

# COMMERCIAL TO COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY – A DAY OF GREAT CHANGE

August 6, 2017 Nina O'Hare Archives, Commercial Archaeology, Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2017, Young Archaeologists Club

Hi, I'm Nina, an archaeologist working for Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service.

Until this Monday I spent most days out in a field, or on a building site digging things. On Tuesday it felt like a revolution occurred – I began my new job and was launched into the wonderfully eclectic world that is community archaeology. I would have liked to gain more digging experience before leaving the field, but due to various health issues (mostly exacerbated rather than caused by my job) being a commercial digger is not for me. I'm thrilled to be moving into community archaeology though, as that has always been my goal. There is something very special about being able to share the past with others – it is a great privilege.

So, I find myself sat here on Thursday morning in a warm and dry office with a desk of my own (a novelty after 18 months of scrounging for desk space during lulls in fieldwork!), with the immensely exciting task of sharing our archaeological and historical knowledge.

My day began at the civilised time of 9am (fieldwork usually runs 8am – 4pm). In my inbox was an email about a test pit dig of a WWII site that we are trying to arrange for the Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club. As World War II is not my area of expertise, much googling followed.

Researching was cut short by a social media training session that ran until lunchtime. I need not tell you how important social media is for outreach work, as that would be preaching to the converted. Along with several other colleagues, I learnt more about creating a coherent plan for using our various social media channels and assessing the impact of what we do. All useful stuff and some interesting new ideas too.

After lunch I spent some time with our knowledgeable archive team, as my outreach role covers both archaeology and archives. My limited understanding of how archives work has now expanded – I even semi-understand the referencing system! I also got my first look in our archive strongrooms, which are kept carefully temperature and humidity controlled to aid preservation. Excitingly, I got to see Shakespeare's marriage bond, which is just one of many historic documents held in Worcester!



*WAAS archive strongroom with Shakespeare's marriage bond in the right hand case (image taken by author)*

A helpful handover and ideas chat with another outreach colleague, about school resource packs and upcoming events, led to a last minute flurry of emails before the end of the day. My diary is starting to fill up with site recces, events, project meetings and a first aid course. I think I am starting to feel more like a community archaeologist and less like a misplaced digger.

If you'd like to explore the archaeology of Worcester or know more about where I work (a.k.a. a shameless plug), you can find us here:

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