

# *Getting Medieval!*

**A collaborative one-day informal learning & community engagement event to celebrate Adult Learners Week  
Cosmeston Medieval Village on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010**



Dr David Wyatt, Event Co-ordinator

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### **Background & Introduction:**

***Getting Medieval*** was a one-day collaborative informal learning event to celebrate Adult Learners Week held at Cosmeston Medieval Village on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010. In accord with the ethos and principles of Adult Learners week and the Welsh Assembly Heritage Minister's recently published strategy for the Welsh Historic Environment, *Getting Medieval* was a heritage based educational partnership between a number of learning providers including Cardiff University's School of History and Archaeology, Cardiff Centre for Lifelong Learning, Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre, the Vale of Glamorgan Adult Learning Network & Cosmeston Medieval Village (Vale of Glamorgan Council).

*Getting Medieval* consisted of a variety of activities and workshops, themed on the medieval context and held on site at Cosmeston. These activities were designed to provide a series of family-centred, informal and enjoyable educational tasters in subjects such as history, archaeology, creative writing, music, languages, science and the environment. They were delivered by a combination of lecturers, tutors, staff, postgraduates and undergraduate students from all of the stakeholders involved.

### **Adult Learners' Week: Background**

Adult Learners' Week is the UK's largest festival and celebration of adult learning, co-ordinated by NIACE Dysgu Cymru and core-funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, and the European Social Fund. Adult Learners' Week is a campaign which combines national promotion with local action. The campaign offers adults the chance to have a go at learning something new by trying out one of the hundreds of free taster sessions that happen across Wales during the week, and an opportunity for learning providers to showcase their provision.

### ***Getting Medieval* Stakeholders**

*Cosmeston Medieval Village (CMV)* is a "living history" medieval heritage site near Penarth which is run by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Cosmeston is a reconstructed medieval village, based upon remains discovered during a 1980s archaeological dig in the grounds of Cosmeston Lakes Country Park. Incorporating reconstructed houses, artifacts and rare breed livestock, guided reenactment tours at the Village provide a re-creation of 14th century peasant life in Wales in the Middle Ages to a wide variety of participants.

*The School of History, Archaeology and Religion (SHARE)* at Cardiff has, for some years, been involved in a collaborative community archaeology project at Cosmeston. The project has carried out a range of practical archaeological investigations and activities, including landscape survey, excavation and finds processing, in which the public have been practically involved and 'hands on' with history. In collaboration with the Centre for Lifelong Learning (LEARN) SHARE is also establishing *Exploring the Past* which is an open access foundation pathway in history and archaeology. The *Exploring the Past* foundation pathway, which was launched at the *Getting Medieval* event, has

been developed to widen access to non-traditional mature students and progress them on to study history and or/archaeology at degree level.

*The Centre for Lifelong Learning (LEARN)* is Cardiff University's 'shop front' for open access part-time adult education and widening access for adult learners. LEARN has previously run successful Adult Learners week tasters including whole day events at the National History Museum at St Fagans. Alongside the forthcoming foundation pathway collaboration with SHARE, LEARN has recently re-launched its Humanities provision which includes an innovative 10 credit course taught entirely on site at Cosmeston by Nick Coles, a longstanding LEARN tutor and site manager of the Medieval Village.

*The Vale of Glamorgan Adult & Community Learning (VGACL)* offer lifelong learning opportunities at a variety of levels to communities across the Vale of Glamorgan. Courses include, computing at all levels, drawing and painting, textiles, art and crafts, basic skills & Welsh.

#### *Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre*

Located at Cardiff University's School of Welsh, the Welsh for Adults Centre attracts 2,000 enrolments each year and has a team of some 70 staff. Welsh for Adults courses are held all over Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, in numerous locations, including town halls, shops, gymnasiums as well as in schools, collages and University Buildings.

#### **Marketing *Getting Medieval***

Getting Medieval capitalised on the intensive NIA CE publicity surrounding Adult Learners Week. The event was advertised via LEARN & SHARE's web pages. LEARN, the Community Engagement Team, the Vale Adult Learning Network & Cardiff University Alumni division circulated to interested parties via mailing lists. In addition, the Community Engagement team produced 1000 flyers which were widely distributed to appropriate locations. A press release was issued by LEARN's marketing team and this gained coverage in the *Penarth Times*. On the day of the event, we also benefited from significant 'passing trade' through face to face contact and leafleting to the substantial number of visitors (it was a glorious sunny day!) to the adjacent Cosmeston Country Park & Visitor Centre.

#### **This evaluation document**

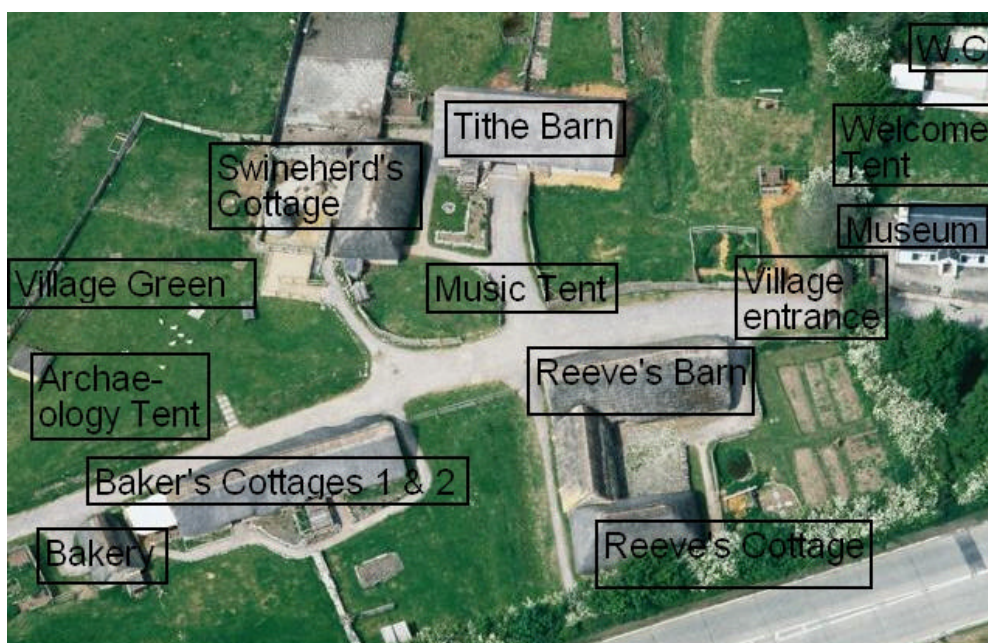
The purpose of this document is to provide a reflective evaluation of the strengths & weaknesses of this community engagement event and to attempt to capture and assess tangible evidence for informal learning. It is intended that this evaluation report may help to provide ideas and templates to inform the planning of future events of this nature.

