

Autumn 2023

Leicestershire
County Council

Culture
Leicestershire
Heritage, Libraries, Collections and Learning

Volunteering

News

We can't believe it's been 6 months since our last Volunteering Newsletter and what a busy time it's been! Thank you to our amazing volunteers, over 300 of you, who continue to gift your time, effort, skills, creativity and experience to enrich our Cultural Services and your local communities. This newsletter gives you a flavour of what's been happening. We hope you enjoy it reading it!

Culture Leicestershire's Volunteering Sharing Day

In March, volunteers across our services came together to celebrate achievements and share their experiences at the Volunteer Sharing Day. The event empowered volunteers to showcase what they do and the impact gifting their time has on our communities.

Chairman of the County Council, Dr Kevin Feltham, opened the event highlighting the importance of volunteering for the council's cultural services and extending his personal thanks to them all. Attendees then watched the new Culture Leicestershire Volunteer Film. [Watch it here!](#)

Next volunteers took centre stage. Speakers included Anila from the Anand Mangal group, who discussed how the group began and their motivation to continue sharing their traditions through co-curated projects. Terri, a volunteer from Leicestershire Shared Reading, led everyone through a wonderful group reading session.

After lunch, there was a volunteer 'marketplace'. Everyone mingled to learn more about each other's volunteer roles and discover the wide variety of volunteering opportunities across Leicestershire to staff and one another. Thank you to all the volunteers who took part and made the day so special!



Volunteers at Bosworth

Our brilliant Bosworth Battlefield volunteers are going from strength to strength with more people joining the team!



The growing team of Gallery Volunteers are now on hand to support visitors in the exhibition spaces from Fridays to Mondays, explaining the nuances of the Wars of the Roses and encouraging people of all ages to get hands on with our interactive exhibits. They have also helped support the site team with a boom in school visits, particularly during the summer term when many of them were called upon to marshal troops of students through the galleries while engaging them with battlefield history!

With the support of our enthusiastic event volunteers, Bosworth has also welcomed more visitors to enjoy a varied programme of activities including author talks, workshops, children's trails, outdoor theatre and living history. Many of these events, particularly large events like the Medieval Festival, would not be possible without volunteers who help with a variety of tasks including set up, ticketing, car parking and facilitating workshops.

Hijaz Trust at Bosworth Battlefield

Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre is proud to present a new exhibiton, 'A Tale of Two Reinternments,' co-curated with volunteers from the Hijaz Trust.

This exhibition draws parallels between two extraordinary individuals – King Richard III and His Eminence Murshid Muhammad Abdul Wahab Siddiqi (RA) – both of whom met untimely deaths and were laid to rest in sacred places within the local vicinity.

Farzana Hannan, a Trustee of Hijaz Trust, expressed excitement about this exhibition, seeing it as a great opportunity to introduce Hijaz Expo and its mission to a wider audience. She believes that through this project, visitors will gain a deeper appreciation for local history, discovering the diversity of English heritage through the burial of the first UK Muslim saint.

The group volunteered over 1000 hours of time and involved over 30 dedicated participants. Over 140 guests came to the exhibition launch!



Don't miss the incredible opportunity to learn more about the legacies of these remarkable individuals. The exhibition is FREE and on display until January 2024. There is a parking charge and entrance fee to the main galleries.

Click [here](#) to plan your visit to Bosworth Battlefield, and click [here](#) to learn more about 'A Tale of Two Reinternments'.

The Friends of Donington le Heath Manor House present, Friends Welcome



'Friends Welcome' is a volunteer led group which launched in Spring this year and was the idea of the Friends of Donington le Heath Manor House - The 1620s House. They felt the venue with its beautiful surroundings was the perfect place for local people to drop in and meet with others, join in with activities such as arts & crafts, play board games and enjoy refreshments or a bowl of soup. And they were right! The group is averaging

25 people weekly; a mix of different ages and from all walks of life. The feedback has been wonderful.

During the open season the group run on the first Wednesday of the month, from 11am-3pm. From November sessions will run weekly on a Wednesday, from 11am-2pm.

