

# Why focus on securing a positive archaeology programme as part of your development?

Case study: London’s Crossrail project – securing benefits through the historic environment and archaeology programme

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In the first decade of the 21st century, industry standards for civil engineering, developed by CEEQUAL<sup>1</sup> and CIRIA<sup>2</sup>, have been responsible for an evolution in thinking about sustainability, risk management and best practice.

These developments have enabled CifA-accredited archaeologists to identify opportunities for developers and the historic environment and achieve benefits through processes of positive cross-sector collaboration.

CEEQUAL in particular, from its revision in 2008 (Version 4) moved the historic environment topic up the agenda, from a position of reluctant compliance – ‘have you completed a watching brief?’ – to a comprehensive performance index for measuring the value that well-planned archaeology and conservation works in the design and delivery of civil engineering projects could deliver for owners, stakeholders and communities affected by the works. Significantly, under the CEEQUAL scheme, performance is linked to project awards. In this way, public recognition that efforts made to maximise benefits for the historic environment in scheme design, delivery and project legacy plans can begin to be directly related to the fortunes of the clients and contractors involved in developing great outcomes.

Designed with continuous improvement at its core, CEEQUAL is delivering real benefits, with what was once ‘best practice’ but which is becoming more often the norm, with each iteration of the guidance adapted to enable new innovations. The London Crossrail archaeology project design is a recent example of a major public project that is delivering high quality benefits as a result of this practice.



## CROSSRAIL'S ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAMME

The Crossrail commitment to achieving value and benefit for the historic environment is set out in a series of measured key performance indicators (KPIs) in sustainability to track how the archaeology programme has performed, and what value it has brought to the project.

Targets for the Crossrail archaeology programme were set in five themes. The illustration above shows the baseline themes and some examples (amongst others) of activities delivered to address the KPIs.

Across these themes, opportunities to make the best use of the archaeological works and discoveries were identified and activities capable of delivering benefits, particularly in the field of community, stakeholders and education (public values), were designed.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Crossrail archaeology team delivered more than 120 public lectures over the course of the project, providing regular updates to communicate the latest finds, news and upcoming works in the programme to audiences ranging from the very local to regional and national. Community halls, local council committee meetings, schools and special interest groups were the most common venues, and this face-to-face sharing, combined with social media content, developed an extraordinary network of community groups

*Crossrail Historic Environment KPI themes and examples of project elements delivered*



*Volunteers joining the Crossrail crowd research project (Photo: Jay Carver)*



*Open day at Westbourne Park (Photo: Jay Carver)*



*Lunchtime crowds attend the excavations at the Bedlam (Bethlem) burial ground (Photo: Jay Carver)*

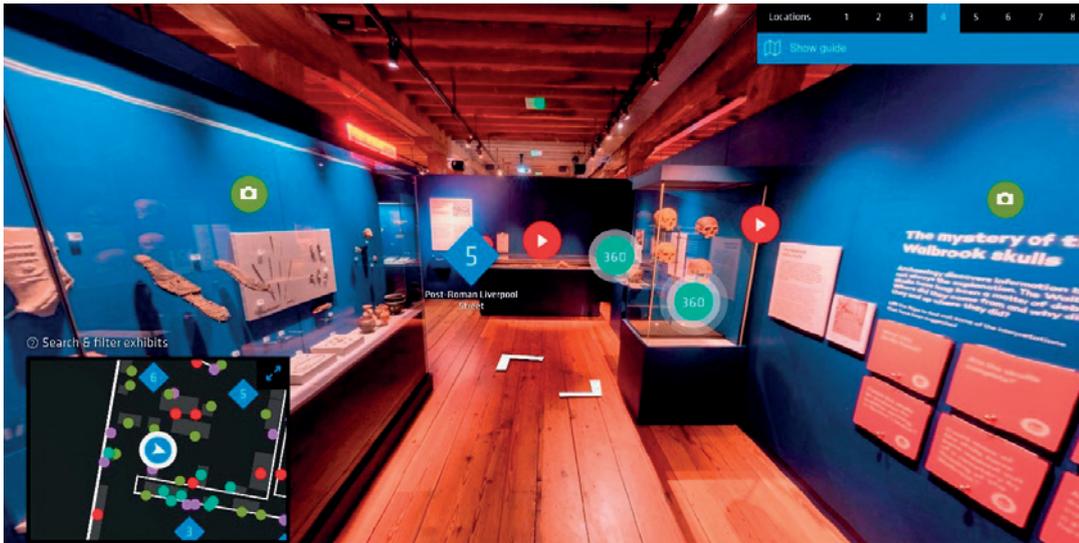
which became actively involved in the project.

