Young Archaeologists' Club

EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY in the YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS' CLUB

Survey of YAC Branch Leaders carried out online during November 2014

Could you describe experimental archaeology? Maybe begin "Experimental archaeology is...".If you are unsure, don't know, or have never heard of it, please type a note to that effect instead.

Experimental archaeology is replicating methods of making and doing things that happened in the past to get a feel for the skill and knowledge needed to do it. It can also help work out things, for example how long a round house can last before it needs reroofing.

Experimental archaeology is recreating techniques/crafts/industry used in the past to find out exactly how they worked.

Experimental archaeology is when you take an archaeological idea and test whether it works or not by devising ways to prove or disprove it. It is usually hands on and very practical, also fun.

...aims through re-creating artefacts or processes to test proposed theories/interpretations and gain greater knowledge.

Experimental archaeology is where you attempt to replicate past methods for all facets of life - hunting, building, farming, cooking, tool manufacture etc

Experimental archaeology is trying to recreate historic artefacts using what we believe to be true historic methods.

Experimental archaeology is essentially giving things a go - using archaeological evidence or theories and testing them by doing, by building a round house based on the material remains we find of them, and materials and technologies we know we're around in the Iron Age and using the results of these 'experiments' to enhance our knowledge and inform our understanding.

Experimental archaeology is essentially studying the physical remains of the past and then trying to recreate these remains by various methods. Physical remains could be anything from clothes to tools or food and experimental archaeology also tries to address how people in the past lived their lives and organised their societies.

Experimental archaeology is the process of trying to recreate ancient techniques, artefacts and ways of life in order to study how our ancestors used the materials they found around them.

Experimental archaeology is: carrying out activities that either recreate those used in the past or that test theories about how things were used/done in the past

I am so sorry but I would only be guessing

Testing out life styles, e.g. reconstructing round houses or faces, farming crops, flint knapping, weaving, bread oven, iron smelting, CORS test pitting etc.

Experimental archaeology is testing the theories archaeologists have about what the evidence from the past tells us and having fun finding out if those theories are correct.

Experimental archaeology is attempting to replicate the construction or use of artefacts to learn more about how they were made/used.

Experimental archaeology is phrase describing a wide range of activities. The aim is to try to recreate likely methods for activities from the past and to compare their remains with those on archaeological sites to try to find out how likely it was that such techniques were used.

the testing of concepts, (practical and theoretical) by trying to replicate ancient (and more recent) ideas and methods

My understanding of Experimental Archaeology is that it is a means of interpreting and understanding the past through experiment in the present.

Experimental archaeology is exploring the past through activities and crafts that replicate what we think are ancient technologies and techniques as evidenced in the archaeological record.

Experimental archaeology is attempting to re-create either artefacts or life style in order to find out more about techniques, how objects might have been used, and what effects they might have had on the society that used them.

Experimental archaeology is where techniques are tested to see if certain ways of making things/subsisting/living could have happened in the past

Experimental archaeology is testing out a theory or a archaeological process i.e. how roundhouses were built

Recreating the crafts and technology used in the past, to see how people in the past achieved their ends. Comparing the results of these experiments with surviving artefacts or structures to verify our activities or processes.

Using modern day processes to test how people in the past may have carried out certain tasks, activities, for example, building firing pits to fire pottery enables us to understand the processes ancient potters would have gone through

Experimental archaeology is an attempt to reconstruct ancient artefacts/structures/landscapes to establish use or methods or practices.

Experimental archaeology is the use of tests/experiments to understand how past processes were undertaken

I believe experimental archaeology is exploring the past though the practical application and testing of theories and knowledge to see if they actually 'make sense' in the 'real world'.

Investigating past processes

Experimental Archaeology is trying ways of producing objects to see if any match the features of 'real' archaeological artefacts as supporting evidence of how artefacts were produced in the past.

is trying to explore how things were made or whether what we think a thing was maybe true (i.e. what may have left the residue found) by trying to make them now using the tools, materials that were available then.

Remaking something as close to the original

Experimental archaeology is giving the children (adults) a chance to have a go at recreating an object/building/person they have heard of/about in any archaeological setting to enable them to understand how it was made or who that person was and how they lived at a certain time.

experimental archaeology is trying out method that we think were used in the past or trying to recreate methods used in the past

Experimental techniques, attempting to understand better the practices of past people by physically replicating what we think they may have done.

