service families, allowing them to get involved in investigating and learning about an important part of the past of their area."

Notes to editors

About Wessex Archaeology

Based in Salisbury, Wessex Archaeology is one of the largest archaeological practices in the UK, working with public authorities and developers to ensure the archaeological remains are recorded, preserved and interpreted. Set up in 1979, Wessex Archaeology now employs more than 100 archaeologists and retains its charitable status, encouraging interest in archaeology and extending knowledge to the wider public. Visit Wessex Archaeology website.

Further information

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