



VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 25 – SUMMER 2015

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WELCOME TO ISSUE 25 OF THE IWM VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

By Jim Hutchinson

Head of Volunteering & Engagement, IWM

During a period of major change management for IWM our volunteering programme has also been undergoing transition and I am editing this newsletter in my first month as IWM's first ever Head of Volunteering & Engagement. I am looking forward to the opportunities that my new post should bring to meet a still wider number of our current family of supporting IWM Volunteers. I will also be using my new appointment to further raise awareness of the significant contribution that volunteers already make, and could make, to the wider work of IWM in the future.

With 2015 over half gone we can already look back on a broad and varied range of volunteering experiences, events and services delivered across our IWM Group through staff and volunteering partnerships at all sites. During our last complete IWM year from April 2014 to March 2015 an average of 1052 volunteers collectively donated some 103,110 hours in support of IWM branches and projects. Some of these volunteering developments have been externally recognised and a number of them are featured within this issue.

Enjoy the read.

Cover: Volunteers from IWM North and other Manchester museums and heritage sites at an afternoon Tea Party to celebrate Volunteering in Greater Manchester on 16 June 2015. Full story on Page 7.

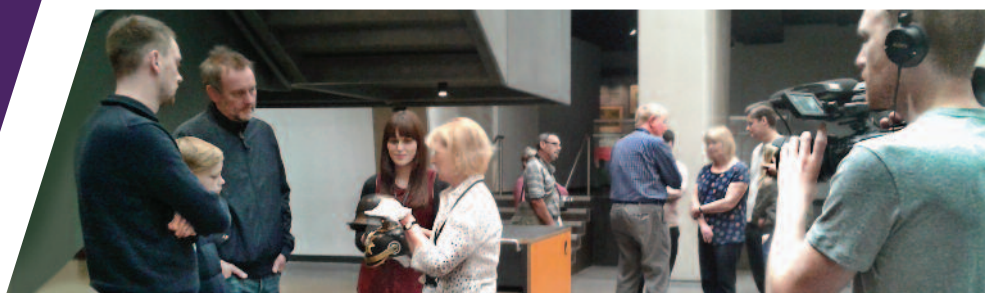
BBC FILMING FOR MUSEUM OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

By Jessica Pocock, Interaction Team Volunteer, IWM London

When Jim phones, as opposed to emailing, you suspect this is something out of the ordinary, as it proved to be when I found myself in the darkened First World War galleries in IWM London soon after 8 the next morning, approaching a BBC team armed with lights and a large camera. They were grouped around the shrunken glove that I'd suggested might be interesting. By now I was thinking "Why did I ever say I'd do this?"

They were there to capture a snapshot of aspects of IWM London today as part of IWM's recent submission for the Museum of the Year Awards and our own Interaction Volunteers Team work was something that they were very keen to profile. But the BBC team was delightful and it was fascinating to see how they operate and manage to keep everyone calm. By 10 o'clock the museum doors had opened and I pointed out that they should really come back one Sunday to film the volunteers around the trolley, showing First World War hats and helmets to the visitors. So it was wonderful that they did this, and filmed the interaction between us and the public, who so appreciate being able to hold original artefacts. It also meant that Grant could be there, and he, after all, set the whole thing up and trained us in the history of these objects.

It was a very rewarding experience, so if Jim phones you with some totally unexpected request, it might be worth saying "Yes"!



Jess (centre) introduces the BBC crew and IWM visitors to a German Pickelhaube helmet from the First World War

STOP PRESS... IWM DUXFORD NEWS

The inaugural SHARE Volunteer Awards ceremony took place on Thursday 9 June in Bury St Edmunds. Congratulations go to IWM Duxford volunteers Chester Mersman and Viv Alderton who won awards in the Front of House category. Accepting the award on their behalf was Niki Hughes, Volunteer Manager for IWM Duxford (featured right), and handing out the awards was Hedley Swain, South East Area Director for Arts Council England. Also nominated was IWMD Volunteer Anne Hughes for the Behind the Scenes Awards and Rob Clayden, Conservation Assistant, for the Volunteer Manager Award.



