

MY DAY AS A COLLECTIONS CARE ASSISTANT

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WHAT DO YOU DO?

Collections Care Assistant is my job title. It's a catch all phrase including aspects of collections management and preservation (i.e. making sure items are stored correctly, liaising with conservation colleagues about items which may need some extra care, returning items to the archive after members of the public have had a look at them and a bit of location control to make sure nothing gets lost amongst the millions of items we hold). That's what I've been up to so far and I only started in June so it's been a busy few weeks!

HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

With a lot of luck I was in the previous round of the Skills for the Future Trainees (2013-14). When my training contract finished I had already applied for an internal position with Historic Scotland in the Publications and Interpretation department. In addition to this I was offered a job with the National Collection of Aerial Photography via a temping agency so when the Collections Care Assistant post was advertised internally I was eligible to apply. For me this has worked out perfectly. I enjoy a very varied working week and I also get to experience a number of different areas within the wider heritage sector. Although I am not an archaeologist I do work with archaeological material very frequently, be it site drawings, excavation reports or as research material for publications.

FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

After seeing the questions for these posts I have been pondering my answer for a while. Favourite part of the job...hmm...there a lot of different aspects I really enjoy within the work itself. Firstly every day is challenging and I appreciate the chance to give my brain a good work out with such interesting and diverse material. I'm constantly learning a lot about different periods in history, correct conservation methods and the different roles within the organisation. However, I'd have to say my favourite part of my job is all of the possibilities contained in the archive and the staff who work here. I love the fact that we are all working together to preserve other people's life work so that the current and future generations can enjoy them, be inspired by them and also go on to do great things themselves.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON TODAY?

Today I am catching up on a lot of filing. I was off with the flu so there's quite a lot to catch up on...



WHAT DID UNIVERSITY NOT TEACH YOU?

Somewhat unusually, I am not a graduate. I'd say it is unusual as most of the people I have encountered in the heritage world have a great deal of impressive qualifications. I have highers and some University study to my name but that's it. I think work experience is incredibly valuable and an important thing to do before you decide what to study. For me leaving University when I did was the best decision I could have possibly made. I don't think I'd be working for the Commission now if I had completed my degree. I wouldn't be so passionate about my work and I wouldn't be able to manage my time and responsibilities

as adeptly as I do. University is great for some, but for others time away from education to decide what you enjoy and also discover what you are good at is the best option.