### ***Getting Medieval Key Objectives***

- A. To provide a series of family-centred, informal and enjoyable educational tasters in a variety of disciplines with tangible learning outcomes
- B. To promote interest in, & provide information about, adult education at HE & other educational levels.
- C. To break down barriers to HE and facilitate widening access to formal learning progression routes including the launch of the *Exploring the Past* Foundation Pathway
- D. To instil adults, young people and children from a variety of backgrounds with a greater awareness of the medieval past
- E. To strengthen existing collaborative partnerships and create new enduring networks & partnerships between learning providers
- F. To provide undergraduates & postgraduates with skills & experience in relation to community engagement and informal learning delivery
- G. To promote Cosmeston medieval village and instil a heightened sense of place in relation to this living heritage site.

### **Getting Medieval Activities & Outcomes**

The idea behind the educational tasters at *Getting Medieval* was to provide a series of hands-on, imaginative and creative activities which promoted learning through 'doing' in order to stimulate intellectual interest for both adults & children. These activities were intended to provide tangible learning outcomes in the form of learning activity 'products' (pots, drawings, medieval charters) which people would be able to take away with them to remind them of the event and its impact upon them. Upon arrival, all visitors were given a handout (see Appendix 1) which provided information detailing the timetable & location of activities, these were also signposted around the village and guides were present at both the village entrance & welcome tent to direct people throughout the day.



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### **Archaeology**

#### ***Make your own medieval pot - Sarah Doherty/ Ioannis Smyrnaioi SHARE***

Location: Baker's Cottage 1

Archaeology postgraduates Sarah & Yiannis imparted their knowledge of ceramic production through a hands-on practical workshop. Yiannis's PhD research examines the social significance of pot decoration & manufacture in the Greek Iron Age (c. 900-600 BC), whilst Sarah is exploring the technological origins of the potter's wheel & looking at links between craft production and social identity in Ancient Egypt and beyond. Yiannis & Sarah encouraged visitors to consider the significance of pottery in relation to issues of community identity and technological sustainability by getting them to design and manufacture their own pots.



*Outcome:* over the course of the event around 70 pots were made by visitors.

***Learn about the archaeology of animals – Dr Jaqui Mulville SHARE***

Location: Village Green

Jacqui used medieval images of dogs and skulls from a range of dogs as a launching point for getting people involved in a discussion about medieval dogs, their uses, breeding and their relationship with their forerunner the wolf. The precise format of the sessions were fluid and changed in response to the audience, for example for smaller children were encouraged to look at the wolf in relation to the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' highlighting the wolves' characteristic large eyes and teeth in relation to the smaller features found in domestic dogs. For adults and young people, the focus was on the roles the dogs played in Welsh medieval history and the genetic history of dogs and wolves.



*Outcome:* over a two hour period this activity engaged around 50 adults & children.

***Learn about medieval food & diets – Kishli Laister-Scott SHARE***

Location: Baker's Cottage 2

Kishli, a PhD student researching food & agricultural production in Anglo-Saxon society, ran drop in sessions which employed the cottage and its contents as props. She showed visitors how medieval people would have cooked and prepared food, what they caught and what they grew.



*Outcome:* these informal sessions were very well received and Kishli took a large number of questions from groups throughout the day, around 70-100 individuals participated in this activity. Kishli prepared 30 handouts with information & medieval recipes & these were very quickly used up.

***Archaeological drawing & recording & discover & record Cosmeston's medieval objects – Julia Best SHARE***

Location: Bakery & Museum

Julia is an archaeology PhD student who has excavated at Cosmeston. In the morning, she ran archaeological drawing sessions using tape measures, drawing grids and planning boards to record the standing walls of the bakery. In the afternoon Julia conducted drop-in sessions outside the museum, allowing visitors to handle and draw medieval artefacts from the Cosmeston excavations discovery box which was prepared by SHARE's community archaeologist at the village.

*Outcome:* the drawing activity was particularly engaging to children with around 20 taking part whilst adults preferred to watch & chat. The drop-in artefact analysis sessions attracted around 40 individuals, with a mixture of adults and children.

**History**

***Write your own medieval charter – Dr Bill Aird SHARE***

Location: the Tithe Barn

As specialist in the history of the Norman Conquest, Bill reads medieval manuscripts which require significant skill in order to decipher the scribal hand writing and understand the format and structure of these complex documents. In this fun activity, Bill imparted some of his knowledge by getting visitors to compose and keep their own medieval charters with parchment, seals, scrivener's ink and quill.



*Outcome:* this was one of *Getting Medieval's* most popular activities. We purchased 60 fake seals but these were soon used up as was the majority of the ink & parchment. We estimate that around 150 individuals attempted this learning activity.

***Learn about medieval weapons & warfare - Gareth Riseborough CMV***

Location: outside the Tithe Barn

Gareth, a heritage re-enactor at Cosmeston, provided hugely popular interactive demonstrations of medieval weapons, armour and tactics in warfare using authentic replicas. Visitors were able to handle weapons and try on helmets and mail coats.



*Outcome:* Well over a hundred people attended these demonstrations over the course of the event, several people left written comments about how much they had enjoyed these sessions.

***Attend a medieval manorial court – Dr David Wyatt SHARE***

Location: the Tithe Barn

I held two enjoyable 20 minute sessions during which visitors participated in a role playing exercise acting out a manorial court using edited extracts from manorial court rolls (see handout Appendix 2).

*Outcome:* 25-30 individuals (adults & children) participated in each session (50 handouts were distributed in total). The sessions were followed up by extended discussions with 3 participants.

## Story Telling & Folklore

### **Medieval creatures: storytelling and story-making for adults & children – Amanda Rackstraw LEARN**

Location: Baker's cottages garden



After hearing storyteller, Amanda, tell about shape-shifting in the story of Taliesin adults were encouraged to compose their own creative writing piece. Children were given a story and told about medieval bestiaries – they then did drawings of imaginary creatures, they made their own medieval bestiary based on creatures they might like to change into if they were being pursued by a witch.

*Outcome:* this activity was particularly appealing to children & quite a number of excellent drawings were produced, around 80 visitors attended throughout the day.