VOLUNTEERING ON THE ROGER FREEMAN COLLECTION

By **Emily Charles**, Project Assistant and Volunteer, American Air Museum, IWM Duxford

The American Air Museum team launched a new website (www.americanairmuseum.com) in October 2014. The site serves as an interactive archive of the American Air War in Europe and it invites users to share their memories and experiences of Americans in Britain during the Second World War.

At the heart of the website is an impressive collection of photographs from aviation historian Roger Freeman, now owned by IWM. Over the course of his life, Freeman collected approximately 15,000 prints and slides of American aircraft and airmen in Britain during the Second World War. Around 10,000 images from Freeman's collection are currently available to view online, and more will be released in stages as the website progresses. Freeman's collection was largely gathered from veterans who sent him personal photographs and stories of their experiences. Many of his images had not been made publicly available, and while he had published some of his collection in his

A farmer's wife walks her ducks past a B-17 at Basingbourn: one of the images from the Roger Freeman Collection



The American Air Museum website

books, most of his photographs had remained unseen in boxes, folders and files.

The majority of the digitisation and cataloguing work on the Roger Freeman collection for the AAM website has been undertaken by a team of dedicated volunteers who have worked for over two years on this fascinating collection. I joined the project as a volunteer in January 2013, to help make a brief record of the images before they were scanned externally. On my first day I was sorting through photographs of the 91st Bomb Group, which included the famous "Memphis Belle", Clark Gable demonstrating his gunnery skills and a farmer's wife walking her ducks across Basingbourn airfield! The team of volunteers also worked hard to transcribe handwritten notes and press captions on the back of the images. Such captions are especially important as they provide background information on the photograph or identify the people, aircraft and places depicted. In April last year I joined the AAM team professionally in order to catalogue the Freeman collection on the IWM collections database – Adlib. I have gained new insight into how valuable the work of the AAM volunteers is, as their efforts have facilitated my cataloguing and improved the website content. So thank you Eric, Roy and Phil!

With the launch of the website, the work of the AAM volunteers continues. They are working to improve the website content, which has expanded to include more fantastic collections – aerial photography from English Heritage, and deceased personnel files from American Casualty researcher Bill Beigel. They have been joined by an army of "virtual volunteers" who have also added their photographs and research to the website. If you have any information about or family memories of Americans in Britain during the Second World War, you can share them on the website and help build the archive.

Visit the American Air Museum website and see the Roger Freeman collection at www.americanairmuseum.com.

VOLUNTEERING WITH THE WAR MEMORIALS ARCHIVE AND THE BOND OF SACRIFICE COLLECTION PROJECT

By **Catherine Long**, Digital Support Volunteer, War Memorials Archive

I began volunteering with IWM London in January 2015 as a Digital Support Volunteer. Working across IWM's Centenary digital programmes I split my commitment between the War Memorials Archive and the Bond of Sacrifice Collection. I chose this role because I wanted to contribute to a project with a long-lasting impact and



Catherine helping with the digitisation of the Bond of Sacrifice Collection at IWM London

tangible results. I am currently completing a part-time Masters in British First World War Studies. Volunteering with the IWM reinforces my passion for military and cultural history.

The War Memorials Archive is working to compile a comprehensive record of all war memorials in the UK, in order to promote their appreciation, use and preservation. My role is to input information about the memorials into a searchable database displayed on the IWM website. The database currently records over 66,000 memorials. The work is incredibly rewarding and an amazing experience. I benefit from collaborative work and knowledge exchange with enthusiastic members of staff and fellow volunteers.

My other commitment is assisting with a Collections programme. The remit is to preserve and make accessible the series of portrait photographs, known as the Bond of Sacrifice, that came into IWM's care during the First World War. The portraits are accompanied by letters from their donors, which I am currently cataloguing. These will be accessible in IWM's cataloguing management system and published online for public access. The letters are fascinating and it is a real pleasure to work with such personal records.

My time volunteering with the IWM has provided me with valuable experience and an incredibly rewarding sense of achievement. Our team is contributing to collections with significant historical and cultural value. It is a real privilege to be part of the process, and exciting to participate in the progression of IWM's digital programmes.

