



Case Study: Richard Gough Volunteer Coordinator at Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

Richard Gough is the Volunteer Coordinator for Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT) who looks after the needs of regular volunteers, as well as managing event volunteers (drawn from local community and uniformed groups), and corporate volunteers from several local companies.

Prior to joining IGMT Richard worked within galleries which included six years as a Gallery Manager in North London, where he set up and managed an award winning volunteer scheme.

Alongside his full time role Richard also provides advice and advocacy on Volunteer Management, and is Vice-Chair and a founding member the Heritage Volunteering Group, a national body set up to promote best practice and support for Volunteer Management across the Heritage Sector.

He also chairs the Regional Volunteer Managers' Forum for those in the museums and heritage sector across the West Midlands.

What attracted you to your current role?

Fundamentally, people! I find it fascinating and amazing how much volunteers give to museums, and to be a part of the nurturing and needs-matching process that keeps everyone happy is a real privilege. Volunteers tend to be some of the most interesting and passionate people you'll come across in museums, and I feel very lucky to work so closely with them.



How many volunteers do you currently work with?

Our current numbers are just shy of 500 regular volunteers, with a further 220 event volunteers, and about 200 corporate volunteers per year too. Luckily, they don't all turn up on the same day! Last year, they contributed over 35000 hours to the museum, which is staggering!

What is the best part of your job?

The best part is seeing a volunteer grow into a role they didn't think they could do. Nurturing and choreographing each individual according to their wants and what the museum needs is tricky but when you get it right, and when you're able to motivate them dynamically, the effect it has is incredible!

The biggest challenge is time, I always try to physically be there for all the volunteers whenever they need support, but because of all the other duties of the job, it's not always possible. However I'm lucky to have a great team working with me to help cover the gaps!

In your experience what are the 3 key thing to a successful volunteer programme in this sector?

For a volunteer programme to be successful and sustainable, it needs:

- Resources – not just financial, but support, management and facilities for the volunteers.
- A genuine need for volunteers and worthwhile roles to suit - and then matching the needs of the museum with the motivations of the volunteers.
- A way of saying thank you, saying it often and doing so in a meaningful way.



Richard recently gave a talk at the Museum Association Conference in Birmingham about 'Employer Supported Volunteering' and its capacity to bridge the gap between what museums need to achieve, and what their resources allow them to. Richard believes that tapping into a business's Corporate Social Responsibility scheme can bring real and sustainable gains to the sector.