### **Learn about medieval charms & talismans – Dr Juliette Wood SHARE/LEARN**

Location: around the village

An expert in folklore and perceptions of the supernatural, Juliette demonstrated the creation of protective charms and had a basket of items that would have been used as talismans. Using quill & ink visitors created their own charm papers to take away.



*Outcome:* A mixture of children & adults got involved. 47 charm papers were completed throughout the day's sessions, though far more were engaged (around 70 visitors).

## Music

### ***Listen to & learn about medieval music – Antwn Owen Hicks***

Location; Music Tent

Musician Antwn Owen Hicks performed traditional Welsh compositions dating from the late medieval period on early oboe and pibgorn pipes. He also chatted to visitors about the instruments and the music.



*Outcome:* Antwn was situated centrally in the village and his music provided an atmospheric backdrop to the event. The majority of visitors on the day will have heard & enjoyed his playing.

### ***Chant like a medieval monk - Dr Clive Wood & Pat Clark LEARN***

Location: the Tithe Barn

Clive and Pat performed a series of authentic Gregorian church chants as they would have been heard at the nearest church to the original Cosmeston. Visitor's were instructed in chanting technique & were encouraged to join in.



*Outcome:* around 100 individuals attended and/or participated these sessions throughout the day.

## Languages

***French: learn the language of Lord De Caversham! - Catherine Chabert LEARN &***

***Welsh: learn the language of the native population! - Frank Bonello, Welsh for Adults***

Location: Reeve's Barn

Imaginatively incorporating medieval themes into their taster sessions, Frank & Catherine used both Welsh & French to provide an example of what adult language learning is like. These were informal, flexible drop-in sessions and both contributors catered for all levels.

*Outcome:* around 80 visitors participated in these interactive language sessions.

### **Science & Media**

#### ***Photographing the past: digital photography- Heather Todd-Bennett, Nikki Ryalls & Debbie Lewis VGACL***

Location: museum & around the village

The VGACL team ran a very successful digital photography competition, visitors were given a little compositional tuition and then encouraged to take photographs of *Getting Medieval* activities based around the theme of recording the past using their own cameras or mobile phones. The best entries were then loaded onto a PC, printed in colour and posted on a display board for visitors to view as they left the event.

*Outcome:* there were around 50 entries to the competition with an impressive portfolio of entries. The winner was judged by myself & the Dean of Cardiff Centre for Lifelong Learning and won a substantial financial prize!

#### ***Find out about the medieval environment & natural resources – John Eddington LEARN***

Location: around the village

Employing environmental samples from recent excavations at Cosmeston, John conducted informal talkshop tours of the village examining how the village inhabitants might have exploited the resources of the immediate environment for everyday purposes, including crop production, the use of wild supplementary foodstuffs both plant and animal, securing materials for building, for use as fuel and as medicinal plants.

*Outcome:* John conducted several talk-shops, however at time of writing this report the numbers attending this activity is unknown.

#### ***Welcome/Evaluation Tent – Eluned Parrot/Jessica Clitheroe, Louise Gray***

Location: Village entrance

Eluned and Jess from the University's community engagement team organised a series of family centred activities including sandpit excavations for the children and a multiple choice competition to encourage feedback and evidence learning outcomes (with the prize of a 10 credit course in LEARN). The welcome tent also contained information on educational opportunities



*Outcome:* hundreds of visitors passed through the welcome area, many children participated in the activities whilst adults perused the information available. We received feedback in the form of written comments from around 40 individuals. Disappointingly, only 23 completed the competition.

## Evaluation

Informal learning events such as *Getting Medieval* are notoriously difficult to evaluate. From my own experience, eliciting responses via traditional methods of evaluation such as feedback forms can be very problematic & are often not wholly appropriate.

At *Getting Medieval* a variety of strategies were employed in order to provide evidence of engagement at various levels. These included:

- recording attendance
- activities that involved tangible outcomes with records kept of things that visitors were able to take away (i.e. pots, charters, handouts etc)
- competitions & competition entries
- fun evaluation archery targets
- a photographic record of the event
- a written comments post-box.
- feedback and evaluation forms from contributors

What follows is an attempt to draw this evidence together to provide an evaluation of the event in relation to the key objectives set out on page 4 above.

### **Numbers attending & demographic:**

In terms of attendance the day was a huge success with in excess of 460 visitors attending *Getting Medieval* during the course of the day.

**Reflective Comment:** The number of visitors was very gratifying and, while we were undoubtedly aided by the excellent weather, credit must be given to the marketing team in LEARN and the University's Community Engagement team for their highly effective marketing strategy (see p 3 above).

The numbers attending *Getting Medieval* also reflect the enduring attraction of Cosmeston Medieval Village as a living heritage site & also of Cosmeston Lakes & Country Park. We undoubtedly attracted a great deal of 'passing trade' in the form of visitors to the Country Park. My thanks goes out to the students & colleagues who handed out leaflets to park visitors and manned the front of the visitor centre in order to drum up business for the event!

If the event were held again marketing strategies could be improved by:

- An earlier start date for the marketing campaign
- An advertisement on the Cosmeston Village Web site well in advance of the event.
- Further media coverage
- Distribution of information via partner learning providers in the Vale Adult Learning Network
- A large eye-catching banner outside the visitor centre erected up to a week in advance & a welcome desk there on the day.

The photographic record reveals that the demographic was very diverse with people of all ages & a variety of backgrounds attending; there were clearly many families with young children, there were also single individuals and couples from a range of age groups, several wheelchair users, retired people, and a significant number of young people including a group from the charity Fairbridge which supports young people not in education & training.

### Summary of Activity Outcomes

<b>Archaeology</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Archaeological drawing & recording	20 participants mostly children, producing archaeological plans
Make your own medieval pot	70 pots made by participants (all ages)
Learn about the archaeology of animals	50 participants (all ages)
Learn about medieval food & diets	70-100 participants, 30 handouts distributed
Discover & record medieval objects*	40 participants (all ages)
<b>History</b>	
Write your own medieval charter	Around 150 participants, all materials used 60 seals and all parchment paper
Learn about medieval weapons & warfare	In excess of 100 participants, see photographic evidence
Attend a medieval manorial court	Around 60 individuals (adults & children) participated, (50 handouts distributed)
<b>Story-telling &amp; Folklore</b>	
Medieval creatures: storytelling and story-making for children & Medieval mythological creatures: creative writing for adults	80 participants, numerous drawings produced
Learn about medieval charms & talismans	70 participants, 47 charm papers were produced
<b>Music</b>	
Listen to & learn about medieval music	Majority of visitors enjoyed performance
Chant like a medieval monk	Around 100 individuals attended
<b>Languages</b>	
French: learn the language of Lord De Caversham! Welsh: learn the language of the native population!	80 participants spread over both activities, unknown number of handouts distributed
<b>Science &amp; Media</b>	
Photographing the past: digital photography	Around 50 entries to competition
Find out about the medieval environment & natural resources	Number of participants unknown

