

# Why I'm a Volunteer

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My first experience volunteering was on an archaeological dig before I started my BA in Archaeology and Classical Civilisation. This was to help me see if I liked the area I would be studying; fortunately, I did. While at home from university on my summer breaks I also volunteered at a local museum store for the same reason. Volunteering is a great way to discover if you will like what you will study or the job you wish to do, and also introduces you to new areas, which is how I came to be a volunteer at the Mills Archive.

After university I worked outside of the heritage sector, but volunteered at a museum to stay connected to an area that I loved. This is where I discovered my interest in archiving. I decided to do a Masters on the subject, and in preparation looked for a local archive I could volunteer at to expand my knowledge and skill set. I found the Mills Archive and was very interested in their collection, as it is vast and diverse, even though it focuses on one area, and I was excited to see that it was an Accredited Archive.

At the Archive I have been cataloguing the Richard Hills Slide Collection, including images of mills, mines and water works in the UK and Europe. This includes some areas of archiving I have little to no experience in: digitisation and using an archiving database (the Mills Archive uses AtoM). There is also a lot of research to find the mills, which shows that even if you start with little knowledge about a particular subject area, archival work will soon lead to you learning a lot about it. As well as helping me to learn new techniques and information, I get to give back to the Archive by helping keep the constantly expanding collection up to date and catalogued.



*Mine wheel at Cwm Pennant copper mine, Caernarfonshire, January 1973*