

Costumed interpreter volunteer - Jane Austen's school friend

Role Description

Could you be a school friend of Jane Austen sharing stories about your school days together in Reading?

Jane's only formal education was in at Reading in 1785 when she attended the Reading Ladies Boarding School which was next to the Abbey Gateway.

Why are we doing this?

Our costumed interpretation programme is part of the *Reading Abbey Revealed* project, joint-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Reading Borough Council.

This project saw the conservation work and successful re-opening of the Reading Abbey Ruins and Abbey Gateway last year, as well as the installation of history information boards and signposting to the Reading Abbey Quarter from the town centre.

Why we want you

Reading Museum is looking for new volunteers to join our costumed interpreter team to help visitors better understand the rich history of the Abbey Quarter.

The use of costumed role play is a great way to help visitors to understand and empathise with the lives of the people who lived, visited or worked in the Abbey Quarter and to share their stories.

What will you do?

- Playing a role as part of a pair or within a small team
- Interacting with visitors to bring your character to life and answering their questions.
- Being able to jump in and out of character to create a positive encounter with the general public.
- Responding to the varying needs and interests of different visitors and to make their visit as enjoyable as possible.
- To research relevant documents relating to your role in order to ensure that visitors receive accurate, fact-based information.

This role will suit you if you are:

- A people person - enthusiastic, outgoing and friendly
- Confident and able to use your own initiative



- Able to work as a team member
- No experience in drama is necessary, just an enjoyment for the performing arts or enjoy performing for and meeting people
- Happy to wear authentic replica period costume
- Have a willingness to research and develop your character
- Have good interpersonal and communication skills both in and out of character
- Keen to learn about the history of the Reading Abbey Quarter and its inhabitants.

What will you get out of it?

- The chance to express yourself in character and really bring history to life
- Being part of a friendly team and make new friends
- New skills and experiences - this will really stand out on your CV!
- Learn new facts about the history of Reading and the Reading Abbey Quarter
- Meet and inspire visitors from all over the world
- Develop your communication skills and share your love of history with our visitors
- Above all, this role will be a lot of fun!

How much time will you need to give?

There are several events throughout the year that we would like you to attend, which may be held on weekends and some family workshops during the school holidays. You may also be asked to support school projects. These are the events we plan to attend:

28 May	Reading Museum event
11 May	Forbury Fiesta, Reading
15 June	Waterfest
23 June	East Reading Festival
September	Reading Town Meal
Aug/Sept	Friends Summer Party
13 - 22 September	Heritage Open Days
11 November	Take Over Day (school event)

What training and support we provide

Reading Museum prides itself on being awarded the Investing in Volunteers accreditation as part of the Museum Partnership Reading in 2019. We will provide full training and ongoing support to all volunteers to help them do well in this role.

To apply

Read through our volunteer policy (found under 'Get Involved' at www.readingmuseum.org.uk) and complete the volunteer registration form. Email your form to curator@readingmuseum.org.uk.

If we think you are suitable for this role, we will invite you to Reading Museum for a brief chat and short audition.