

The NHM Widens its Horizons

Since it reopened in 2000 the Natural History Museum has made great progress in establishing links with local schools and voluntary organisations and developing its outreach work in partnership with Royal Holloway University of London and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. In the last two years it has linked up with over twenty Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead schools, as well as running a series of sell-out Family Learning Events (including a sleep-over and night safaris across the local meadows) and becoming an accredited learning destination of Slough Children's University. It took part in the Windsor Great Park Open Day in Summer 2012 working with the Crown Estate for the first time, and reaching 1600 school students in one day. This March, for the first time, we mounted an extensive display at the Royal Holloway University of London Science Festival and we now regularly use undergraduate volunteers at our family learning events,

Now, in order to broaden access and widen its audience still further, the Museum has set up its first internship, a post filled very ably by Katie Bermingham, herself a Royal Holloway graduate. Katie works flexibly, two days per week and her position includes a wide variety of responsibilities, including conservation, cataloguing, developing displays and – of course – outreach. The position aims to expose her to a variety of museum tasks and provides the opportunity for her to develop relevant skills and abilities. Crucially, her availability enables the Museum to be more accessible to schools during the week. She's been particularly helpful in developing educational and promotional resources for the Museum.

Another addition to the Museum team has been a new Custodian. Local resident, Anne Leahy, now supervises the Museum every Sunday afternoon (from 2.30-5.00pm), enabling the Curator more

freedom to interact with visitors and provide educational activities on a more regular basis. For the first time, this means that the Museum has felt confident about marketing itself through the local tourist office and it now features on the Royal Borough's official tourist map (and website: www.windsor.gov.uk). Friends who wish to 'follow' or even 'like' the Museum can do so on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ECNHM). We have also produced an attractive new leaflet to distribute across the region.

The hope is that increasing numbers of tourists will make the journey down Keate's Lane. Indeed, once the Myers' Collection is in place further down South Meadow Lane, Eton will have a museum quarter all of its own, just like South Kensington, and it should provide a significant boost to local tourism.

George Fussey



Volunteers from the Clewer Cluster and the NHM during a recent Family Learning Event. Katie Bermingham is at the far right, and Anne Leahy is next to her.