"Have had a wonderful time seeing old friends and gaining new ones. Great for the mental health of us that are socially isolated"

"It's been a wonderful day again! Lovely company, lovely food. Great to be somewhere nice and warm"

For more information email: 1620shouse@leics.gov.uk or click [here](#).

Growing the Museum at Melton Carnegie Museum



As autumn arrives, Garden Volunteers at Melton Museum are celebrating 5 years since Growing the Museum began in 2018! We want to take this opportunity to recognise how far the project has come and thank all the volunteers involved.

Growing the Museum is a volunteer-led project which transformed the empty, unused land around the museum and turn it into community green spaces with the focus on growing environmentally friendly, sustainable produce for visitors and passers-by to take for FREE! The gardens also provide beautiful year-round floral displays for wildlife and the public to enjoy, as well as additional space for museum activity.



The volunteers' hard work has been recognised since 2019 with multiple local and Royal Horticultural Society awards. The Garden Volunteers also take part in environmental events; recently the team got involved in 'The Great Big Green Week', sharing the gardens with local people, supporting talks and a new museum display.

The small dedicated volunteer team have gone from strength to strength and we couldn't be prouder of their success! Click [here](#) to plan your visit to Melton Carnegie Museum.

Loughborough Library Local Studies Volunteer Group



Next time you are in Loughborough pop into the Local and Family History Centre at Loughborough Library and have a look at the latest display. A dedicated group of volunteers maintain the archives and they are on a mission to keep the town's history alive and in the public eye.



Currently showcasing the Carillon, which was opened as a war memorial just 100 years ago, the volunteers are always looking ahead and already have their Christmas display planned. 'Showtime' will focus on Loughborough Town Hall and the concerts and events that have taken place there since it was opened in 1855. Right up to the present day, the Town Hall has played host to the famous, not - so - famous and local talent.

This promises to be a colourful exploration into the history of this imposing building that is such a familiar sight in the town centre. The Local & Family History Centre is open Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri 10 – 12pm, 2–4pm.

To find out more, email: llsv@gmx.co.uk

Volunteer Shares Specialist Knowledge



The Archaeology Collections Volunteer Team were recently treated to a fascinating training day at the Collections Resources Centre on human osteology. This was a particularly special event as the training was delivered by fellow volunteer, Dale Munn.

Dale, a former teacher, started volunteering with Leicestershire's Archaeology Collections a few years ago when preparing for his PhD studies in Osteology. In order to gain hands-on experience of human remains collections, Dale offered to analyse skeletons which had not been properly assessed when excavated in the 1960s.



Dale lecturing with the help of his plastic skeleton, 'Stan'.

During the training, Dale explained how to age remains via tooth wear, sexing and how to spot evidence of trauma and diseases. Thanks to Dale sharing his specialist knowledge, both volunteers and staff feel more confident in identifying and handling the human remains collections and respectfully telling the stories of the people whose remains they care for.

To find out more about our archaeology collections click [here](#).

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS SPOTLIGHT!

Creative Learning Services (CLS) - Teen Book Queen

Creative Learning Services

Our teenage volunteer, Alice Galbraith has now been reviewing books for CLS for almost 2 years.

Alice first asked if she could do some volunteering work for us as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award and has continued with us even though the award was completed. Alice's reviews are shared on our Facebook and Twitter pages and we encourage Alice to read and review any books she has enjoyed reading that she would recommend to her peers or younger readers.



Her reviews are fantastic, and we particularly love her style of writing which really grabs the reader straight away and manages to give a synopsis of the story and an honest personal appraisal. To see Alice's reviews, follow us @midlandscls on Twitter or Facebook.

To learn more about Creative Learning Services click [here](#).

Summer Reading Challenge

READING
HACK

'Ready, Set, Read!' has been a hugely successful Summer Reading Challenge with over 5000 Leicestershire children aged 4-12 years joining the scheme, reading 6 library books and collecting their rewards. The challenge also helps children maintain their reading level during the holiday break and grow their love of reading.

