



WILTSHIRE MUSEUM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Research Officer: Archaeology

Responsible to: Curator

Job Purpose: We are looking for someone to work on our recently awarded Arts Council England Designation Development Fund project. The role is to work with the Curator of the Wiltshire Museum to review the research undertaken on the archaeology collections over the past decade; updating the collections database with new findings, present the results online and in the galleries and contribute to the development of new internal processes, to encourage and promote the research potential of the Wiltshire Museum collection..

Salary: £14,302 per annum (equivalent to an annual salary of £23,500)

Hours of work: Part-time (21 hours per week, usually spread across 3 days.
Some additional days are also available by arrangement

Term: This is a temporary post until 31st March 2022.

About Us

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (WANHS) was founded in 1853, after it acquired the books and papers of the topographical author, John Britton. WANHS, which has over 1,000 members, runs the Wiltshire Museum, home to the best Bronze Age archaeology collections in Britain. The whole collection is Designated as being of national significance, and includes many objects excavated in the landscapes surrounding the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site, as well as the archives that record their discovery. As a whole, the collections record the archaeology, history and environment of the County, and include an important Archive and Library. The Museum has a high profile, and regularly features in newspapers, radio and television programmes.

In March 2012 Wiltshire Museum was awarded £370,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to support plans to create new prehistoric galleries, focusing on the Bronze Age archaeological collections. The new galleries, which opened in October 2013, tell the story of the people who built and used the world-renowned monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury. For the first time in generations the unique gold and amber finds from Wiltshire that date back to the Bronze Age, more than 4,000 years ago, are now on permanent display. The galleries link with the new English Heritage Stonehenge Visitor Centre and new Wessex galleries at Salisbury Museum. This partnership encourages visitors to Stonehenge to visit Devizes to see the nationally important prehistoric collections at the Museum. It is also a busy time as Prehistory is a new topic in the History Curriculum and is popular with local schools.

In 2015 the Museum also opened a new Anglo-Saxon Gallery, supported by a grant from Arts Council England Designation Development Fund.

The Museum welcomes approximately 20,000 people each year, including 7,000 paying visitors, and is open seven days a week through most of the year. It is used extensively for events, lectures and talks, attended by a wide range of people from the immediate area and beyond. The Museum is an independent charity, and has grant funding from Wiltshire Council and Devizes Town Council. The Museum depends upon the income that it earns from admission fees, shop sales and events, as well as investment income and support from its members.

The Museum has 12 members of staff, most of whom work part-time, and over 170 volunteers, who together give over 5,000 hours of their time to support the work of the Museum. In 2015, the volunteers who work in the Archive & Library were awarded the South West prize by the Marsh Trust for their outstanding contribution.

All Wiltshire Museum collections, including the majority of the Archive and Library holdings, are available to search online www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/collections, making information about new and important acquisitions accessible to researchers in the widest possible terms.

Wiltshire Museum is part of the Wessex Museums Partnership, a consortium of four museums with world class archaeology collections. Working with Dorset County Museum, Poole Museum and Salisbury Museum, the partners tell the story of Wessex from Prehistoric times to the present day. It is a natural partnership covering the geographical spread of Dorset and Wiltshire. The Wessex Museums Partnership is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation 2018-22.

About the Archaeology Collections at Wiltshire and Salisbury Museums

This project will focus on the archaeology collections of the Wiltshire and Salisbury museums. All the collections of the Wiltshire Museum are Designated and at Salisbury Museum, the archaeology collection is Designated. While our museums have clear and agreed Collections Development Policies, there are considerable geographic overlaps in those parts of our archaeology collections acquired before 1970. This is particularly the case for the Stonehenge landscape in the World Heritage Site, where researchers often visit both

museums while conducting their research. Both museums have nationally important archaeology collections dating from the early prehistoric period through to medieval times.

Since 2010, more than 200 post-graduate researchers from universities across the country have consulted the collections at the Wiltshire and Salisbury museums. This has helped to build our reputation as a centre of academic research, thus making the museums a focal point for some of the latest work undertaken and ultimately building on our knowledge of the past.

About the Project

This project is funded by the Designation Development Fund, through Arts Council England, and its aim is to review the research undertaken on the archaeology collections of the Wiltshire and Salisbury museums over the past ten years. The results of this research will then be used to update the museums' Collections Management Systems (MODES). This will ultimately culminate in an online collections database presenting the latest research results for both collections. The Research Officer will be based at Wiltshire Museum in Devizes and will access the MODES database in Salisbury using Remote Web Access. The Research Officer will be line managed by the Wiltshire Museum Curator.

The project aims are outlined in detail below:

Updating Object Records

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken on the Wiltshire and Salisbury museums' collections over the last 10 years, ranging from post-graduate to independent researchers. However, a limited amount of the results of this research has been fed back to the museum collection management system (MODES). One of the main aims of the project is to identify the results of this research and update the museum records.