**Reflective Comment:** Whilst some activities were very popular others were less so, generally the most hands-on activities were the most popular. In the light of this, some points to consider for the future are raised here by myself and other contributors:

- Clearly not every visitor to the event participated in an activity, we need to consider how to encourage more people to get involved and circulating through all the activities – one contributor suggested we might use a treasure hunt to do this.
- All activities should attempt to embed a practical element or endeavour to ‘produce’ an outcome, most did this, though some were more successful than others.
- A wider range of activities might be more firmly linked to University’s research & involve other university schools (including their postgraduates/undergraduates).
- A refreshments area is needed, possibly with a medieval theme.
- *Getting Medieval* event handouts with timetables/maps ran out far too early, this may have affected the popularity of some activities.
- Better signposting of activities was needed, especially for activities at the far end of the village - archaeological drawing particularly suffered as a result.
- The music element was too close to other activities, particularly the weapons sessions.

### Competitions

The photographic competition clearly engaged quite a number of people (not least because of the generous prize!). A multiple choice written competition which tested knowledge was less successful with only 23 entrants.



**Reflective Comment:** Whilst there were a decent number of entries, the photographic competition might be marketed in advance of the event encouraging individuals to bring along their cameras/camera phones. In order to encourage more entries for the written competition, competition forms could be distributed to participants via the activities contributors with a sign-posted competition desk which might also display educational information/leaflets.

### Written feedback from visitors:

What follows are a selection of comments posted visitors to the event:

*Excellent!*

*Very Interesting. Good to see Cardiff University engaging with local community. Keep it up, see you next year!*

*It was very interesting, intriguing and useful. It gave lots of extra knowledge and was great to learn and know how medieval peasants lived. Thank you so much, it 's a great idea, people should know their history.*

*Very interesting projects shown here.*

*Weaponsman was totally terrific – very clear speaking, lots of details, engaging material. Other talkers have been very good and interesting as well  
Downsides: Pottery hut needs more light and a map of the village would have been useful. Many thanks for such a useful and educational entertainment.*

*Everything was really very nice. The most interesting story was told by a weaponsman. Also making a pot was quite interesting and even useful. The village itself looks fantastic and seems real to me. Many thanks for this event!*

*Good presentation of the village. The weapons talk was very interesting and the presenter included the crowd. The various speakers/presenters were knowledgeable and interesting. The pot making was also enjoyable.*

*Super Idea – we missed quite a lot arriving at 1.30 but enjoyed it!*

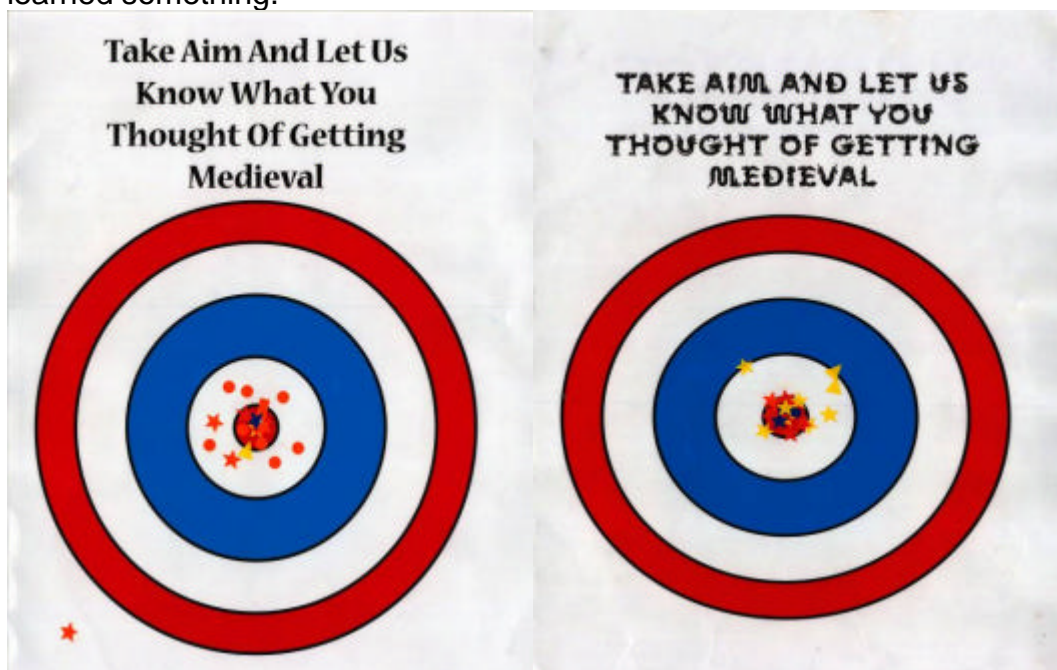
*I enjoyed it a lot very worthwhile.*

*A really interesting day out with plenty to do for the children and interesting information about the village for adults. We learned a lot and will certainly return for other events. We particularly enjoyed writing the medieval charter and drawing plans for the bake house.*

**Reflective Comment:** Obviously such positive feedback is very pleasing and suggests that certain key objectives of the event, particularly A, D & F were achieved at least in some cases. However, it is less clear from this feedback that our objectives to promote interest in education (B & C) were wholly successful & this will need further reflection if the event is run again.

## Evaluation archery targets

Two targets were placed near the welcome/evaluation tent and visitors were asked to place stickers near to the bull's eye if they enjoyed the event and learned something.



**Reflective comment:** this was a fun yet worthwhile form of evaluation that provided a positive overall reaction to the event. Perhaps in future we might have targets posing slightly different questions, plus they might be larger.

