

# Heritage focus



In this issue:

## Broadening the diversity of your volunteer team

### Success stories

Good practice from  
projects we have funded

PLUS

### Interview

Clive Anderson on  
volunteering and  
nature conservation

**“These beautiful  
places are  
for everyone”**

Volunteers spread the message about  
heritage projects and tell us about  
the benefits of taking part

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## focus on... volunteering

Welcome to the first issue of *Heritage focus*, the Heritage Lottery Fund's twice-yearly bulletin for everyone involved in the projects we're supporting.



In this issue we focus on ways of broadening the diversity of your volunteer team. We look at how different heritage projects have successfully involved a wider range of people as volunteers. And we hear from volunteers about what the experience has meant for them.

Volunteering brings many benefits. As well as contributing skills and enthusiasm, volunteers can help projects to better reflect the local community and reach wider audiences. People often tell us that volunteering has changed their lives, bringing a sense of fulfilment and new opportunities. That's why we want to ensure that everyone has the chance to get involved.

*Melissa Strauss*

**Melissa Strauss**  
Heritage Lottery Fund policy advisor,  
Participation and Learning

**Heritage Lottery Fund**  
7 Holbein Place  
London SW1W 8NR  
Phone: 020 7591 6000  
Textphone: 020 7591 6255  
Fax: 020 7591 6001  
Email: [enquire@hlf.org.uk](mailto:enquire@hlf.org.uk)  
Website: [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)

Front cover: A volunteer at the Black Cultural Archives, London © Kois Miah Photography

# Involving a wider range of volunteers in heritage projects

Volunteering helps organisations and volunteers to become more connected with their local community. People feel strongly about their local heritage, and if you make your project as open and welcoming as possible, they'll want to get involved.

Heritage projects provide scope to involve new volunteers, and it makes sense to recruit people who reflect the community where your project is based.

Volunteers can spread the word about your project. They may give talks in schools or assist disabled visitors. They can distribute information via leaflets or email. And they are a great source of knowledge on how people feel about heritage in their area.

## Reaching out to different groups

Well-established groups of heritage volunteers often represent only a small cross-section of the local population. There are several ways in which your project can reach out to a greater diversity of people.

Make contact with organisations that serve the groups you want to involve. For example, talk to local youth agencies and schools about involving young people. Or visit clubs and day centres that work with older or disabled people, young families or asylum seekers. Once you've established a good working relationship, some agencies will refer potential volunteers to your project.

It's helpful to consult with people about what would attract them to volunteering. Try to identify barriers that might make them see your project as 'not for me'. Taster sessions



can attract potential volunteers who might be interested but are still unsure.

It's a good idea to provide opportunities that reflect your volunteers' interests and circumstances. Some people may be good communicators, while others may be passionate about the local environment.

Be aware, too, of different motives for volunteering, such as wanting to learn new skills or meet new friends.

## It makes sense to recruit volunteers who reflect the community where your project is based.

Like paid staff, volunteers need a contact person, a supervisor and suitable working conditions. Volunteers with disabilities may need you to make adjustments to the workplace. It's also important to cover reasonable expenses, such as phone calls and travel.

## Training for success

Many people like the idea of learning specific skills, and offering training may help to attract new volunteers. As well as benefiting individual volunteers, training increases the range and level of skills in your project.

Make the most of any opportunities for informal, on-the-job training, such as induction sessions for new volunteers and mentoring by an experienced member of your organisation.

Some people may be looking for accredited training, especially young people and others looking for employment. You may want to consider offering them the opportunity to gain formal qualifications, such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), Scottish Vocational Qualifications or Open College Network credits.

You could also think about providing external training. Volunteers may attend a public course, or you can employ a trainer to run a short course 'in house'. Ask your local Volunteer Centre, further-education college or adult education centre about appropriate courses.



