



Avalon Archaeology
The Past Reconstructed

Living History Volunteer

A little about us...

Hand-built by a dedicated group of volunteers using traditional techniques, Avalon Archaeology is a lovingly crafted reproduction of Somerset's heritage in the heart of the Avalon Marshes.

Here, visitors can explore an Iron-Age roundhouse under construction, a richly decorated Roman dining room, an Anglo-Saxon longhall, and a waterline replica of a Viking ship. Filled with handcrafted furniture and art, visitors are immersed in thousands of years of heritage and can discover first-hand the archaeological evidence behind the recreations.



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We are part of the South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), an independent charity, which works across Somerset and Devon, providing a broad range of heritage services and experiences. Established in November 2014, we inherited heritage services and projects from Somerset and Devon County Councils. Our annual turnover exceeds £3.5 million and we employ 100 people, working across seven sites.

What you'll be doing...

- Helping to bring the archaeological reconstructions to life by wearing historically accurate costume and using replica artefacts to recreate and character and activities from the past.
- Sharing inspirational stories, curious facts and practical information about the buildings at Avalon Archaeology and the time periods they represent as your character.
- Creating warm welcomes for every visitor, putting their needs first. This means knowing when to provide help or information, and when to leave them space to wander in peace.
- Being the extra pair of hands on site during events and activities and supporting craft activities for children and adults, such as coin striking, mosaic laying or dressing up for example.

- Helping things to run as smoothly and safely as possible. This means getting to know our health and safety and evacuation procedures and showing visitors the safest routes out of the building in an emergency.
- Occasionally building and maintaining the open hearth fire in the Saxon longhall and hypocaust furnace in the Roman villa. This means carrying wood and charcoal from stores, managing the size and intensity of the fire, and supervising visitors.

When you'll be doing it...

- This role is only required when the site is open to the public on our usual advertised days (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday in 2023).
- You can choose whether to come to us for a 3-hour session or to do a 6-hour day with a lunch break.
 - Sunday: 9.45-1 pm, or 12.45-4 pm, or 9.45-4 pm
 - Monday: 9.45-1 pm, or 12.45-4 pm, or 9.45-4 pm
 - Tuesday: 12.45-4 pm
- We will ask you to commit to a minimum of one 3-hour session per month, but understand that this may not always be possible.
- Occasionally, special events or activities for different groups may be held on other days or in the evenings and we may require extra help.

This role will suit you if you...

- Love meeting new people and are not put off at the prospect of talking to strangers of all ages.
- Have a passion for history and heritage and a particularly deep knowledge of either the Iron Age, Roman, Saxon or Viking periods.
- Are interested in a career in education or heritage engagement and would like to gain experience, or have experience working in learning and want to carry it on.
- Are able to provide your own costume and props. This must be inspected by the staff before use to ensure they meet our requirements for health and safety and historical authenticity.
- Can commit to at least one 3-hour session per month.
- Are cheerful, even when a large party has just arrived and it's a little bit hectic!

What we'll do for you...

- Make you feel welcome and ensure you have a positive experience when volunteering with us.

- Provide you with the necessary induction, training and equipment for you to do this role well and safely.
- Give you annual membership of Avalon Archaeology.
- Offer you expenses to cover agreed travel costs between your home and Avalon Archaeology.
- Keep you updated with plans for the site's development and share information about the ongoing volunteer project to build and decorate the reconstructions.

We expect you to...

- Accept the values and standards of the SWHT and work in its best interests, and represent those standards in terms of reliability, courtesy and behaviour.
- Participate in appropriate induction, training and where suitable, complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Follow all relevant policies and procedures including safeguarding, health and safety, and equality and diversity.
- Be able to meet the demands of the role without risk to your health.
- Give us as much notice as possible if you are unable to volunteer so we can make new arrangements.

Other things to know...

- Avalon Archaeology is located within the Avalon Marshes Centre around 5 miles from Glastonbury, on the Shapwick Road between Shapwick and Westhay. There is parking at the centre as well as footpath and cycle routes connecting it to nearby towns, but there are no public transport options.
- Our site is in a rural location, so the only place to purchase food or drink without leaving the site by car is by using the Marshes Hub Tea Stop onsite café. Our Welcome Hut has a kettle, fridge, sink and some crockery. We can offer you basic refreshments like water/tea/coffee/hot chocolate, otherwise, please use the café.
- Our site is mostly accessible but there are challenges for those with mobility issues. If you have any concerns we'd recommend a visit to the site and we'll do our best to make the adjustments you'd need.

What's next?

If this role sounds perfect for you, please complete the application form and send it to volunteering@swheritage.org.uk. We'll be in touch to discuss the type of work you would like to undertake and any factors that should be taken in consideration, and invite you to the site for an informal meeting.

CVs and formal qualifications are not required to volunteer but we will ask you to provide two referees who will be contacted for a reference prior to any placement starting. We will only undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check if our risk assessment shows that you will work on specific projects that involves regulated activities with children or vulnerable adults.

If you decide to join us you'll be given a welcome pack and asked to sign the Volunteer Agreement Form. We will then set up a training and induction programme to get you fully set up with SWHT before you can begin volunteering at the site. This means you'll have to do some training, either online or in-person, and will be asked to do refresher courses annually.

Keep in touch

Site email: avalon@swheritage.org.uk

Website: www.avalonarchaeology.org.uk

Volunteer blog: www.avalon-archaeology.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AvalonArchaeology

Instagram: www.instagram.com/avalonarchaeology

Twitter: www.twitter.com/AvalonArchaeo or @AvalonArchaeo

Event tickets: www.swheritage.org.uk/avalon-archaeology/whats-on/ or search for 'South West Heritage Trust' on Eventbrite.