### Photographic record of the event

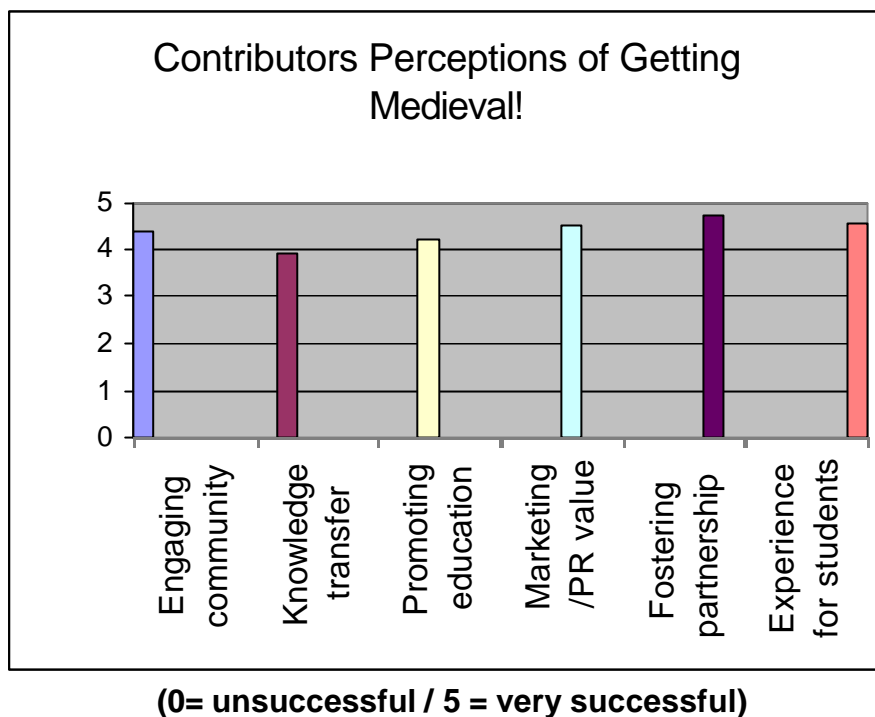
Please see *Getting Medieval* gallery in appendix 3. My thanks go to James Gregory who produced such a marvellous photographic record of the event. These photographs, arguably, reveal the level of engagement with *Getting Medieval* learning activities far better than any of the other forms of evaluation employed. Verbal permission was requested from all of the subjects in the photographs for the right to use their images for the promotion of future events on the web & in publications, signed written permission forms were acquired for the images of several children.

The intention, on the day, was to compliment this photographic evidence with video recordings of activities taken by student volunteers, excerpts of which could be posted on the web. Unfortunately, this was not possible as the School's DVD recorder went missing. If the event runs again this would constitute an important evaluation tool alongside video diaries made by visitors.

### Feedback from contributors

Contributors & stakeholders were made up of a variety of different learning providers including university lecturers, lifelong learning lecturers, postgraduates, a heritage re-enactor, a musician & community adult education officers. These were all asked to complete feedback forms (appendix 4 & 5) reflecting on the success of *Getting Medieval* & rating the

event in 6 key areas in relation to the objectives. The following graph displays the results from returned feedback forms of contributors (9 out of 16 completed a form).



**Reflective comment:** This graph is indicative of the very positive feedback that I received from all contributors regarding the value of *Getting Medieval* as an informal learning/community engagement event. It is interesting that the event's value as a community engagement initiative / a catalyst for fostering partnerships / and student training event scores slightly more highly than the areas of knowledge transfer and promotion of education. What follows are some more general comments from the feedback forms:

*This event was a great success... It should become an annual event – Nick Jones, academic lecturer*

*I think the collaboration between the University team of Public Engagement and the LEARN Marketing team worked very well together – Catherine Chabert, academic lecturer*

*I think that everyone enjoyed themselves: both visitors and participants – Pat Clark, academic lecturer*

*The informal approach to the public gets a positive response, people feel comfortable to take part, ask questions. Good way of overcoming negative image of university courses as 'dry' and 'academic', and lecturers as stuffy aloof academics! – Amanda Rackstraw Lifelong Learning Lecturer*

*This was an excellent event with a wide range of activities running. There was 'something for everyone' and the event attracted a good response from*

*members of the public. Adult and Community Learning is all about raising awareness of and making provision for a wide range of learning opportunities. An excellent event and ideal for partnership working as the various partners can bring a wealth of ideas to promote adult learning. – Heather Todd-Bennett, Community Education Area Development Officer*

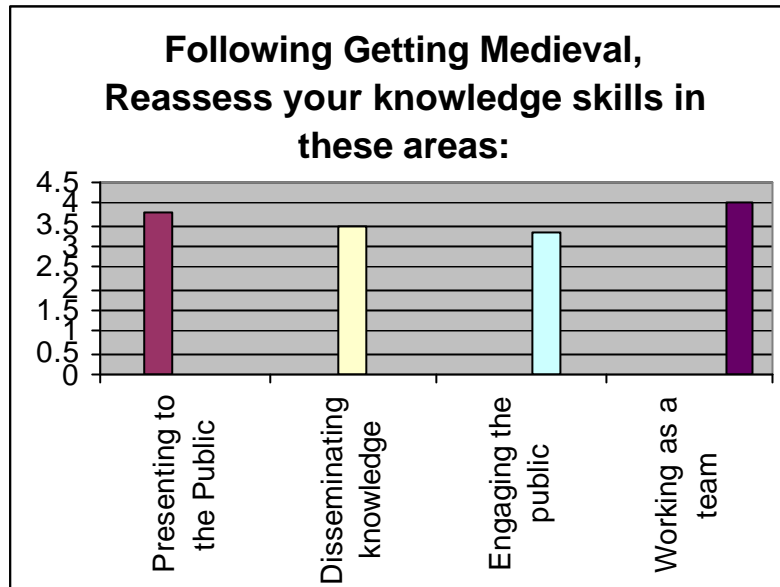
*I think it was a really good event – it gave visitors lots of different opportunities to learn, made the most of the facilities available through the medieval village, gave staff the chance to meet a wide range of different public audiences and gave the institution the opportunity to showcase a variety of different areas of work. - Eluned Parrott, Community Engagement Manager*

*Overall, the day was interesting and well organised. There was a steady stream of visitors, particularly in the morning/early afternoon. As a performer, engagement with the public is essential. It's always a delight to introduce music to new audiences and talk about its history, cultural developments etc. – Antwn Owen Hicks, Musician*

### **Feedback from students & postgraduates contributors/volunteers**

A range of student volunteers/contributors from SHARE were involved in *Getting Medieval* from 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduates to MA & PhD postgraduates. They were asked to complete a slightly different feedback form to the one issued to contributors/stakeholders (see appendix 5). This prompted them to reflect on the nature of community engagement initiatives and the value of this event in relation to their career development (6 out of 11 student participants returned feedback forms).

All respondents felt that they had benefited from engaging with the public and regarded *Getting Medieval* to have been a positive experience. All indicated that their knowledge & skills of public engagement methods had been improved by the experience, whilst acknowledging that there was room for improvement & the need for further involvement in such initiatives (see graph below). 5 of the respondents felt that they would benefit from further training in public engagement (1 was unsure on this issue). Overall, respondents appear to have felt most proficient in the teamwork aspect of the event.



