

National Waterways Museum

VOLUNTEERING IN THE ARCHIVE

The Archive at the National Waterways Museum is an amazing store of books publications, files and other materials that chart the progress of waterways heritage over two centuries. Volunteers in the archive assisting with sorting, indexing, data inputting and repackaging the articles are actually touching history.

Strangely it can be the 21st Century dimension that is the real challenge. Inputting data and indexing (for example rental registers and cottage books) requires concentration and a feel for detail. Some of the records have never been catalogued and there is an excitement about sorting through periodicals and photographic collections that haven't been seen for many years. Putting the data into a form that can be accessed by modern media can help others to share that pleasure.

As with all jobs there is an element of routine. Assisting archive staff to sort and arrange collections, repackaging, re-boxing and box moving items as well as the inevitable shelve tidying is just as vital.

There may be opportunities to help with enquiries by letter and email, including family history enquiries or being part of a team asked at short notice to work on special projects. When you feel more comfortable you could be asked to write features and news items for the Virtual Waterways website.

To find out more or to register interest call the Museum on 0151 355 5017 or email volunteers@boatmuseumsociety.org.uk

Dusty photographs, old pieces of paper! Nothing could be further from the truth. I work with real history, objects that may not have seen the light of day for 50 years. Last week I found a vital piece of information that completed the jigsaw for a family researching their family tree...Well I can't tell you how good it feels.

Liz. (Works in the archive two mornings a week.)