Library Staff Member:
"Our Hacks have been fantastic again this year, we would like to thank them all for their efforts!"

The Summer Reading Challenge is supported by a small army of Young Volunteers, aged 12-24 years, otherwise known as HACKS. Volunteers supported children to register for the challenge, pick out books and collect their award. They also supported events in the library, including: Bollywood Dance Workshops, Puppet Shows, an author visit from Tom Palmer, Theatre Workshops with The Curve and football skills mornings with LCFC and Filbert Fox!

Parents: "A really fun afternoon...We loved the reading scheme this year and it's great to see the children learning at events when we don't usually get to see them learning in class."

We Are Harborough, Interactive Map

by Moosa, Undergraduate student at the University of Leicester



As a final year Creative Computing student, I had the privilege of developing a webpage for Culture Leicestershire's 'We are Harborough' exhibition. This formed my final year project and dissertation for my degree.

The website I created focused on sharing local residents favourite spots in the town through a 3D interactive walkthrough. I travelled to see as much of it as I could in person, this all informed my design process. I hadn't heard of Market Harborough until November 2022, but then, I hadn't heard of a lot of places in England before, as I'm from southern Africa. I moved to Leicester for University in 2020 and it took some time for me to adjust to the city - my first year was during the pandemic, so I didn't have much of a choice anyways. In my second year, I found my feet and travelled to nearby places.

In my search for a real-world partnership for my third-year academic project, my supervisor put me in contact with Esther Shaw, Community Participation Worker who told me about the Harborough exhibition that was due to start. I was particularly interested in using digital storytelling and web application, and after reading the project proposal, I wrote one of my own for a digital walkthrough exploring places that locals' treasure.

Harborough's charm is unmissable. I got to experience a slice of life in a place miles away from home, but too, realised the world is a lot smaller than I thought. Particularly in Leicestershire, where everyone is from everywhere, you'll always find someone who has family or friends where you're from, or nearby. I think when travelling, we often focus on visiting the big, shiny attractions. Now, of course there's nothing wrong with that! But it does mean that we might overlook people with lives like ours who have wonderful stories.

I benefitted from more than just a cool academic project, it was a warming experience and something that will be a landmark in my memories of my time at university.



Visioning a Cultural and Creative County Summer Project Day

On Tuesday 11th July at the University of Leicester we hosted the Visioning a Creative and Cultural County (VCCC) Summer Project Day in partnership with Nottingham University and Creative Leicestershire. Over seventy volunteers, artists, cultural participation staff, strategic leaders, and academics attended and shared their different expertise, ideas and thoughts. Our aim is to continue the development of a plan, approach or manifesto for the cultural services of Leicestershire County Council within our remit of libraries, museums, collection and learning.

Many of the volunteers that joined us on the day are keen to support the development of this cultural plan and have signed up to be part of a new Community Connectors Group.

If you'd like to get involved, please get in touch with Claire.Bradshaw@leics.gov.uk



A Fond Farewell to Laura

Laura Waters, who joined the Heritage Team on Pirate Day in 2022, has moved on from her role as Heritage Volunteering Officer. Over the last year Laura has continued to develop the volunteering offer and recruited many new volunteers across 1620s House and Garden, and Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre. She has helped coordinate work experience placements, advised on Better Impact and organised an excellent trip to Gainsborough Old Hall.

Laura has facilitated young people with additional needs to gain valuable experience in Heritage at events, and found opportunities for a local college to volunteer with the Garden Volunteering team. Laura has also rolled out training for new activities at the 1620s House and coordinating new equipment requirements to ensure volunteer safety.

We wish Laura all the best for the future. The Heritage Team will have more news to share about the role of Heritage Volunteering Officer soon.

Thank you to all our fantastic volunteers who gifted 13,000 voluntary hours between January – August 2023. If you would like to add to the next volunteering newsletter, please talk to your Volunteer Manager. If you have any questions, please feel free to email: Claire.Bradshaw@leics.gov.uk

www.cultureleicestershire.co.uk/volunteering

Your community

Your opportunity