**(0 = none, 1 = little, 5 = a lot)**

**Reflective comment:** Student involvement was absolutely crucial to the success of the *Getting Medieval* event. Indeed, without the fantastic support of the students the event could not have taken place. Generally, both postgraduates and undergraduates were naturals at public engagement; they were enthusiastic about their subject areas, friendly, open and able to articulate their knowledge in highly accessible manner to individuals from a variety of backgrounds and age groups.

Student performance and feedback at this event has reinforced my conviction that students need to be at the heart of university community engagement initiatives. Students gain hugely from such involvement through experience and development of employability skills. They are also excellent facilitators of informal learning, breaking down barriers and inspiring interest in the university's activities. I would suggest that student involvement, both through informal voluntary work and, potentially, formal training initiatives within the curriculum is the key to embedding community engagement more firmly within the culture of academic schools. In order to reinforce this point their follow some general comments from the student feedback forms:

*Its interesting hearing people's reactions to what we study, and learning how to present it to them so that they are as interested as we are. – Sarah West MA Postgraduate*

*It was great to see such a diverse range of people interacting with the activities and learning something. A very worthwhile, but fun, experience. Thank you! – Kishli Laister-Scott PhD Postgraduate*

*Having to draw people into the event was a good way of building confidence in talking to strangers. It is also worthwhile to talk about what you are studying to people who know nothing about it, so you can pass your interests onto them....The people who I spoke to on the day seemed to enjoy the experience and were glad they came along. – Rhian Harris MA Postgraduate*

*Each opportunity to engage with the public gives me a better idea of how to communicate best to different groups and what people find interesting and what they don't like. It also increases my confidence in my own ability to communicate effectively. – Jessica Clitheroe*

*It was a way to get people involved and interested in history that was fun and enjoyable for all and hopefully made people more aware of the historical sites which they live by...It was a fun day and I enjoyed talking to people and telling them about the village and I also liked dressing up as a peasant! –Amelia Tomany, undergraduate*

*The interaction with the adults and the children promoted their interests in history and archaeology, it demonstrated to them the practical aspects and potentials of our work, and at the same time, it offered us a huge opportunity to interact with them and realise our own needs. - Ioannis Smyrnaios, PhD postgraduate*

## Conclusions

### Improving Evaluation Strategies

The following reflections are derived from an evaluation of the strengths & weaknesses of the event and from feedback from contributors, students:

- At a basic level, the distribution of handouts, programmes and educational information might have been monitored more rigorously with a clear inventory of the numbers printed/displayed at the outset so that 'take up' could have been more clearly ascertained in relation to location/activity. Furthermore, more handouts should have been prepared across all activities.
- Competitions, which provide a good window for evaluation, might be better promoted to improve take up with a designated competition stall that doubles up as a shop front for literature on courses & educational pathways. Competitions might also be more strategically developed in line with the event's objectives.
- Video pod-casts could be made of activities by students and a video diary stall could be set up to encourage visitors to provide feedback & comments on the event.
- Archery target evaluations might be made larger, more accessible and prompt more significant feedback.
- A large post-it note board could be set up near the exit to elicit informal feedback comments.
- Students & contributors should be allowed to contribute to the video diary & also be given feedback forms on the day of the event

### Some encouraging outcomes/developments:

- A collective assertion from all concerned that *Getting Medieval* should become an annual adult learner's week event & involve more partners/contributors.
- That the event had fostered new collaborative partnerships both within Cardiff University and, more broadly, between learning providers in the Vale of Glamorgan including Cardiff University representation on the committee of the Vale Adult Learning Network.
- That there is a keen desire amongst the postgraduate & undergraduate community in SHARE to be involved in community engagement initiatives which can provide much needed public relations experience & broader employability skills

### Final reflections

Organising and co-ordinating *Getting Medieval* involved a lot of work. Yet, the successful nature of the event and subsequent constructive feedback has yielded significant dividends in terms of experience & insights into informal learning and community engagement initiatives; in terms of nurturing partnerships with other learning providers; in terms of the developing skills of postgraduate and undergraduate students & perhaps most importantly in

provoking and inspiring visitors to get involved with learning activities on the day.

Clearly not all the key objectives were achieved. As an event designed specifically to promote interest in adult education at HE & other educational levels *Getting Medieval* was, at best, only partially successful. There are things we could have done better & areas where we could have made clearer the links between informal & formal learning. Such issues require further serious consideration as we attempt to facilitate widening access in these difficult economic times. The importance of lifelong learning and of linking meaningful yet accessible progression routes with such informal learning initiatives will be crucial. The launch the *Exploring the Past Foundation Pathway* at *Getting Medieval* is an encouraging step in this direction.

As an event designed to instil adults, young people and children from a variety of backgrounds with a greater awareness of the medieval past *Getting Medieval* was a huge success. This was in no small part to the huge effort & commitment of all contributors & volunteers. My heartfelt thanks also go out to Nick Coles the village manager at Cosmeston and all of his staff who handed us the keys to the village and assisted in every way that they were able.

Informal learning events such as *Getting Medieval* are notoriously difficult to evaluate, evidencing a clear link between such informal learning and meaningful formal progression is even harder. At *Getting Medieval* only a handful of visitors were immediately motivated to register a very clear intent to embark on the *Exploring the Past Foundation Pathway* - nevertheless many others were clearly inspired by the event and some of them may well yet take that same step!



Vale of Glamorgan Councillor John Fraser (Glamorgan Heritage Coast Advisory Group/ Scrutiny Committee Lifelong Learning) launches the *Exploring the Past Foundation Pathway* at *Getting Medieval*

with event co-ordinator Dr David Wyatt

## Appendix 1: Getting Medieval Programme Handout



# About Getting Medieval!



'Getting Medieval!' is a FREE one-day event involving Cardiff University and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The day is made up of a variety of exciting activities and workshops for both adults and children, themed on the medieval era. The idea is to make learning FUN and all of the activities are VERY interactive, everyone is encouraged to JOIN IN, GET INVOLVED and ENJOY the day!