One such research project is the *Ritual in Early Bronze Age Grave Goods: An examination of ritual and dress equipment from Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age graves in England*. A Woodward and J Hunter, 2015. The Research Officer will start by updating the existing MODES records for these objects. The Research Officer will also work with the Curator to identify other research undertaken on the collections and update the associated MODES records.

The newly enhanced records will include more detailed descriptions of individual objects, as well as information about destructive analysis, loans, new photography, bibliographic references, and new knowledge derived from the research.

Create an Enhanced Online Collections Database

The enhanced MODES records will then be uploaded to the Wiltshire and Salisbury museum's websites, making them accessible to researchers in the widest possible terms. There are also plans to create a central database for the Wessex Museums Partnership, bringing together all those collections online. Both Wiltshire Museum and Salisbury Museum are partners in the Wessex Museums Partnership, National Portfolio Organisation led by Poole Museums Service and including Dorset County Museum. This is particularly important where our collecting areas overlap in areas of great research interest, such as the

Stonehenge landscape. Enhanced collections records will be prioritized in online searches and displayed as ‘Collections Highlights’ on the museums websites.

New Interpretation and Updating Displays

As the project proceeds, and new information is added to the collection records, the Wiltshire Museum will review the potential impact this may have on the current interpretation in the museum, with the aim of updating gallery displays. An example of this is the recent analysis of the source of the gold studs used to decorate the handle of the dagger from the Bush Barrow Chieftain. The new knowledge from this analysis changes our current thinking on the manufacture and provenance of the dagger, and will need to be reflected in its interpretation and display. Wiltshire Museum will also explore the potential to incorporate simple digital displays to highlight ongoing research into the collections – including interviews with researchers, explaining their work.

Identifying Future Research Potential

By collating and assessing the research already undertaken over the past decade, it will also be possible to identify the under-researched areas of the collections, with a view to promoting them as possible areas of future enquiry. Working with our academic partners, we will host a series of seminars to identify joint research priorities for the Wiltshire and Salisbury museum collections. These seminars will be organised by the Research Officer and will include the opportunity for researchers to visit stores and review archaeological archives. The identified research priorities will be launched at the Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference in the Spring of 2022. This work will feed into the development of a research framework for the museum.

Help to improve the Reporting and Enhancement of Future Research Outputs

By supporting the Curator to enhance the current Wiltshire Museum Research Charter and develop internal processes that will enable future research to be fed back to enhance collection records. This will include academic research and the results of development-led investigations, helping to identify significant collections that can be highlighted for their research potential (higher education and other researchers). Ways to improve the public value of research will also be explored.

Specific Role and Responsibilities

- Updating the Collections Management System (MODES) with the latest research undertaken on the collections at the Wiltshire and Salisbury museums.
- Creating enhanced MODES records to put online using a centralised database incorporating the museums which make up the Wessex Museums Partnership.
- Identifying the future research potential for the collections of the Wiltshire and Salisbury museums, by liaising with researchers and running seminars.
- Identifying where museum interpretation and displays need updating and putting a plan in place to achieve this.
- Improving collections management processes, to enable future research to be fed back efficiently and effectively to enhance collection records.

Qualifications and Experience

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	Degree in archaeology	Post-graduate qualification in archaeology
Knowledge and Skills	<p>Understanding of British archaeology, in particular Prehistory.</p> <p>Experience in working with archaeology collections and / or finds.</p> <p>Experience in analysing and processing archaeological data, information and knowledge.</p> <p>Confident computer user, including using cataloguing systems.</p> <p>Good communication skills for working with academic partners, including organising workshops.</p> <p>Good written and verbal communication skills.</p>	<p>Working knowledge of Wiltshire and its archaeology.</p> <p>Experience using museum or other heritage data management systems, in particular MODES.</p> <p><i>*MODES training will be provided</i></p>
Personal attributes	<p>Well-organised. Able to prioritise work load and work on own initiative.</p> <p>Self-motivated with an ability to work unsupervised.</p> <p>Able to work effectively as part of a team working with museum staff and volunteers.</p>	

Job Details

Length of contract: this post is funded until the end of March 2022 and it is therefore offered on a short-term contract post basis. The successful candidate will be able to start work in April 2020.

Working hours: 21 hours per week (usually spread over 3 days). Normal working hours are between 9am – 5pm and will be agreed with your line manager. A one-hour lunch hour is unpaid. There is the opportunity to work from home for part of the week and a laptop will be provided. There is the potential to work additional days on the project by arrangement.

Annual leave: the annual leave entitlement for full-time members of staff is 20 days. Annual leave will be given pro rata (12 days) Members of staff are eligible to join our Pension Scheme.

Applications

Please complete an application form which can be downloaded from the Wiltshire Museum website. This should be emailed to lisa.brown@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk, and must arrive before the deadline. A CV should also be included. A signed paper copy of the application form must also be submitted, but this can arrive after the application deadline or brought to the interview.

Closing date: 20th January 2020 (5pm).

Interview date: we intend to interview shortlisted candidates on 31st January 2020. Please let us know if this is convenient for you.

Target start date: 1st April 2020 (or soon after)

Probation: the post is subject to a three-month probationary period.