Changing lives: Mary Rose volunteering helps Neil



In 1995, 28-year-old Neil Clements was near to completing a demanding course to be a Royal Navy Parachute Instructor. Then in a split second his life changed forever.

Embarking on a routine jump, Neil's newly purchased parachute failed to open and he crashed 400 feet to the ground, landing in the middle of a football pitch. He miraculously survived the impact of his fall but received life-changing injuries: a broken neck, pelvis, leg and back and severe damage to the back of his skull. Doctors anticipated him being in a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

Twenty-three years on and after much hard work and intensive physiotherapy, Neil is an invaluable volunteer at the National Lottery-supported Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth. He can now walk short distances and has embraced opportunities through its outreach and volunteering programme.

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Neil’s role at the Museum includes meeting visitors and showing them a range of objects that were perfectly preserved on the 500-year-old sunken *Mary Rose*. He credits his time there as helping him get back his life, albeit a very different one to his days as a Royal Navy Petty Officer: “My favourite role is working on the handling table where you can actually touch a piece of the *Mary Rose*. Working at the Mmuseum has helped me improve my social and communication skills, I can speak a lot more clearly to the public who visit.”






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Years of painstaking work on the Mary Rose's hull have now concluded The Mary Rose Trust

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