



Viva Volunteers!

Oxford University Museums Volunteer Service
October - December 2016



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

**Quarterly Public
Engagement Stats**

287 Events

1408 Volunteering Hours

191 Volunteers

524 Instances of Volunteering

Spotlight on (Super) Science Saturdays



Clockwise from Top Left: Mark uses a polar bear paw to talk about adaptation; Meg discovers the wonderful world of worms; Robert investigates animal X-rays; Metta explains why fruit flies are the way to Tim Peake's heart; Robbie shows off his anatomical henna tattoo alongside plesiosaur Eve's flipper; Barry reveals the identity of a mystery fossil

"It's always fun and interesting to present science to families and young adults."

"I've realised I'm quite good at explaining things to very small children!"

"It's a great way to engage visitors and an excellent arena for speaking to lots of people."

On 26th November, the Museum of Natural History held its third 'Super Science Saturday' event. This time the theme was 'Science Behind the Headlines', and approximately a quarter of the 100+ scientists and science enthusiasts taking part were museum volunteers. Whilst some assisted other museum staff and volunteers, or staff from partner organisations, to run activities, others used their experience of volunteering to develop and lead activities about their own research.

The biannual event is an expanded version of volunteer-led 'Science Saturdays', which started five years ago, in Oct 2011, and continue to happen most weekends in University term time.

The aim of both 'Science Saturdays' and 'Super Science Saturdays' is to introduce family visitors to some of the ideas, concepts, processes, and equipment that people use when working in Life and Earth Sciences. The next 'Super Science Saturday' event ('The Brain') will be on 11th March.

Many thanks to...

...**The Museum of the History of Science (MHS)** for hosting this year's Volunteer Christmas Party. Tinsel and a star-themed quiz added sparkle to the evening: a fun and festive occasion for staff and volunteers alike.

...**Andy Lamb and Chris Jarvis** for their inspiring 'Introduction to...' the Bate and the Museum of Natural History, respectively. For some of the 17 volunteers who attended, it was their first time visiting, so really nice to have a personal welcome.

...**Marie-Louise Kerr** for showing the MHS guides around the new 'Back from the Dead' exhibition: a great extra insight in to the penicillin objects that many of them already highlight on their Thursday and Saturday afternoon tours.

...**Volker Heuchert, Julian Baker, and Shailendra Bhandare** from the Ashmolean Coin Room for their help training seven new 'Hands-on Coins' volunteers. We'll be recruiting again in the spring as part of the Watlington Hoard project. ...Also to **Simon Glenn** for his talk and object handling session about 'Alexander the Great' coinage. The 'Hands-on Coins' volunteers are now enjoying sharing an 'Alexander' coin with the public 11.30 am - 3.30 pm every Saturday in the Money Gallery.

...**Simon Glenn** again, but this time in his role as our Admin Assistant. Over the past 14 months, he has caught us up on volunteer right to work checks, uploaded dozens of volunteer profiles to the database, sent for hundreds of volunteer references, and just generally been a great colleague. He finished with us in December in order to focus on his Coin work, and we wish him all the best.



'Hands-on Coins' volunteers enjoying their session with Simon Glenn

In brief...

- This term is always our busiest recruitment-wise. We attended the University's Freshers Fair and Newcomers Club and ran 20 public engagement inductions. Lots of new recruits have already started, and we look forward to seeing the rest in 2017!
- We are continuing our programme of volunteer audio description training. 21 volunteer guides have now been trained. We also ran a session for Museum of Oxford volunteers.
- The Volunteer and Community Engagement Team gave a lunchtime seminar for Natural History and Pitt Rivers staff, with updates on numbers and projects. Meanwhile, Caroline found out what's going on in the rest of the sector at this year's MA conference in Glasgow.

Remember: if you have any volunteer news you would like us to share in our next quarterly newsletter, then get in touch! Our next issue will cover Jan - Mar 2017.