Experiments are tests of theories. Excavation reveals anomalies which can not be translated or interpreted until some sort of experiment is carried out. For instance at Castell Henllys in Pembrokeshire we discovered many post holes and drip gulleys. Only by experimental building did we discover that they are the remains, or footprints of ancient round houses.

Using hands on practical attempt to test how something uncovered by archaeology may have actually been done in the past.

Experimental archaeology is the use of hands-on experiments/practical activities to try and work out how people might have done stuff in the past.

Replicating past technologies

Experimental Archaeology is the testing of hypotheses to advance the knowledge or experience of archaeology, whether it be through traditional or untested methods.

Experimental archaeology is the active participation in attempting to replicate processes from the past, in order to experience the same successes and pitfalls as people in the past.

Experimental archaeology is trying things out for ourselves.

Experimental archaeology is...using a hands of experience of making or doing something as it may have been done in the last, to work out the most likely processes and asses the evidence that they leave.

Tick any of the things in the list that you think experimental archaeology includes:

Answer Choices –	**Responses –**
– re-enactment	58.54% 24
– testing an archaeological theory	87.80% 36
– archaeological science	58.54% 24
– making things only using ancient technology	95.12%

Answer Choices –	Responses –
	39
– traditional crafts	78.05% 32
– trialling new equipment e.g. geophysics machinery	14.63% 6
– excavation	14.63% 6
– building structures like roundhouses	95.12% 39
– investigating what happens to things when they get buried	82.93% 34
– it's only relevant to prehistory	0.00% 0
– I'm not sure what it includes	2.44% 1
Total Respondents: 41	

Other:
Long term experiments

Recording the experiments and their results

The important point is that the techniques tried provide reasons for some of the features found on artefacts that otherwise have no explanation. Building a roundhouse out of reinforced concrete would not be experimental archaeology.

We have done all these things over the years. Our young members particularly enjoy hands on experience.

Does your Branch do archaeological experiments...

Answer Choices –	Responses –
– ...never.	9.76% 4
– ...a one-off.	7.32% 3

Answer Choices –	Responses –
– ...every now and then.	65.85% 27
– ...often.	17.07% 7
– I don't know.	0.00% 0
Total	**41**

Does your Branch do re-enactment, or ever make use of re-enactors?

Answer Choices –	**Responses –**
– Yes	75.61% 31
– No	24.39% 10
– I'm not sure	0.00% 0
Total	**41**

Why hasn't your Branch tried any experimental archaeology?

Answer Choices –	**Responses –**
– We have! I'll tell you more in the next section.	80.49% 33
– I don't know why we haven't.	7.32% 3
– We haven't got the skills or knowledge.	7.32% 3
– We haven't got the space.	4.88% 2
– We wouldn't be allowed to, where we meet.	7.32% 3
– We can't get the materials we might need.	0.00%

Answer Choices –	Responses –
	0
– The risk assessment puts us off.	2.44% 1
– We can't afford it.	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 41	

Comments:

We have tried flint knapping and then using tools to strip bark and fur. We have made our own pigments and experimented in re-creating prehistoric art. We have used clay to make coil pots and beakers which we decorated with string etc

We haven't got round to it yet, we haven't been going that long as a branch. We have some session ideas to make use of experimental archaeology but just haven't done them yet.

I am only covering for a maternity leave so perhaps the proper leader knows!

I would love to do some experimental archaeology with our group

We are a new branch and therefore have not yet had enough sessions to do any but do intend to do much more experimental archaeology to introduce this to our YACers but have been limited thus far by time.

Would you like to try experimental archaeology with your Branch?

Answer Choices –	Responses –
– We've already had a go; bring on the next page!	78.05% 32
– Yes	17.07% 7
– No	0.00% 0
– I'm not sure	4.88% 2
– I don't make decisions about our activities	0.00% 0

Answer Choices –	Responses –
Total	41

Please describe the activity your Branch has done (if lots, take your pick!).What prompted you to do archaeological experiment(s), and what did you want the members to get out of the activity?

It's a great hands on experience for the YACs, and helps them understand and appreciate history in another angle, getting them to explore different aspects of history. A while ago we made pots and then made our own kiln and had a go at firing them. Some of the pots exploded and so when we excavated the kiln in the next session the YACs not only got an idea of how hard it was to fire a pot, but also what a kiln would look like if an archaeologist where to dig one up!

Writing with quills, wax tablets and other types of writing. Working with clay to try making pots, cant think what else.....got Viking re enactors coming in January!! and Roman cookery next year!

Roman sponges on sticks - we showed that they definitely were not used instead of toilet paper. It taught the YAs that they should always question ideas in books.

