NLHF Project:
Curatorial volunteer

Take Shelter is the volunteer-led charity which runs the only school air raid shelter open to the public in the south. We run a busy schools and community programme which welcomes more than 4000 people each year. Access to the shelter is through guided tours of groups of no more than 10 people at the time. In addition to the guided shelter tours we run wartime themed activities in our wartime themed museum space and are fortunate to have a number of veteran volunteers, who were all children during the war, sharing their first-hand experiences. On our community days we also run a gift shop and Tea Room.

As a volunteer led organisation we could not deliver either our schools or community programme without the support, skills and dedication of our volunteers.

About our National Lottery Heritage Fund project: *'Capturing Brighton's last wartime veterans project'*

Take Shelter has been awarded an £85,575 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to capture and share the experiences of the city's last wartime veterans. Working with volunteers, we will present these first-hand experiences alongside artefacts, wartime documents, photographs and films drawn from the partner organisations to create a rich story of wartime Brighton, saving it for future generations for whom the Second World War is not within their lifetime.

During the war every school would have had an air raid shelter. Today the only accessible one in the south is located under the playground at Downs Junior School in Brighton. Take Shelter is very aware that the last wartime generation will not be with us for much longer. Without this funding from Heritage Fund we would not be able to take this last opportunity to record and preserve the memories of our veteran volunteers, who were all children during the war, and others of their generation across the city. Their recollections, alongside other original wartime material from Brighton Museums, Mass Observation Archive, Screen Archive South East and The Keep will provide the personal and social context for the air raid shelter and life in wartime Brighton.

This project will see Take Shelter work with volunteers to record the veterans' memories, research and select original archive material for display, curate new physical museum displays, develop content for new digital touchscreen, and create an interactive bombing map of key locations across the city. The final project resources will be informed by consultation with advisory groups drawn from the local community and school teachers We will also be working with an access advisory group and young people with additional needs to ensure that we are meeting their needs as fully as possible.

What will I be doing?

You will be working as a part of a team to select to artefacts from the Take Shelter collection to create new museum displays which reflect key wartime topics and interweave the personal experiences from the oral history interviews and archive research. You will be working as a team to create new interpretation for the items to tell the story of wartime Brighton. There will also be opportunities to help with the practical installation of the artefacts.

Key tasks:

- To take part in an introductory session to the project.
- To undertake the appropriate curatorial training.
- To work with the Project Officer and other members of the project team to select artefacts for the new displays.
- To help research and write new interpretation for the displays including the personal experiences of wartime veterans.
- To support the project by helping at related events and open days.

Where will I be based?

The project is based at Downs Junior School on Ditchling Road, Brighton. BN1 6ED. Access to the school during the week is via the entrance on Rugby Road. At the weekends access is via the gate on Ditchling Road. The air raid shelter is located underneath the top playground. Training will take place at the school but it is anticipated that research and other activity can be carried our remotely.

How much time will I be expected to give?

The introductory sessions to the project and the initial curatorial session will take between 2-3 hours each. Curatorial, research and interpretation time after that will depend on the time you have available. We hope that all our curatorial volunteers will be able to help research at least one wartime and / or 3-4 wartime artefacts.

What skills, qualities and experience do I need?

No experience or qualifications are necessary as this is a good opportunity to gain new skills. However this role would suit people who:

- Are welcoming, approachable and helpful
- Have good communication and listening skills
- Are proactive with a good eye for detail
- Enthusiastic and interested to learn about the project and life in wartime Brighton
- Reliable, friendly and polite
- Comfortable working as part of a team; supporting other volunteers
- Are able to work with and without supervision

What support and training will I receive?

All volunteers will receive an induction and including background to Take Shelter and the NLHF project including a tour of the air raid shelter. Curatorial and interpretation training will be provided by experienced professionals and ongoing support will be provided by the Project Officer.

What will Take Shelter expect from me?

- To be the friendly face of Take Shelter and be ambassadors for the project in the wider community.
- To be reliable in attendance and dependable.
- Maintain good working relationships with other volunteers, Project Officer and wider Take Shelter team.
- Undertake appropriate training and attend volunteer meetings.
- Complete wherever possible, research for one wartime topics or 3-4 wartime artefacts.
- To help at events and open days related to the NLHF project.

What can I expect from Take Shelter?

- A welcoming and enjoyable experience.
- The opportunity to learn and develop new skills and experience.
- To be treated fairly and with respect.
- To become part of a friendly, motivated and dedicated team.
- Recognition and appreciation for your contribution.
- The opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and make new friends.
- Satisfaction of giving back to the community; promoting the work of the Museum.