WAR ARCHIVE MEMORIALS PROGRESS REPORT

By **Colin Sweett**, Public Engagement Manager, Lives

Since re-launching the War Memorials Archive in November 2014 with an updated database system and public search facility our volunteers have added over 1500 memorials to the database. Thanks to the dedicated work of our volunteers we now record over 66,000 memorials.

The next phase of development for the WMA is to release a names database recording names on war memorials. This database will be released publicly

later this year and we are calling for volunteers to help us transcribe the lists of names. The work of our volunteers is vital in ensuring that these individuals are remembered.

We have volunteering opportunities currently available for in-branch and fieldworker roles. If you would like to contribute to building a comprehensive record of war memorials and the names they commemorate please contact us at memorials@iwm.org.uk.

UP SHE ROSE AGAIN AT PORTSMOUTH!

By **Joyce Glasscock**, Centenary & Office Support Volunteer, IWM London

On Wednesday 6 June 2015 I met up with the IWM Volunteers who had travelled by coach from London (myself by train along the south coast via Brighton) to arrive at a very sunny and very breezy Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The first part of our visit was to see the further restoration of Henry VIII's former flagship *Mary Rose*. This was my third visit and it is wonderful to see how much has been achieved since the very first spraying of water onto the ship that had to be done. I do have a particular interest as my friend's son was one of the divers who helped to raise the ship.

So much has been cleaned and exhibited for us all to view. A lift is now installed and on each deck level there are glass display sections of what has been found on that level, from the stone hearth in the hull to a coil of rope on another and even shoes on higher



Quarterdeck treadplates from ships HMS Fearless and HMS Invincible with the Honours Board from Second World War destroyer HMS Cassandra in the storage area of the National Museum of the Royal Navy within Portsmouth Dockyard

decks. The hoarding that is in place with glass inserts to view the ship will be coming down when the exhibition closes in October and from May 2016 we will be able to walk by *Mary Rose* in her full glory. What an achievement for the dockyard personnel.

As we left *Mary Rose* behind and headed for the National Museum of the Royal Navy we passed HMS *Victory* looking pristine in the sunshine: all yellow and black and another "thumbs up" for the dockyard.

There was so much for us to see in the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) but one of the highlights was being taken to the top two floors to view artefacts that the general public may never see as there is not sufficient space to display all of them. We felt very privileged to have been given this chance: everything was catalogued and available for us to view from metal ship's name plates to uniforms, crockery and guns. On the ground floor was a new display depicting the Gallipoli campaign incorporating a screen displaying footage from this engagement. What I particularly appreciated was the attention shown by the NMRN's staff to Simon one of our visually impaired volunteers whom Richard and Jim were escorting during our visit. They gave him some conservation friendly white gloves and then placed some of the antique pistols and other equipment in his hands so he too could better feel the atmosphere of the place.

We all enjoyed our lunch and sitting and meeting other volunteers and catching up on the latest news. So well done Jim and your team for providing us again with a '1st Class' day out, and I was so grateful it wasn't to the Isle of Wight when I saw the state of the sea!

Simon O'Connor – our visually impaired Interaction Volunteer – getting 'hands on' with a model of the Mary Rose



MAYORAL RECOGNITION FOR CONSERVATION TEAM

By **Richard Hall**, Warship Conservation Volunteer, HMS Belfast

On a pleasant late spring evening on 12 May, a small group made its way from HMS Belfast to City Hall – the strangely inebricated looking structure that is home to the Mayor of London and under the menace of the ship's aft 6" guns. Representatives of Belfast's conservation team had been invited to meet the Mayor, Boris Johnson, at a reception celebrating volunteering across London. The reception was held on the top floor, boasting a gallery offering quite spectacular views of the London skyline as well as a unique opportunity to view our ship from above. The warm and sunny weather made this a very enjoyable experience, and the clear evening sky an excellent opportunity to enjoy the vista.

To the assembled throng, Boris spoke at some length in his inimitable style, interspersing his appreciation of volunteering efforts across the capital with his



Richard and Mike (fifth and fourth from right respectively) at the City Hall certificate presentation ceremony

exuberant sense of humour; it was very entertaining. Speech over and the Belfast team – Andy Curran (Conservation Manager), Jim Hutchinson (Volunteer Programme Manager) with Warship Conservation Volunteer Mike Pipe and myself (representing the Warship Conservation Team) were presented to Boris and received a certificate in appreciation of the work done by volunteers to help preserve the ship, which is such a prominent feature in the heart of London and a major tourist attraction.