Pre-historic art: an appreciation of known examples of pre-historic art and discussion around its locations and meanings; fun experimenting with making colours out of natural ingredients (even if though some of these would not have been used in pre-historic times like turmeric/berries etc)

Our members are definitely in the 'learn by doing' camp! We've made tools and weapons from microliths, experimenting with different shapes/formations for different functions. We've cooked using wild food, attempted to light fires using different methods. We've had demonstrations from re-enactors.

open firing of pots

Not applicable

One of the activities we did was making a wattle-and-daub fence. It was very messy but the members enjoyed it and we wanted them to understand how structures were built in the past. In the same session they also made their own little houses out of lolly pop sticks and clay.

N/a

Be hands on, learn about various techniques, be patient, creative and use their imaginations, have something to take home, think about how people lived and how that is different from how we live.

I don't think that we have done any archaeological experiments

We have done all the examples given earlier. We have also been to the Ancient Technology Centre at Cranborne, Dorset. It is always a great deal of fun and improves ones awareness of the past.

Iron Age huts x 2 (2003 & 2009) - Hands on experience of building techniques and an understanding of how our ancestors lived. Re enactment - learning about the Civil War and meeting lots of people with similar interests.

We have done a flint-knapping activity - we knapped flint and then used the blades to try cutting fat and sinew from some large raw beef bones. We were supervised by a volunteer from the local university. I wanted the members to learn how sharp and effective stone tools could be (we wore gloves, goggles and leather aprons!) and also how tricky it can be to cut tendons from bone, plus the "ick" factor of raw bones and marrow. Another time we made replica pottery, and another time we made a replica Roman bread oven and then baked bread in it (with a demo using a cilbanus). I have planned more experiments in cooking and testing solar alignments/shadows.

We had heard of fun experiments at YAC Leaders' Weekends and wanted to try them out. We thought that the members would enjoy them and learn about another side of archaeology. We made grain stores in cups, which although it was not archaeologically legitimate, were easy. We opened the stores over the coming months. The excitement from the members was great. They really got the idea of the grain store and how it should work. We have also done some textile work but struggled to link it to specific sites, so would do so again. We have also had Karl Lee along, whose flint knapping sessions are brilliant and really get across the experimental archaeology idea.

Examples include: leather shoe making; wool and linen spinning ; iron age jewellery making ; pottery making ; annual historic-themed feasts. These activities encourage the YACs to think about how things were produced in ancient times and the difficulties of making simple things without modern tools. For the feasts it shows that people in the past could eat quite well even with simple ingredients.

We tend to focus on craft activities in the winter. An example includes making coil pots. This especially appeals to kinaesthetic learners.

An awful lot of engagement for younger members

We had been finding out about the stone age and wanted the members to have some experience of how hard it would have been just to make everyday tools. Also done weaving and dyeing to find out more about one of our early Saxon burials.

We have built a roundhouse, but using techniques suitable for youngsters today so maybe not very authentic.....but then what do I know!! maybe it was!!!

DNA analysis - extracting DNA from a banana to explain how the DNA analysis of Richard III was done. We have made coil pots to demonstrate one of the techniques in making pottery. We have had members use calligraphy to understand how manuscripts were produced. We have regularly used re enactors to explain different periods of history etc.

This year we have explored the Mesolithic. This included making temporary shelters from fallen branches, brushwood and leaves, viability tested by pouring water over the shelter with children inside! We have also made nettle string. This Saturday (Nov 15 2014) we are setting them a challenge, how to transport all the things you need to live, given the nomadic lifestyle in the Mesolithic.

N/A

Iron Age and Roman cooking using authentic ingredients and dress.

It's fun and brings the past alive. Great learning experience

I am a re-enactor as well as a leader so it makes a lot of sense for us to get our members trying things and exploring the past through experimental archaeology. It's also a lot more fun for them to try tablet weaving, flint knapping or basket weaving as a way of learning about the past rather than just sitting listening to us talk at them.

Ideas for meeting suggested by assistant leaders working as professionals in heritage. Primary aim to engage children in the past.

We carved cup and ring marks out of a sandstone mix using flint. We wanted to see how hard it was to make these and what techniques worked best. Members gained some respect for the skills and patience of people in the past.

engages the members by giving them hands on experience of the difficulties faced and how skilful they must have been. Making miniature round houses for example.

