

WHY I VOLUNTEERED IN ARCHAEOLOGY

July 24, 2015 allenarchaeology Explore Posts volunteering

By Alice Riley-Ward

In the past it was always difficult for me to stick to one career choice and as such I was often indecisive about my future career; and there have been multiple paths that I have considered purely because they are things that I enjoy. During my childhood and even up until a few years ago Palaeontology and Marine Biology were the most viable choices, but recently they were discarded when I finally realised that I wouldn't want to stray too far from home. If I wished to choose one of them indefinitely, I would have had to move away from everything I knew because while Palaeontology and Marine Biology exist in the UK, what I'd be interested in would probably be difficult to find here. But a few years ago, Archaeology became a real possibility for my career.

My mandatory 6th Form work experience was difficult, as I had no ideas about where I should have gone and how anything could be relevant to my career if I didn't know what to do with my future, and it was only after I spoke with the school's career advisor that she recommended Allen Archaeology to me. I looked into the prospect and found it interesting, and after spending a week of work experience with Allen Archaeology I was able to partially explore what being an Archaeologist was really like. I spent most of my time on site, working with a few volunteers and the site workers in digging and similar activities, and this opened my eyes to the fact that indeed, I may actually have a future in this. It has the intrigue and ever-changing ideas that would grasp my attention, and focuses on history which I am fond of. So towards the end of the week, I entertained the idea of coming back for more volunteer work, to consolidate this hopeful possibility.



A tray of finds washed this week

Unsurprisingly I've returned, remembering how interesting my work experience was, and while doing these two weeks of volunteering in my summer holidays, I've been so far blown away by what I've seen here and learned from the people working at Allen Archaeology. I've been looking at what happens off-site, staying at the offices and learning that there is more to Archaeology than just digging and searching

for finds. Archiving has interested me greatly, as I can look at what has been found after it's clean and devoid of dirt or clay (or both) and think about where it came from, and consider how impressed I'd be if I found something like it. Easily the best thing about my time here, however, is that I can ask all the questions that I have about the different paths in archaeology and I can learn all I could ever wish to know and ask as many questions as I would like, which to be fair is quite an extensive list. I do, however, know that I will hold the answers and wealth of information dearly and that I also won't tire of what I can learn from those around me.

So now I can say that Archaeology is the right choice for me and I'm glad that I can spend time with Allen Archaeology pursuing what I cannot do through school, because it is those working here that I should thank for helping me make my choice.