It is sad that such events have to limit the number of invitees, but let us not lose sight of the fact that the recognition is for the whole Warship Conservation Team and is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved.

CRANE'S RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION

By **Andy Curran**, Conservation Manager, HMS Belfast

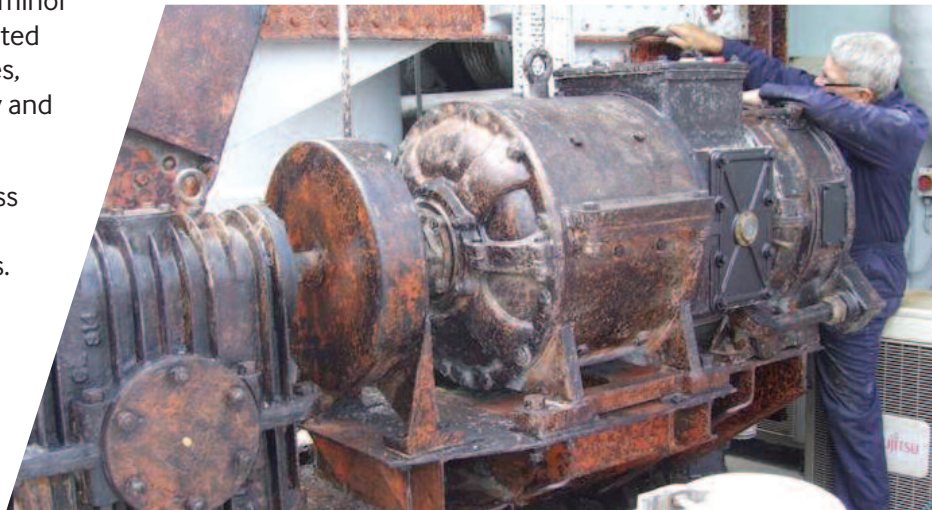
During the autumn of last year work began on the restoration of the boat crane. The crane itself was in a poor condition and many coats of paint hid a vast amount of corrosion. The Conservation team started work on the jib, removing the paint and surface corrosion. Minor fittings were removed for treatment in the workshop, and additional eyeplates which did not belong on the structure were ground off. A few minor repairs were carried out and the structure recoated with a full paint scheme. The gearboxes, clutches, brakes and motors were also restored externally and corrosion stabilised.

A replica ladder was manufactured to gain access to the operating platform which houses the operator controls and electrical contactor boxes. Two of these boxes were removed to a workshop. One of the units turned out to be full of water. Due to the poor weather and dismal forecasts, external work was halted for the winter.

The fittings removed were restored over the winter and in June external work resumed. The last contactor box was

brought down and the operating platform is having the paint removed so that the platform and support framing can be surveyed and treated.

The conservation team are also actively engaged in restoring a four inch gun mount and a close range blind fire director as well as digitising thousands of ship drawings.



Warship Conservation Volunteer Andrew Preece helps to remove corrosion from the ship's Boat Deck Crane

VOLUNTEERING JOURNEY LEADS TO FAMILY HISTORY REVELATIONS

By **Chris Mannion**, Volunteer, IWM North

There always seem to be volunteers at museums to help you enjoy the experience – sharing their passion, their knowledge, and their own history. I've always enjoyed visiting museums and even managed to do 23 during a ten day visit to Normandy and the D-Day beaches.

Somewhere at the back of my mind was: how do people volunteer in museums? What's it like? It must be interesting, all that history, meeting all those people, and just being a part of it. I made a pledge to myself to go and find out how to volunteer at a museum. It turned out to be a lot easier than I thought.

With more than a passing interest in the Second World War and other conflicts it had to be IWM North. I checked the website *if: Volunteering for Wellbeing*: ten weeks, one day a week, even a qualification at the end of it. I was invited to a taster session to see the museum, meet the people, ask questions, and have a quick one-to-one chat.

Before you know it you have a new set of friends of all ages and backgrounds. Soon you're learning how to meet and greet visitors, handle objects, search family history, and talk about the museum.