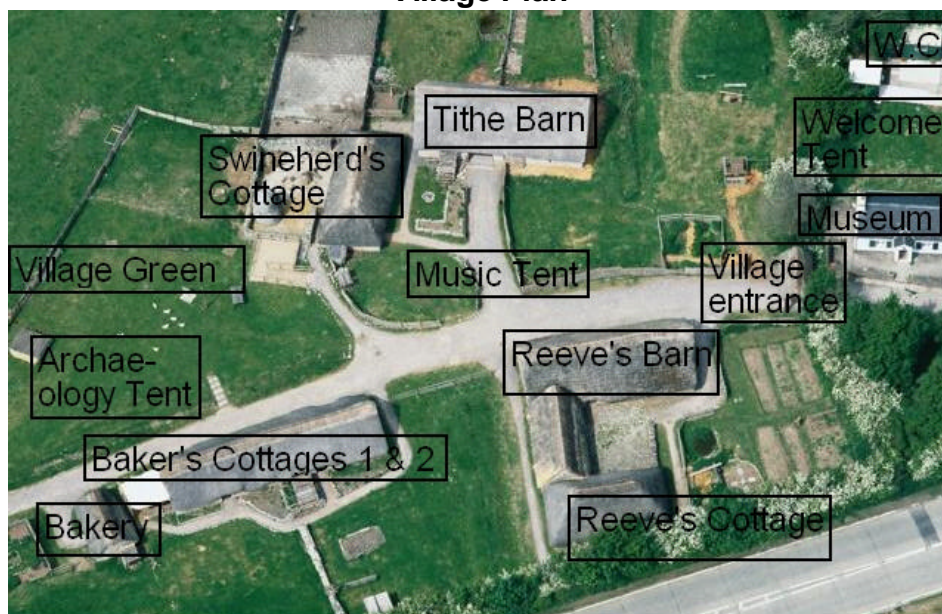
TODAY we also are launching our *Exploring the Past Foundation Pathway* which is

a new educational route for individuals wanting to study history and archaeology at Cardiff University. To find out more about this and other educational opportunities or if you would like information or guidance on getting back into education then speak to one of our helpful & friendly advisors at the welcome tent!

### Getting Medieval Events!

Activities will be going on simultaneously throughout the village all day between 10.30am-3.30pm. Please feel free to circulate around and join in! **Each activity will last no longer than 30 minutes** so if an activity has already started then don't worry! Either join in or watch & wait a few minutes until the next session is due to start.

### Village Plan



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## GETTING MEDIEVAL ACTIVITIES!

**Most activities will take place every 30 minutes or so. Please note these times & locations may vary due to demand & the weather!**

<b>Archaeology</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>
Archaeological drawing & recording	<b>Bakery</b>	<b>10.30-12.30</b>
Make your own medieval pot	<b>Baker's Cottage 1</b>	<b>10.30-12.30 &amp; 1.30-3.30</b>
Learn about the archaeology of animals	<b>Swineherd's cottage</b>	<b>11.00-1.30</b>
Learn about medieval food & diets	<b>Baker's Cottage 2</b>	<b>12.00-3.30</b>
Discover & record Cosmeston's medieval objects*	<b>Museum</b>	<b>1.30-3.30</b>
<b>History</b>		
Write your own medieval charter	<b>Tithe Barn</b>	<b>10.30-12.00 1.00-2.30</b>
Learn about medieval weapons & warfare	<b>Village Green or Tithe Barn</b>	<b>11.00-12.30 1.30-3.00</b>
Attend a medieval manorial court	<b>Tithe Barn</b>	<b>12.00-12.30 2.30-3.00</b>
<b>Story-telling &amp; Folklore</b>		
Medieval creatures: storytelling and story-making for children	<b>Reeve's Cottage</b>	<b>10.30-12.00</b>
Learn about medieval charms & talismans	<b>Reeve's Cottage</b>	<b>12.00-2.00</b>
Medieval mythological creatures: creative writing for adults	<b>Reeve's Cottage</b>	<b>2.00-3.30</b>
<b>Music</b>		
Listen to & learn about medieval music	<b>Music Tent</b>	<b>10.30-12.00 2.00-3.30</b>
Chant like a medieval monk	<b>Tithe Barn</b>	<b>12.00-2.00</b>
<b>Languages (activities alternate through the day)</b>		
French: learn the language of Lord De Caversham!	<b>Reeve's Barn</b>	<b>10.30-3.30</b>
Welsh: learn the language of the native population!	<b>Reeve's Barn</b>	<b>10.30-3.30</b>
<b>Science &amp; Media</b>		
Photographing the past: digital photography	<b>Museum</b>	<b>10.30-3.30</b>
Find out about the medieval environment & natural resources	<b>Starts: village entrance</b>	<b>12.00-2.00</b>

**PLEASE let us know what you thought of Getting Medieval: post a comment in our post box or aim for the bulls-eye on our archer's target, both situated near the Welcome tent!** About the Village:

Cosmeston Medieval Village is a "living history" medieval village set in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and reconstructed upon actual archaeological remains discovered in the late 1970's.

For more information about the village and its tours visit the Cosmeston Lakes visitor Centre. **SAFETY NOTICE: please do take care as you walk around the village as there are a number of low doorways/ceilings and some uneven surfaces!**

## Appendix 2

# ***As a tenant you are summoned to attend Cosmeston's Manorial Court in the Tithe Barn (at 12 noon & 2.30pm!)***

### **About Medieval Manorial Courts**

**Cosmeston** is not a native Welsh village but a colonial settlement established following the Norman Conquest by Anglo-Norman immigrants from England. Being situated in a frontier region or 'march' Cosmeston court probably had greater powers and dealt with a broader range of business than its English counterparts and this probably included criminal offences.

**The business of the court** was to enforce the customs of the manor and to deal with the lord's financial interests especially with respect to farming, land exploitation, agricultural produce & control over his unfree tenants. The court dealt with disputes between villagers, petty crimes, land transfers, labour services due to the lord and election of village officials amongst many other things. Lord De Caversham stood to gain financially from all of these things through fines, assizes and gaining labour services! We know about the workings of manorial courts because manorial clerks kept detailed records of the business that went on in them.

### **Some key characters in our court:**

**Gwalchmai ap Morgan** is the manorial Sergeant of the Peace & Lord De Caversham's right hand man. He arrests, fines and punishes wrongdoers. **Father Edwin of Cog** a literate priest is the clerk of the court and records details of the court's proceedings on parchment known as the manorial pipe roll.

**Walter the Reeve** is essentially the head peasant or village 'manager' and it was his job to ensure that the agricultural side of village life was going as it should.

**Gruffudd ap Hugo** is the village baker & is hated by some as being part of the lord's monopoly. Only he, having paid the lord of the manor for the right, can bake bread.

**Eleanor ap Hugo** is Gruffudd's wife, it was very common for the wives of bakers to become the village ale wife. If women held land in their own right then they attended manorial courts, they might also be present as both defendants and plaintiffs.