2

## Want to know more?

You will find more detailed information in our guidance *Thinking about volunteering*. This includes a list of UK organisations involved in the voluntary sector. The guidance is available to download from our website ([www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)). You can also request copies by emailing [enquire@hlf.org.uk](mailto:enquire@hlf.org.uk) or phoning our helpline: 020 7591 6042.

- 1 Two young volunteers at a new way marker © Jenny Barnes
- 2 A volunteer at the Black Cultural Archives, London © Kois Miah Photography

# Recruiting and working with volunteers: Good practice



3



4



5



6

## New volunteers in Manchester museums

**The idea behind the 'In Touch' programme at Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum (IWM) North was to engage volunteers from groups that are hardly represented at all in the usual profile of museum volunteers.**

Project officers based at the museums began by making contact with agencies serving long-term unemployed people, those with limited skills, young offenders, asylum seekers and other groups. Kate Clancy of Manchester Museum explains: "We contacted job centres and charities, via email, letter and word-of-mouth. We held meetings and networking days. Then we ran taster sessions, where people who were interested could come along. These were followed by one-to-one meetings with prospective volunteers, to find out their special interests and skills."

A 10-week training programme follows, involving an introduction to the museums' departments, object-handling sessions and trips to other museums. It's a steep learning curve – but fun and sociable too. Finally, participants are offered volunteering opportunities, supported by Learn Direct courses in English, IT and other subjects.

Over three years, 'In Touch' will introduce around 180 people to volunteering. For some, the experience has already proved a bridge to employment. The project benefits the museums too. Says Kate: "'In Touch' is a really good way of diversifying our workforce."

## Championing National Parks

**The Mosaic Partnership is a collaboration between the Campaign for National Parks, the Youth Hostel Association and four National Park Authorities – the Brecon Beacons, North**

## Yorkshire Moors, Yorkshire Dales and Peak District.

These magnificent natural landscapes are all within easy reach of multicultural urban centres, and yet it seemed that they were rarely visited by people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Mosaic addressed this situation by recruiting and training volunteer Community Champions. Via local groups such as SADACA (Sheffield and District Afro-Caribbean Association), project officers contacted people who were already active in their communities and were interested in spreading the word about National Parks.

The volunteers were asked about their special skills and experience. Training involved short residential courses based in a National Park, where volunteers met the staff and took part in activities such as orienteering.

In their home communities, Community Champions are successfully initiating activities based in National Parks, such as days out for families with young children. The volunteers are also encouraged to get involved in the parks' management boards, where they can share

the views of their communities and help to shape the future of National Parks.

## Teenagers transform Kent museums

**It's well known that teenagers tend to steer clear of museums. 'Boring', 'quiet' and 'irrelevant' were some of the terms that came up when staff from the Kent Medway Museums Partnership (KMMP) talked with local teenagers about museums.**

KMMP's 18-month project 'Inside-Out' engaged teenagers in activities at museums in Maidstone, Canterbury, Dover, Rochester and Tunbridge Wells.

The groups created their own museum installations, displays, interpretation and web pages.

Museum staff, the young volunteers, and staff at local schools and youth agencies all agree that 'Inside-Out' was a success. "The project has given teenagers a voice," says

Peter Davies of the Museum of Canterbury. "And we have new material for the collections and displays." The response from volunteers is equally positive. "I thought museums were serious," comments one Dover Museum volunteer, "but it has been fun and more than just a learning experience."

What are KMMP's top tips for recruiting teenage volunteers? Don't use adverts or flyers but make contact via schools and youth groups. Talk directly to young people. Take an informal approach, stressing that the museum needs their help. If they're interested, they'll spread the word. And if they enjoy the experience, they'll encourage others to get involved.

