



Queenswood Oral History Volunteer Role Description

Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum are looking for Oral History Volunteers to support the Queenswood Heritage Gateway Project.

The context

Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum is the most popular outdoor tourist destination in Herefordshire, with 450,000 annual visitations. The site includes 123 acres of semi-natural ancient woodland and an arboretum of 1,200 rare and exotic trees. A site of special scientific interest (SSSI) for semi-natural ancient woodland, Queenswood is also a Local Natural Reserve with open access under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act. The entire woodland was saved from housing development in the 1930s following a successful public appeal led by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England. Management of the Country Park and Arboretum was transferred from Herefordshire Council to a partnership between Herefordshire Wildlife Trust (HWT) and New Leaf sustainable development by way of a community asset transfer in spring 2016.

Queenswood Heritage Gateway Project

The Queenswood Heritage Gateway project, running until October 2019, aims to explore and showcase the heritage of the site with new opportunities for visitors to learn more about the arboretum and history of Queenswood.

The project is receiving grants amounting to just under £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The grant of £58,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, made possible by National Lottery Players, will fund practical improvements and new interpretation on the site and a programme of events and activities as well as a part-time project officer to manage the project.

The Role

As a Queenswood Oral History Volunteer, you will learn how to conduct oral history interviews with people who have a connection with Queenswood. These might be people who live nearby, people who have special memories of the park or people who've worked here; staff, conservationists, contractors and many more. You will be involved in recording their stories and creating a new oral history archive which will capture the unwritten history of the country park for generations to come

You will receive training and on-going support from Julia Letts, an accredited trainer for the Oral History Society, and you will be part of a small, committed volunteer team who will help create the audio trail.

Who might this suit?

This is a really fantastic opportunity for:

- Anyone who is either interested in extending their historical knowledge or gaining new history skills. If you haven't done any oral history recording before, this will be excellent work experience for future heritage work or history courses.
- Anyone who wants to gain experience in communication skills, media/radio skills and any jobs related to working with people. Oral history is all about building up rapport with people. We will also be working with professional audio equipment used by TV/radio producers.
- Anyone who fancies doing something completely different likes listening to stories and wants to have a go at recording some.

What we are offering the volunteers

A chance to:

- Learn new skills including how to make an oral history interviews, how to use digital recorders and how to summarise and edit your interviews
- Work with a small friendly team of oral history volunteers to create a unique archive of recording
- Receive training and support from Julia Letts, an accredited trainer for the Oral History Society
- Discover a huge amount of new information – the type of things that would never be put in history books - about Queenswood, its history, woodland management, community life etc.
- Opportunities to take skills to a further level: e.g. training in audio editing, preparing oral history extracts for an exhibition and book
- Out of pocket expenses – for things like travel (T&Cs apply)
- A certificate from the Oral History Society on completion of the Introductory Course and access to OHS resources

What we are looking for in volunteers

- A willingness to learn new skills and attend training and mentoring sessions
- A curiosity in the past and an interest in other people's stories. Empathy is more important than interviewing experience.
- Confidence to work on their own – the volunteers will be expected to arrange their interviews themselves. This will involve making phone calls and sending paperwork (templates will be provided). They will need to collect equipment, make their own way to the interview location and record the interviews themselves. Afterwards, they will be expected to listen back to the interview and provide a summary of it.
- A commitment. We will start with comprehensive training and practice sessions and a chance to get to grips with our methodology. We will then expect the volunteers to have a go at recording their own interviews. Each interview may amount to 10 hours work. We would not expect volunteers to do many each, but certainly more than one.

- A reasonable knowledge of computer eg. word -processing, emailing, listening back to audio files on the computer
- An ability to work with others – we will be a small team who will need to communicate with each other and share our material with the history team.

What is the time scale and level of commitment?

This is very flexible, but we would hope to start training our group of volunteers in September 2018 and then meet regularly over the next 6 months.

In short:

- Attend at least 2 formal training sessions (a day plus a half day each) – the first one to take place on **Monday 10th September 2018 (10am – 4.30pm)**
- Attend less formal mentoring sessions as and when you need them (these can be by phone)
- Complete at least two interviews but hopefully more than this.

Expenses

Volunteers may claim legitimate expenses for costs incurred with authorisation from the Volunteer Co-ordinator. These costs are likely to include volunteer support costs (bus or train tickets) and vehicle mileage to attend meetings or conduct interviews.

To apply for this role please fill in the **Volunteer Application Form** and return to r.farrington@herefordshirewt.co.uk by Sunday 2nd September 2018. Please note that this is a competitive process and there are limited places available, we will let you know if you have been successful by Monday 3rd September 2018. Please ensure that you have understood the level of commitment required. Contact Rose Farrington, Queenswood Heritage Gateway Project Officer on 07341 736182 for an informal conversation about this role.



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