

## **THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERS: A CALL FOR MORE VOLUNTEERS FOR LOCAL MUSEUM**

*Latest news from The Athelstan Museum, Malmesbury*

The Athelstan Museum in Malmesbury is appealing for more volunteers to come forward during Volunteer Week (Monday June 2 to Sunday June 8).

The museum is the central hub for local history in the town with exhibitions about Athelstan, Malmesbury's history and it permanently houses an original watercolour of Malmesbury Abbey painted by the celebrated artist J. M. W. Turner.

It's run entirely through volunteer hours and support. Without the volunteers, exhibitions would not exist, and local knowledge would not be preserved. The team also needs volunteers to join the Museum Management Team to help behind the scenes.

Publicity manager Sian Kuropatwa said : "We need volunteers to act as museum hosts, interact with visitors and run the shop, as well as people to join the management team - which oversees the running of the museum. These volunteers ensure that our town's history remains a living legacy relevant to the people of the town and Wiltshire today.

"Being a volunteer is not only giving back to the community, it's preserving history, sharing stories, making friends and combating loneliness."

The museum has been operating for many years and as part of Volunteer Week 2025, they're honouring the volunteers who keep the museum open to the public and preserve Malmesbury's history. The theme for this year's week is 'volunteers make waves' and in Malmesbury they do!

Harri Rawlings, aged 21, joined as a volunteer for The Athelstan Museum in October 2024 after graduating from university. He is one of the museum's youngest volunteers.

"I live near Malmesbury and have known about the museum since childhood. I wanted to get involved before I returned to university and found out the museum was entirely volunteer run and contacted them. I wanted to give my time to something important and give back to somewhere I care about.

"When I first joined, I said I liked exhibitions and research and the process of a museum acquiring artifacts. Since then, I have been invited to meetings and done research for the museum as part of my volunteering. They have really looked after me and my own interests.

"One of the nice things about volunteering is getting to meet people from all over the world and to talk about my town. Children are the best, the history comes alive when you talk to them about it. One of my favourite pieces of Malmesbury history is the story of Hannah Twynnoy, the first person on record to be killed by a 'tyger', we have an activity throughout the museum to engage visitors. It's incredibly fun."

Kim Davies, aged 65, has been volunteering at the Athelstan Museum for five years. "I moved to Malmesbury in August 2019 after retiring from being a teacher. I didn't know about the town until I moved. I went into Malmesbury library, and they had a volunteer folder, and I found the museum as part of a volunteer option. I emailed and haven't looked back since.

“My first time volunteering, a lady visited the exhibition and listened to the voices narrating the history. She confided it was her mum on the recording and that she goes back to listen to her mum’s voice. I will never forget that first day.

“I live on my own and having conversations and meeting new people is a big reason I volunteer. It also feels like giving back to a town and feeling part of a community. I have met a lot of friends whilst doing this.

“I don’t know how many people realise how much you get back yourself from volunteering. They are a friendly group of people around the museum and it’s interesting work. Not to be put off if you aren’t aware of the history, you can talk to other people and can pick things up over time.”

The Athelstan Museum is entirely volunteer run and is open six days a week for the public. If you would like to learn more about the museum or enquire about volunteering or joining its proactive Museum Management Team, visit <https://www.athelstanmuseum.org.uk/>.

**ENDS**

#### **EDITOR’S NOTES**

**Attached is an image of volunteer Harri Rawlings, at The Athelstan Museum, one of the museum’s youngest volunteers. Picture taken by Richard Harris.**

***For more information please contact media consultant Fiona Scott on 07789 270030 or email [fiona@fionascott.co.uk](mailto:fiona@fionascott.co.uk).***

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