**"I thought museums were serious, but it has been fun and more than just a learning experience."**  
Teenage volunteer at Dover Museum, 'Inside-Out' project



7

- 3 Cyclists in the Peak District, Mosaic Partnership
- 4 Mosaic project participants
- 5 Teenage volunteers at a museum during the 'Inside-Out' project
- 6 A Manchester Museum volunteer
- 7 Volunteers at IWM North, Manchester

# Volunteers' stories



8

## “Volunteering has opened up new opportunities for me”

**Gary Jaye, volunteer at Manchester Museum**

When Gary first heard about 'In Touch' through employment organisation Working Links, he had been unemployed for a long time. After signing up for the 10-week training course, he is now a regular volunteer at Manchester Museum.

“There were 10 of us on the course – all from different backgrounds. There was a really good spirit in the group, and we learned a lot of different skills. After that, I started volunteering with the front-of-house staff in the museum. This involved welcoming visitors, talking about the objects, and helping with school visits. I love what I'm doing now – working behind the scenes, cataloguing the entomology collection and boxes of scientific papers. Volunteering has opened up new opportunities for me, like my NVQ Level 2 in Customer Service. The assessment for this was done in the museum.”



10

## “These beautiful places are for everyone”

**Henry Squire, Community Champion for the Mosaic Partnership**

Henry is a project co-ordinator working with disabled people. He heard about Mosaic at a project event in Herefordshire.

“Being a Community Champion has brought together a lot of my interests. Since 2004 I'd been a member of BEN (Black Environmental Network). I love to travel and see different parts of the country, and I always had a strong feeling about social responsibility. I found that black people often think of National Parks as 'not for us', so it's great to be able to spread the message that these beautiful places are for everyone.

“I worked with a group of young people on a project in the Brecon Beacons. One of my best moments was collecting the award we won for the project – we were runners-up in the CSV's Most Inclusive Activity 2005 awards. I enjoy being able to contribute my skills in financial management to the training for new Community Champions.”

## “We want to carry on reconnecting urban people to nature”

**Bhunesh Napal, Community Champion for the Mosaic Partnership**

Bhunesh lives in Newport, South Wales. She decided to become a Community Champion after reading about Mosaic in an email from her local community centre.

“My main job is being a mother, but I also do voluntary work, like being a school governor. I'd already visited the Brecon Beacons National Park with my family and decided to go on one of the Mosaic Partnership's 'taster weekends'.

“As a Community Champion, I've organised outdoor activities for groups and families – there's been a real demand from our BME community. The young people helped with a wonderful Diwali celebration in the Brecon Beacons. We stayed in the youth hostel, lit candles and sparklers, and invited the local community to join in – there was a really good response.”

Bhunesh is currently setting up a new organisation, Grass Routes Cymru. “We want to carry on the good work of Mosaic, reconnecting urban people to nature.”



9

## “The project has boosted my confidence”

**Beth Robinson, volunteer for 'Deaf Heritage'**

The 'Deaf Heritage' project set out to record the history and experiences of the deaf community in Northern Ireland in a medium that would be fully accessible to deaf people – a DVD using sign language. This was an innovative approach to a subject that had never been addressed by conventional cultural histories.

With the support of project staff, deaf volunteers including Beth Robinson gathered or contributed all the material for the DVD. Beth explains: “When I first heard of the Northern Ireland Deaf Association's heritage project, I was so thrilled to know that the unique and special culture that is deaf culture was going to be preserved in this manner.

“When Paula, a project worker, first approached me to be involved, I was a little hesitant and nervous, but the information given and the encouragement I received was great, and I found the whole process great fun. I also think it has boosted my confidence.”

## “There was a really good spirit in the group, and we learned a lot of different skills.”

**Gary Jaye, Manchester Museum**

- 8 Gary Jaye, Manchester Museum
- 9 Community Champion Bhunesh Napal (left) with a project participant
- 10 Henry Squire, Mosaic Partnership