Made Trebuchet, round houses, cooked food, cloth & wool work etc

We did a set of sessions about war/weapons so we wanted them to understand how weapons worked and how they were used especially in war

Roman cookery on a open fire with clay pots, some glazed and some unglazed to see how Romans would have cooked and which pot was best. Flint knapping (we had someone in to help us). Building shelters from branches (nomads) to see what evidence is left when it has decayed away. The children love trying out things to see if they work.

We wanted them to get an understanding of early farming methods, as one of the things that is less 'present' in the archaeological record. TO gain an understanding of every day life on the land, by experiencing the harvest and associated activities

warp weighted loom weaving, willow fish trap making, wattle and daub, quern grain grinding

n/a

Not applicable

Making and firing ceramics on a bonfire (we have done this several times) Producing our own wattle and daub Flint knapping (also done several times)

We are yet to do any but some of the ideas we have planned included; making butter, creating textiles, doing cress cropmarks.

Growing here barley and processing it to make bread. Growing flax to make linen Bow drilling Pot making

It's the best way for our members to remember the principals of finding out about the past from evidence.

We've done limited experimental activities - I'd like to do more, but we dont have much outdoor space to work with, and we have to leave the classroom clean and empty after a session, so at the moment things need to be quite small scale.

Did any of these things motivate you?

Answer Choices –	Responses –
– not applicable.	17.07% 7
– it's fun.	78.05% 32
– it's hands-on.	82.93% 34
– we had the knowledge and skills to do it.	58.54% 24
– we could get help from a specialist, so we arranged it.	60.98% 25
– a leader is interested, so we had a go.	43.90% 18
– we wanted to teach how to do a fair test of a theory.	14.63% 6
– we visited a place that does archaeological experiments, so we got involved.	21.95% 9
– we could use maths skills.	2.44% 1
– we wanted to do some archaeological science.	17.07% 7
– we could use literacy skills.	2.44% 1
Total Respondents: 41	

Other:

Just to try out the techniques and see if they work.....

I would like to do more experimental work with the children as the sessions when we have had an input of testing an archaeological idea are always the best ones.

N/a

It gives a better understanding of the past.

We luckily had the budget to pay for specialists to run activities for us, so we took advantage of it. I used to do re-enactment as a hobby so I know how helpful hands-on experiments can be for helping kids grasp a point. I've not used experimental archaeology to show how to test a theory - I'll definitely try to work that component in to an activity next time!

We are building on our work during the year, including recent work in the area on the Mesolithic (Pennine flint scatters, Lunt Fields, where leaders and helpers have been involved in the excavations). Nettle string - leaders learnt how to do this from a previous session at the Manchester Museum, so passed on the technology.

N/A

Trying to recreate things using authentic methods helps demonstrate to members that people in the past weren't stupid and were in fact extremely resourceful. It also helps people to engage with the past.

We could share the challenge experienced by people of the past.

So it depends on what the activity might be, but what sort of skills, knowledge and equipment do you think are needed for archaeological experiments? And does your Branch have any of them? Please type any other suggestions for additional resources that might be needed in the "Other" comments box and explain whether or not you can access them.

	Yes, need this! –	**No, don't need this! –**	**Our Branch hasn't got this. –**	**Our Branch has got this. –**	**It depends, maybe we could get this if we needed to. –**	**Total Respondents –**
– A laboratory.	14.63% 6	53.66% 22	43.90% 18	7.32% 3	24.39% 10	41
– Natural raw materials.	65.85% 27	0.00% 0	4.88% 2	29.27% 12	46.34% 19	41
– Industrial or craft skills.	51.22% 21	2.44% 1	9.76% 4	39.02% 16	51.22% 21	41
– Outdoors space.	39.02% 16	4.88% 2	14.63% 6	48.78% 20	36.59% 15	41

	Yes, need this! –	No, don't need this! –	Our Branch hasn't got this. –	Our Branch has got this. –	It depends, maybe we could get this if we needed to. –	Total Respondents –
– Construction skills.	27.03% 10	18.92% 7	27.03% 10	24.32% 9	54.05% 20	37
– Storage space.	42.50% 17	10.00% 4	30.00% 12	35.00% 14	22.50% 9	40
– Scientific equipment.	22.50% 9	25.00% 10	42.50% 17	12.50% 5	35.00% 14	40
– An ordinary meeting room.	40.00% 16	2.50% 1	10.00% 4	75.00% 30	7.50% 3	40
– A kitchen.	33.33% 13	10.26% 4	41.03% 16	41.03% 16	20.51% 8	39
– Food preparation/hygiene qualification.	20.51% 8	10.26% 4	51.28% 20	20.51% 8	28.21% 11	39
– Permission to light fires.	35.90% 14	7.69% 3	41.03% 16	25.64% 10	33.33% 13	39
– Detailed knowledge of an archaeological period.	34.21% 13	15.79% 6	0.00% 0	71.05% 27	23.68% 9	38
– Personal protective equipment (e.g. safety goggles)	35.90% 14	2.56% 1	23.08% 9	38.46% 15	41.03% 16	39
– Special insurance.	21.05% 8	18.42% 7	18.42% 7	2.63% 1	60.53% 23	38
– Extra money/funding.	28.95% 11	23.68% 9	15.79% 6	2.63% 1	55.26% 21	38