One thing we learned was how to signpost visitors who were interested in family history. I needed to know about my grandad. He fought in the Second World War but sadly died before I was born. So many stories were passed on to me, but it seemed like Chinese whispers.



Lance Sergeant
P. Mannion



73rd Anti Tank Regiment

Armed with new skills, knowledge and self confidence I decided to find out.

It turned out that my grandad, Lance Sergeant P. Mannion, had a whole history awaiting discovery. He did fight in the Second World War with the 73rd Anti Tank Regiment Royal Artillery. He landed at Gold Beach on D-Day, 6 June 1944 – his 38th birthday.

He was wounded; he fought in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. But so much more than that! It turned out he was one of a five man patrol who captured Heinrich Himmler.

IWM North now has a display about the 196 battery, 73rd Anti Tank Regiment's hand in capturing one of the most notorious men of Second World War which includes a picture of my grandfather.

I volunteer on *Your History* in the museum helping to give advice to others researching their family stories. Fathers, grandfathers, uncles, sisters, aunts and mothers – they all did something. They all have history waiting to be told.

So, you see what happens when you volunteer: you end up with knowledge of your own family history and you help to make sure the museum experience is an exciting and entertaining visit for everyone.

VOLUNTEERING CELEBRATION TEA PARTY

To mark Volunteers Week and Adult Learners Week *if: Volunteering for wellbeing* hosted an afternoon Tea Party to celebrate Volunteering in Greater Manchester in the Grand Hall of the Whitworth Art Gallery on Tuesday 16 June. The Charleston Charlies jazz band were on hand to transport us back in time to the 1920s and we all enjoyed light refreshments, dancing and tours of the gallery and park as we said a big thank you to our wonderful volunteers.



A VOLUNTEER WEDDING

On 5 July 2014 we were delighted when two IWM North volunteers tied the knot.

Zena joined the museum as a volunteer through the In Touch training programme in 2006 and Brian joined the same programme a year later. The programme aimed to attract people from the local community who wanted to make new friends, learn



new skills, increase their knowledge and get involved with the museum. Both continued to volunteer at the museum each week and love blossomed in 2009 after much banter and flirting.

Congratulations to Zena and Brian who will be celebrating their first year of married life this summer.

WAR ROOMS TOUR PUTS TOM IN THE HOT SEAT

By Tom Wilkie, Orientation Briefings Service Volunteer, Churchill War Rooms

On 2 June 2015 members of the Orientation Volunteers Team were shown around the Churchill War Rooms by its Director, Phil Reed. It was a privilege and a great opportunity to hear from, and question, the man himself about the development of the War Rooms and how they have changed or developed during and since the war years. It was interesting to note that the main rooms, such as the map room and cabinet room, had in fact hardly changed at all. We spent quite a bit of time in both those rooms being briefed on the highs and the lows of those days and particularly how those who worked there were affected when things were not going particularly well. It was sobering to think of the women who worked there whose jobs it was to remove the pins from the maps when U boats successfully attacked the convoys and heartbreaking to think of the number of lives lost.

One of the highlights for me was being allowed to sit in the very chair that Churchill used during cabinet meetings. The chair is wooden and bears marks indicating how tense those cabinet meetings must have been at the time – on one arm is a groove made by his fingernails as he dug into it, perhaps helping him to keep his temper – the other arm bears marks made by his ring as he banged the chair while making a point. It is so evocative and so much part of the history of the time. I have to say that I so enjoyed the opportunity to sit in that chair. Even the absence of a large cigar, which had it been available I would have smoked with gusto, did not diminish the experience.

It was a great day.

*Tom in Churchill's chair
in the War Cabinet
Room at CWR*



VOLUNTEER 'SITUATIONS VACANT' WITHIN IWM!

At all of our IWM branches capacity for new volunteers can vary as training programmes and operational/development projects start and finish. For the latest on current openings for volunteers please contact the Volunteer Programme Managers recruiting for the branch or project that you wish to join. These are:

IWM Duxford: Nicola Hughes, Volunteer Programme Manager on 01223 499 357.

IWM's London branches: Volunteer Programme Manager on 0207 940 6345.

IWM North: Danielle Garcia, Volunteer Programme Manager on 0161 836 4080.