Unearthing Swansea's past, while gaining skills for the future

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As one of five people sharing their experience in HLF's new Heritage Matters in Wales magazine, Natasha explains how the work placement is helping her gain the practical skills she needs to kick start her career.

24-year-old Natasha, who graduated from Lampeter University with a degree in environmental archaeology in 2009 is half way through a placement with the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust. She applied for the placement after struggling to find a full-time job within the sector and was chosen from over thirty applicants.

Natasha said: "Archaeology is a hard field to get into and often requires previous experience, so this opportunity is truly invaluable. I know that I'll be much better equipped to approach the job market once I've finished the placement."

HLF funded the training placement through its Skills for the Future programme, which has invested £1.3million in more than 800 other paid placements across Wales.

Natasha's placement is run by the Council for British Archaeology Community Archaeology Bursaries Project.

Natasha has gained skills in fieldwork, project management and research and recording, as well as training volunteers in how to run outreach sessions within the local community. She is now working towards an NVQ Level 3 qualification in archaeology practice.

Natasha added: "The work placement is very hands-on, I've already learned so much in such a short space of time. One of my highlights so far has been the 'Archaeology for All' day at Swansea Museum. It was great to see children having fun getting stuck in and muddy as they took part in the wattle-and-daub demo, learning about how people used to build their homes.

"Prior to the placement I had little experience of organising community events and projects, so this is an area where I feel I've gained new skills and really grown in confidence. I've loved sharing my passion for archaeology with people and helping to get communities interested in the history that's right on their doorstep.

"I needed practical experience to build on my qualifications and this placement funded by HLF has given me the opportunity to be able to do this. I'm absolutely fascinated in archaeology, discovering things about a place that people might not have known before, so am hopeful that with new skills, I'll find a full-time job within the field."

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, said: "In such a tough job market training placements like these are essential in helping people to gain the practical skills they need to get jobs within the heritage sector. It's vital that we invest in people like Natasha to help equip people with the necessary skills to take Wales' diverse heritage into the future."

Further information

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