# Interview

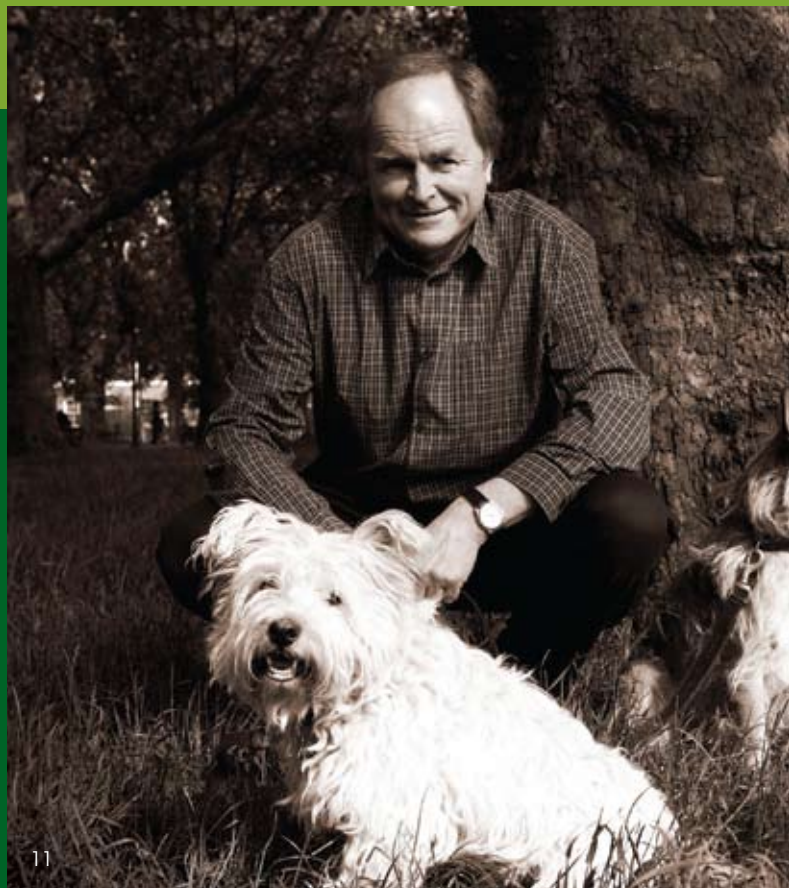
## “We should not forget the natural world on our doorstep”

**B**roadcaster and comedy writer Clive Anderson is President of the Woodland Trust. He explains what attracted him to volunteering and how we can all make a difference to the environment.

“Mine was an unusual route. The Woodland Trust heard me sounding off about the environment, and they suggested I become their President, largely so I could speak from time to time on their behalf. In other words, they got me to put my mouth where my mouth was! But I have planted plenty of trees as well.

“Volunteers make a real impact. Planting trees is fun but you do have to put your back into it. A lot of people giving a little of their time can make a big difference. And rather satisfyingly, unremarkable sticks no more than a foot or two high when they are planted turn into an attractive young woodland in just a few years.

“I approach nature conservation as a human being living on the only planet we have got. I have had the chance to visit some fragile environments as a broadcaster, and it has certainly made me more aware of the



challenges facing, say, the Amazon rainforest, or wildlife in East Africa. But we should not forget the natural world on our own doorstep. It is where we are in a position to make the biggest difference.”

## Young help for ancient trees

**A**ncient trees feature in history, art and local legends. They provide habitats for a host of animal, plant and insect species. There

are around 100,000 ancient trees in the UK, and the more we know about them, the better we can protect them.

The Woodland Trust is recruiting and training thousands of volunteers for the Ancient Tree Hunt, who are helping to record the UK's oldest trees. One way in which the Trust has involved young volunteers is by working with Venture Scout groups (the section of the Scout Association for

15-to-21-year-olds). While Venture Scouts had already recorded many ancient trees, activities based on lessons learned from the Ancient Tree Hunt have now been adopted as part of the Scouts' wider programme. According to the Ancient Tree Hunt's project manager, Nicky Williams, recruiting people is a question of “building a relationship with a partner organisation so that we can make contact with their volunteers”.



11 Clive Anderson © WTPL/Paul O'Connor

12 Children taking part in the Ancient Tree Hunt