Comments:

Don't need extra funding at the moment but in the future maybe.

Not sure about the insurance, I have to admit!

Most skills can be taught at the time. It is nice to have access to an expert.

Good community connections to get donations of materials and the cheek to ask! :)

Oops forgot to add grinding grain and bread-making to our list earlier

Access to where experimental archaeological specialist can be found to help plan or lead a session - We have some access to this.

What do you think your Branch members could learn from doing an archaeological experiment? I'm also interested to know if you think they could contribute new research by doing an archaeological experiment. If you're not convinced by "experimental archaeology", please let me know why.

It is a great opportunity to do something different, that they don't get to do at school. If they are part of YACs they will have some kind of love of history, and more often than not, in my experience, they already know the basics and so can handle the more complicated stuff and it will only increase their range of interest and understanding. And so yes, they could quite easily help in new research.

Yesterday at our meeting we mummified an orange (thanks to Bigger YAC) and will check up on the oranges at the March meeting- this was a small but fun experiment. I would love to (with the Young Archaeologists) take part in an archaeological experiment from the simple (would they really have used oil in the Roman bathhouse - we have a Roman Bathhouse) to the more complicated (saw a fantastic Round house beautifully decorated in a local school recently) . Not experimental Arch but both Hatfield YAC and St Albans YAC were part of the UCL Sensing the Iron Age Roman project and loved the chance to get all technical.

- How to propose and test theories and practises in a controlled situation. - gain a greater appreciation and knowledge of ancient crafts and skills - how maths and science has real practical applications – teamwork.

I think doing things is the best way to learn. Some members think they won't be able to do certain things, very are often pleasantly surprised when they find they can, and I've noticed them coming out of their shells more when we're busy doing this sort of thing. They also like it when the leaders are having a go as well, that we're not just talking at them like a teacher - we admit that we don't necessarily know if something's going to work, and they love that we're all learning as we go along. I don't know about contributing to new research, but that sounds really interesting and I'd love to know more about any possibilities there might be for doing this.

More insight into historic thinking and problem solving

I think members would really enjoy the opportunity to undertake some experimental archaeology. What they could learn would depend on the activity/experimental, but I am sure it would help them engage with past in a new way. YACs could contribute to research by undertaking experimental archaeology but I think this might need to be coordinated at a higher level than individual branches e.g. a programme or experiment as part of a programme of research that is developed or organised centrally by CBA or another organisation with which each branch can contribute or get involved.

I think that taking part in an archaeological experiment can help the YAC members to gain renewed respect for the past and also through that respect for the world that they live in. It makes them see that all of the 'disposable' items they use today were not accessible 100,500,1000 years ago etc and shows them how lucky they are that they can go out and buy a coat instead of having to kill an animal, cure the skin etc. I also think that if there was a suitable project they could add to research. We have considered doing some projects with our group but we only meet once a month and have a wide age group. Instead we 'theme' each session and try to include a practical element for each which often involves some experimental archaeology.

A tangible link to the past, thinking about archaeology differently. If the members decided that was something they were interested in we would try to incorporate into our programme as we always start with ideas from the members.

Members learn more about different periods and people, they get a chance to be hands on and have fun, they get chance to be social whilst doing something fun, they get chance to think about and test their theories, they can be creative whilst doing an activity that is educational.

I am still not sure what it is?

Experimental archaeology is the best because it is practical.

Members learn teamwork, practical skills, how to have fun in the outdoors and about life in the past. An experimental archaeology project gets us out of the 'classroom' and closer to the world our ancestors knew. Plus new experiences including open fires, working with natural materials, ancient crafts and port-a-loos!

