



Viva Volunteers!

Oxford University Museums Volunteer Service
October - December 2017



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

**Quarterly Public
Engagement Stats** **285 Events**
175 Volunteers

1267 Volunteering Hours
479 Instances of Volunteering

Christmas Bash at the Ash

On 29th November, volunteers from across the museums came together for a seasonal soirée - a chance for us to say thank you for all of their support in the past year. For the first time ever, the annual Volunteer Christmas Party took place in the Ashmolean galleries, which - decked out in festive lights and decorations - proved a popular setting. In fact, we're not sure who had more fun: the volunteers attending the party or the staff getting ready for it, but with mince pies aplenty and a swinging jazz duet performing at the feet of Apollo (appropriately, god of music!), everyone was full of good cheer.

We were also pleased to welcome some of our community volunteers, who worked with the Community Engagement Officers to co-curate exhibitions and events at the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums throughout 2017.

Thanks also to the members of staff who attended and showed their appreciation on the night. A particular thank you to Kingston Myles, Katherine Merrony, Emma Hermon, and Bettina Zagoritis for doing all of the organising, and to Xa Sturgis for allowing it all to happen and for speaking on the night. The party was generously supported by funding from the Watlington Hoard and Sensing Culture projects, as well as from the Ashmolean, and the museum shop provided an enviable hamper of goodies, won by volunteer Anne in the free raffle.

"I would just like to congratulate everyone involved in giving us such an enjoyable evening. It is lovely to be able to volunteer in all the different museums in Oxford and it feels great to be appreciated."

"A great party [and] a great chance for volunteers from so many departments and museums to get together."



A chance for volunteers to write about objects significant to their volunteering...

'My Favourite Object...' No.7

Your name: Roger

Your chosen object: An early 19thC. reflex Camera Obscura

The museum the object is in: History of Science

What connection the object has to your volunteering: It has an important role in the historical development of Science, Photography, and Art, and I include it on my museum tour.

Why you've chosen the object: It was the object I chose to make a reproduction of for my final project in a Restoration Studies course in 2002. I have remained a camera obscura maker and enthusiast since then, with clients such as the National Trust, the Bodleian, and Compton Verney. The photograph shows the original camera obscura on the right together with my reproduction on the left.

Volunteer-led History and Highlights tours happen every Thursday and Saturday at the Museum of the History of Science.



A Focus on Tours

At the beginning of November, we gathered together ten volunteer tour guides from across the museums to ask for their feedback. In particular, we were after thoughts on our proposed new recruitment and training plan, which, having received the volunteers' seal of approval, we have already started to implement. In December, we auditioned more than twenty potential new guides - all of whom really impressed us, making the whittling down process very difficult indeed! However, we are now looking forward to training a new cohort in January and February and to getting them stuck in to their respective teams after that.

Database Update

Many of you will be aware that for the past two years we have been investigating implementing a new volunteer database. Thanks to support from the University, we have been able to really push this forward since October, and we anticipate having a new database in place later in the spring. The introduction of this system will (finally) be a good opportunity to make sure that all volunteer supervisors and volunteers are up-to-date with requirements set out in the Museums' Volunteer Policy. In other words: watch this space - we'll be coming to speak to everyone soon!

Emma Hermon: New Ashmolean Volunteer Manager

Emma started in October and we look forward to working with her more in the New Year. In the meantime, a bit about her...

"I previously worked for the National Waterways Museums Ellesmere Port & Gloucester as Volunteer Manager and more recently as Interim General Manager. Having worked with volunteer teams for over 20 years, I am looking forward to supporting such a dedicated and passionate team and to growing and developing volunteer opportunities in line with the Museum's values and visions."

Welcoming New Volunteers

Michaelmas term is always our busiest recruitment-wise. We attended the University's Freshers Fair and Newcomers Club, as well as a session for Somerville College students at the Pitt Rivers. We also ran 13 public engagement inductions. Lots of new recruits have already started, and we look forward to welcoming more in 2018!

An Inspiring Introduction

Many thanks to Stephen Johnston for his engaging introduction to the Museum of the History of Science in November. The session was part of our 'Introduction to...' series, which (as the name suggests) aims to introduce new(ish) or new(ish)-to-that-place volunteers to the different buildings and collections, with a bit about their origins and their ethos. Eleven volunteers attended. If you would like to show off your museum or department to volunteers for an hour or so, then get in touch!

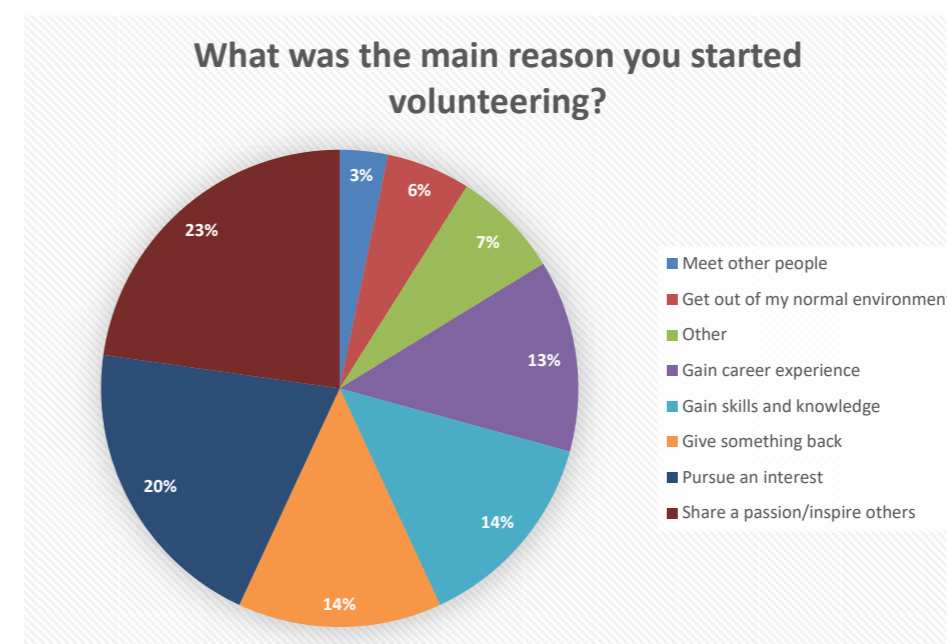
"Just to reiterate comments earlier today, that the introduction by Stephen was fascinating and whetted my appetite to explore the Museum further and volunteer for something there."

Reminder: A Date for the Diary

'Volunteer Management 101' training not only covers the ins and outs of the Museums' Volunteer Policy but also addresses the ethics of volunteering and best practice in volunteer management. All staff tasked with thinking about and/or acting upon volunteer issues are strongly encouraged to attend. The next session will be 1 - 4 pm on Monday 29th January, at the Museum of Natural History. Get in touch if you would like to attend.

The Results are in...

In October, we asked volunteers to complete a short survey asking them about their volunteering motivations, experiences, and ambitions. Here's one result:



If you have any volunteer news you would like us to share in our next quarterly newsletter, then get in touch! Our next issue will cover Jan - Mar 2018.

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