**Henry Hogg** the village swineherd is an unfree serf or villein who is tied to the manor by servile bonds and who owes labour services and dues to the lord.

### **An account of the court's proceedings.**

*These are actual entries from thirteenth-century manorial court pipe rolls At Cosmeston before the lord's sergeant Gwalchmai ap Morgan and Father Edwin of Cog on Saturday the feast of St Helene (22<sup>nd</sup> May)*

#### **Disputes between Villagers**

*Gruffudd ap Hugo complains that Henry Hogg on the Sunday next before S. Bede's day (10<sup>th</sup> May) last past with his pigs wrongfully destroyed the corn on his [Gruffudd's] land to his damage to the extent of one thrave (i.e. about 24 sheaves) of wheat, and to his dishonour to the extent of two shillings; and of this he produces suit. And Henry Hogg comes and defends all of it. Therefore let him wage law six handed.*

#### **Runaway serfs**

*The Court presented that Will, Henry Hogg's son, is the born bondman of the lord and a fugitive and dwells at Cardiff. Therefore he must be sought.*

#### **Land transfer & labour dues**

*Thomas, son of Simon Fig, came into court and took a cottage and 5 acres of land last held by Agnes widow of John Hewet. He (Thomas) has them for the term of his life, to pay ancient rent, and to do proper service to the lord and fulfil all other burdens.*

#### **Paying 'the Man'!**

*Renewal of advowry, Thomas Brown was placed in the protection of the lord and he gave the lord 4d per year and now renews the aforesaid protection.*

*Father Edwin is in mercy for his cow caught in the lord's meadow. Fine 3d.*

*Gilbert, Henry's son gives 5s. for merchet (licence to marry a wife).*

*For the assize of ale 1s 2d from Eleanor ap Hugo*

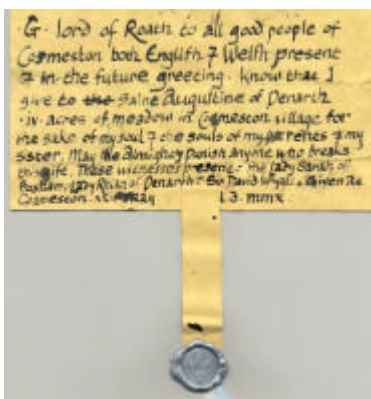
#### **Resisting 'the Man'?**

*All the ploughmen of Cosmeston are convicted ... because by reason of their default [the land] of the lord was ill-ploughed whereby the lord is damaged to the amount of 9s....*

*And Walter the Reeve is in mercy for concealing [i.e. not giving information as to] the said bad ploughing. Afterwards he made fine with the lord with 1 mark (about 13s 4d)*

### Appendix 3 *Getting Medieval* Gallery





## Appendix 4 Contributors Feedback Form

**Hello again,**

Part of the *Getting Medieval* day was to understand how contributors/volunteers experience public engagement events like this & assess the impact we had. Please could you answer the questions below? We'd really appreciate it and it will help us to monitor what your experience was.

Thanks

Dave

**Are you? (please delete as appropriate)**

A researcher/-academic lecturer/-professional tutor/-other

**Have you previously been involved in community engagement events/projects?**

Yes/No

If yes could please give a brief outline:

**From your experience on the day please rate Getting Medieval's success in achieving the following:**

(please circle) (0 = not successful

5 = very successful)

Engaging the community	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5
Transferring knowledge	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5
Raising interest in adult education	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5
As a marketing /PR event	0	1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
Working in partnership	0	1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
Experience for student volunteers	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5

**How might we improve any future Getting Medieval event?**

**Do you feel Getting Medieval should run again? YES/NO**

Comment:

**If yes, would you participate?** YES/NO

Comment:

**How important is public engagement to you &/or your work?**  
(please circle) (0 = not important 5 = very important)

0 1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

**Any other comments?**

Thank you very much!

## Appendix 5 Student Feedback Form

**Hello again,**

Part of the *Getting Medieval* day was to understand how contributors/volunteers experience public engagement events like this & assess the impact we had.

Please could you answer the questions below? We'd really appreciate it and it will help us to monitor what your experience was.

Thanks

Dave

### After working on Getting Medieval

#### 1. What do you think public engagement should mean for a University school?

(Circle/underline all that apply)

- Consulting with the public on a specific issue
- Research that involves the public
- Talking to different groups of people about your work/research
- Preparing a displays/presentations for the public
- Talking to school groups/engaging children
- Press/media work
- Breaking down barriers to higher education
- Working in partnership with other heritage/learning providers

#### 2. Having been involved with this public engagement project, how would you feel about planning a public engagement project?

Please tick one:

- Scared stiff - this is still not something I want to do
- Uneasy about – wouldn't know where to start
- Not sure – know where to start, but not how to plan
- Okay - would need help, but not sure who to ask
- Confident – I've run public engagement projects before and am able to help others get going

#### 3. Would you say that your knowledge and skills of public engagement methods are now (please circle)

Inadequate      Under Developed      Adequate  
Developed      Highly Developed?

#### 4. After the event can you reassess your knowledge/skills of:

(please circle) (0 = none, 1 = little, 5 = a lot)

Presenting to the public	0	1	2	3	4	5
Disseminating your knowledge	0	1	2	3	4	5
How to engage the public	0	1	2	3	4	5
Working as a team	0	1	2	3	4	5

#### 5. As a result of your experience which of the following groups do you feel happiest engaging with? Circle all that are relevant.

Adults      Teenagers      Children (under 13)      Mixed Groups  
Specialist Academics      Undergraduates      None of them?

**6. Do you feel you have benefited from engaging with the public?**  
YES   NO

**7. If yes, in what way? If no, why not?**

**8. Did you feel the Getting Medieval experience was POSITIVE or NEGATIVE? Why?**

**a) Would you do it again?      YES   NO**

**b) If yes, why would you want to do it again?**

**c) If we did it again, how could we improve the Getting Medieval event?**

**d) If no,, is there any reason for this? (please tick all that apply)**

Lack of Time      Pressures to do Other Things

Lack of Collegial Support      Negative Opinions of Peers to Engagement

Lack of Departmental or Institutional Support      Lack of Incentives

Lack of Acknowledgement or Reward      Lack of Motivation

Lack of Training or Skills      Lack of response by the public

Other (please specify)

**11. Do you think you would benefit from more training in public engagement?**

YES   NO   UNSURE

**12. Any other comments?**

Thank you very much!