They can learn the processes involved in making artefacts and understand how archaeologists use experiments in replicating methods/objects to understand more about life in the past (e.g., actually cooking a meal on an open fire tells you how much firewood you need, how hot it gets, how important it is to tie your hair and clothes up out of the way/the benefits of wearing woollen clothes etc). I like the idea of more explicitly linking experimental archaeology to TESTING a theory ----- In future I will set children a theory to test through their experiment, e.g. what is better for waterproofing leather, beeswax or oil?, and then get them to test that (somehow!).

I think our members could learn a wide range of things depending on the experiment. Obviously about the time period and the methods themselves. But also potentially about tests, measuring, recording and reporting them. I think that they could contribute to new research, particularly if there are research projects about young people doing particular activities in the past as I think this might spark their imagination to think that they might be doing something people like them did in the past. And thinking about what people their age might physiologically have achieved in the past. I think that they could come up with their own research project with scaffolding from the leaders in terms of structure, helping to risk assess, resource, record and write up experiments.

The YACs enjoy doing hands on activities and this enthusiasm seems to stretch from the 8 through to the 16 year olds. I am sure the older ones would enjoy being stretched taking part in new archaeological experiments, but we do need to ensure that our activities are not too split up e.g. with some doing one activity only and the youngsters doing another - this is one issue with designing experimental archaeology for such a wide age range.

Completing your survey has certainly made me think that we should engage more with experimental archaeology in the future so thank you! It would be great to contribute to further knowledge.

Convinced

I think lots can be learned from experimental archaeology, as long as we remember it is an experiment and not necessarily the fact/actual way something was done.....

I think our members gain a lot through a hands on experience, especially as we have some members with special needs i.e. autism. To be able to instruct members in the process of creating or testing furthers their education and appreciation

Hands on activity brings the modern child closer to the past and more appreciative of the skills people needed then. Team work, decision making, revisiting hypotheses and refining ideas, increased self confidence.

Archaeology is multi-faceted and by not including experimental archaeology in our activities would be like trying to complete a jigsaw with pieces missing or the wrong box top.

Branch members could widen their skills in a particular topic/period/industry.

I think they get greater understanding of the past and have fun at the same time! I think it would be excellent if members could contribute to research, I think it would be challenging but could work if well managed with access to appropriate resources.

It's a great way to engage children's imagination and get them thinking about the past. It is something we would like to do more of but it can be limited by time (to organise), contacts and money.

Members could learn that doing valuable research doesn't always require equipment, funding or expertise but each of these help do experiments better.

Understanding of the problems of working with the materials and equipment around at that time and giving them new skills as well as making them think about alternative ways /means.

They get more involved & it fires their imagination

More knowledge and proof that it works and it is how it was probably/definitely done in the past, hands on is the only way to go!!!

I’m not sure we can contribute anything new but the children like to find answers for themselves to test theories to see if they actually work. They also like to push the boundaries of existing theories, for example we discovered that the clay pots didn't make custard very well as they got too hot.

Yes, definitely - kids are able to add new research in this way. It's important to find opportunities to contribute real research, and we seek to do this, as it allows the children to realise that they are contributing something real, as well as having lots of fun! Really good for their investigative skill development. Most of our activities have some sort of experimental angle to them - all part of ongoing development and challenging the group to grow in its knowledge base and skills set.

I think they'd learn a lot and have fun doing it. I don't see why they couldn't contribute new research but I wouldn't know what research project to start with them.

Our members would love to try some experimental archaeology. They love hands on activities where they can be involved. It also brings alive a subject in a way accessible to young people.

Experimental archaeology easier for us than for most branches - we have the knowhow, equipment and lab space. These are not always needed but they help. Kids love doing anything hands on. But with an age range of 8-16 doing sustained, experiment based work would be challenging, We approach it more as 'hands-on' work rather than experimentation. But we now have a 14-18 branch and will think more about the possibilities for them.

We would like our YAC members to understand how experimental archaeology can help understanding of the past and why it is key to how archaeological interpretation has developed. We also would like them to enjoy the activities so as to continue to use their archaeological imaginations so that experimental archaeology may benefit from the YAC members conclusions and ideas. I think it definitely feasible for YAC members to conduct research using experimental archaeology to provide key knowledge to influence archaeology interpretations.

They learn the problems people in the past experienced and they can use problem solving skills to come up with solutions!

Trying things out is invaluable and some members are still talking about some of our activities. We have started find washing recently and dig every year.

Larger scale experiments would be great for all kinds of reasons, and what we do is very successful. We'd be happy to contribute to larger research projects.

Katy Whitaker
artefactual@btinternet.com
www.yac-uk.org **www.archaeologyuk.org**