Changing lives: dream career for heritage buff



Daniel Longman found his dream job

A love of heritage has been transformed into a dream job for Daniel Longman thanks to a traineeship supported by HLF.

“Ever since I can remember I have always had a strong interest in heritage but I never really considered it could offer me a long-term career.” So says Daniel, whose wide-ranging interests have included writing local history books, penning articles for a genealogical magazine, running a small tour guide company and being appointed a magistrate.

Finally though, he was appointed Heritage at Risk Officer for Sefton Council, a career move he landed thanks to his involvement in an HLF-supported Townscape Heritage project with nearby Knowsley Council.

Life changed dramatically for Daniel just two years ago. “At the start of 2015 things were not going well,” he says. “I was licking my wounds after falling short of the mark in some legal exams, stuck in a dead-end phone job dealing with pensions and, to top it all off, aged 26, I was back home living with the parents.”

He realised retraining was the answer but postgraduate course fees were out of his reach. “My dreams of working in heritage were set to remain just that.”

An exciting chance

Then a friend forwarded an email from Knowsley Council which had been awarded a £1.85million Townscape Heritage Initiative grant from HLF to restore, repair and re-use historic buildings in the Lancashire town of Prescot.

[quote]“I wonder if people buying their weekly National Lottery ticket ever stop to wonder about all the good that this can do for so many people."[/quote]

The council was looking for an intern and Daniel jumped at the chance. “The year-long role came not only with a salary, but a fully funded place at the University of Central Lancashire.” He would be studying building conservation and adaptation. “Fortunately, it was not all books and PowerPoints and I have had chances to undertake various site visits to enhance my knowledge,” says Daniel.

He is also full of praise for the way in which the Townscape Heritage project he worked on boosted the fortunes of Prescot and the community. “I have seen how Prescot slowly but surely is casting aside its tired and neglected image and regaining its sense of place and purpose once again,” he says. Recently, plans were approved to build a Shakespeare North playhouse and education centre in the town centre, an echo of Elizabethan times when Prescot was one of only a handful of English towns outside of London to have a purpose-built indoor playhouse.

High hopes

And Daniel too, has high hopes for the future. He completed his Masters in Building Conservation and Adaptation, and was offered a post at Sefton where his responsibilities now include addressing problem sites in the borough through enforcement, maximising opportunities for investment and working with the local community to raise the profile of the area.

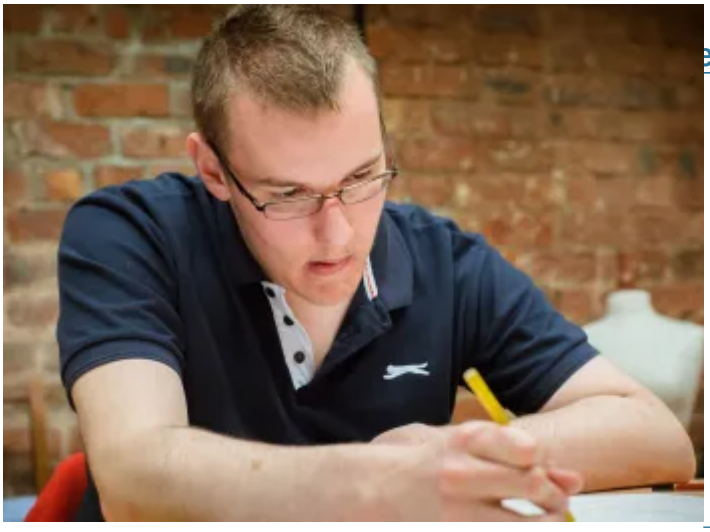
“I wonder if people buying their weekly National Lottery ticket ever stop to wonder about all the good that this can do for so many people,” says Daniel. “Townscape Heritage Initiatives are a case in point. They are not only transforming buildings, they are transforming lives. “

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