One prime example was the creation of the Bethlem New Cemetery burial records project, which was formed to assist the archaeology programme in addressing a pressing research need to transcribe burial register records from across various London parishes that used the site as overflow ground from AD 1569 to 1814. Twenty volunteers (see photo top left) worked with Crossrail over six months to produce the online database (<http://www.crossrail.co.uk/sustainability/archaeology/bedlam-burial-ground-register>), which would help the archaeology team use the information in the analysis and publication of the graveyard – a key site at the Crossrail Liverpool Street Station. The volunteers were supported by Crossrail archaeology staff and gained valuable experience and skills, as well as an enhanced interest in the history of the site and the local communities.

Educational opportunities were also exploited in a series of free public exhibitions and pop-up site events. Although a challenge for site teams, open days and community participation on site were achieved on the Crossrail project with commitment from senior management. Excavations at Westbourne Park that revealed the physical remains of the original Brunel Great Western Railway-era engine sheds and turntables were attended by hundreds of visitors (see photo middle left) and a daily visitors' platform at the Liverpool Street site welcomed drop-in visitors to step behind the hoardings and engage directly with the excavation team over a period of six weeks (see photo bottom left).

### PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL INTERPRETATION

Three major exhibitions of finds were put on: 2012 (Bison to Bedlam), 2014 (Portals to the Past), and 2017 (Tunnel – the Archaeology of Crossrail). Held over periods of weeks and several months, the archaeology content was combined with project engineering information to maximise overall project exposure and form a vehicle for the engagement of those with an interest in history, as well as engaging schools and colleges and those with an interest in civil engineering careers. The Tunnel exhibition was a key collaboration between Crossrail and the Museum of London in Docklands, which achieved its highest-ever visitor numbers for the venue. The value brought to the project from these efforts is demonstrated by the Tunnel exhibition winning the prestigious Royal Historical Society prize for museums in the Public History category in 2018. A commitment was made by Crossrail to those who were not physically able to attend the exhibition in London in 2017 – an immersive website (see image opposite page) with a 360-degree walk-through of the exhibition combined with digital scans of objects and all the panel information is also accessible (<https://>



Tunnel – The Archaeology of Crossrail: immersive exhibition entry page (Image: Crossrail Ltd)

archaeology.crossrail.co.uk).

Crossrail published a core series of ten books to address the academic value of the findings, alongside specialist articles and academic publications from the numerous institutions that we collaborated with, including the Natural History Museum and university departments across the UK, Europe and the United States.

The style of the core publications was aimed at a general readership to increase their value and reach a wider audience. The books have largely sold out in museum bookshops and online marketplaces. For the professional and academic community who wish to study the data in more detail, Crossrail launched an online resource, the Learning Legacy, where all data reports and specialist data is publicly available: <https://learninglegacy.crossrail.co.uk/learning-legacy-themes/environment/archaeology/>.

These outputs are fundamental to the value that archaeology brings to development, as they are how new archaeological knowledge gained from the project is disseminated. These outputs are the vehicles that realise the value of the archaeological data. The information from it is preserved and can be enhanced through further analysis and publication.

### MEDIA INTEREST

The cultivation of media interest was hugely important for Crossrail, with archaeology delivering major returns in terms of free advertising, which can be measured in commercial terms as well as in audience reach. One Crossrail media event in 2013 generated 220 global media stories with an estimated combined audience of 108 million. Just the core UK TV news and radio coverage generated the equivalent of £650,000 in advertising value that day to Crossrail Ltd, while a few minutes of national coverage can translate into tens of thousands in advertising value. To a company, the impact on its brand from that exposure is worth a great deal, and we can also measure

the subsequent impacts by the generation of increased website traffic, inquiries about other aspects of the project, and the positive impact on stakeholders.

### CONCLUSION

The success of a project the size of Crossrail should not exclude smaller-scale schemes from seeking to replicate approaches. While sectors of the UK historic environment suffer funding and resources crises,<sup>3</sup> it is critical that resources provided by developers for fieldwork and publication also improve practice relating to the storage of and access to both the knowledge created and physical archives of objects and data, in order to provide further educational and community benefits.

<sup>1</sup> CEEQUAL is the evidence-based sustainability assessment, rating and awards scheme for civil engineering, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm projects – <http://www.ceequal.com/>

<sup>2</sup> CIRIA is the construction industry research and information association. The work addresses industry issues, challenges and opportunities to provide business and delivery improvement. Works collaboratively across the construction industry to identify good practice, develop new approaches and to identify and enable innovation - <https://www.ciria.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Society of Museum Archaeology 2017 *Museums Collecting Archaeology (England) REPORT YEAR 2: November 2017*, Historic England. In this report, Historic England recounts an ongoing crisis of space and resources.