Helen Tyler
BA(Hons) History, 2012 and MA by Research in History, 2015
Heritage Project Officer at England Netball and Collections Assistant at the British Schools Museum

Getting ahead
Working in heritage is a sought-after career route which means that it is often highly competitive and it can be difficult to get into. Helen Tyler has managed to get two heritage-related roles, both gained through her volunteering experience. ‘I applied for the role at England Netball after being recommended by someone I completed voluntary work with during my university degree and I was offered the role at the British Schools Museum after volunteering there during my undergraduate degree and my Master’s degree.’

In addition to this Helen also volunteered at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies and worked part-time in the University’s Heritage Hub during her Masters. She stresses how important having work experience is, as a way to stand out from the crowd. ‘I would advise getting some work experience; if you’re worried the time you take out will affect your degree then apply for a position over the summer. The knowledge I gained from the History department, while volunteering for them and then in the role of Assistant to the Heritage Hub, is essential to the work I am now doing at England Netball and the British Schools Museum.’

The day jobs
Helen splits her time between England Netball and the British Schools Museum, working for both in a part-time capacity using a range of skills, covering research, heritage, communication and organisation. ‘As Heritage Project Officer at England Netball I am running their 90th Anniversary Heritage project. This involves sorting and cataloguing England Netball’s archive and getting it ready to be moved to a local archive with suitable storage. The project also involves an oral history project on people’s netball history, maintaining the project website and updating social media. I’m also working on getting a portable exhibition ready and hope to increase community involvement.

‘As Collections Assistant at the British Schools Museum I support the other collections staff with the day-to-day aspects of museum work. I have frequently used MODES (a museums cataloguing programme), helped with cleaning and conservation of items in the collection and dealt with enquiries. I also carry out research for other staff members and in the absence of the assistant curator help manage the volunteers.’

Future plans
Helen’s two jobs certain keep her busy, and she hopes to stay working within heritage as she has always been passionate about history. ‘I would also love to do a PhD in History, funding permitting. Even though the heritage field is challenging, I would definitely recommend it.’

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