



PEOPLE'S
HISTORY
MUSEUM

People's History Museum

Collections Assistant



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1. Job description: Collections Assistant

Salary: £18,933

Contract: Full time, fixed term for 18 months

Hours: 35 hours per week, with flexible working and consideration of job-share

Annual leave: 22 days plus bank holidays

Responsible to: Collections Officer

Responsible for: Supervising volunteers and placement students where appropriate

Location: People's History Museum and off-site stores (central Manchester), with partial home working available

Other benefits: Pension with GMCA pension fund; 20% discount in PHM shop and Open Kitchen Cafe & Bar; flexible working policy

Job purpose:

People's History Museum (PHM) is looking for a new member for its Collections team.

We are seeking someone who is inquisitive, interested in exploring the untold stories of the past, and is enthusiastic about highlighting these stories to others.

Our collection includes over 60,000 objects that cover the last 200 years of democratic history, including the stories of early campaigners for equal rights to vote, early 20th century campaigns for workers' rights, and modern campaigns for justice and equality. More information about the makeup of our collections can be found in the 'About us' section below.

Working with the Collections Officer, the Collections Assistant will help to manage and care for the museum's objects. The main duties will include researching and sharing our stories with visitors, supporting engagement, assisting our collections enquiry and access services, and helping to build and improve the collection.

The Collections Assistant will also play a vital role in supporting our new project *PHM's Political Posters*, helping the Collections Officer to document and photograph the museum's collection of around 4,000 posters. The Collections Assistant will be responsible for helping to record information in the museum's collections database, photograph, and edit images of the posters, and interpret the stories they discover using digital platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter and Google Arts & Culture.

Reporting to the Collections Officer, the post holder will work closely with colleagues across the Collections & Engagement department, as well as collaborating with the Communications & Marketing team on digital content.

Key responsibilities:

Collections engagement

- Researching objects and their stories, and interpreting these stories for the public through physical displays and online content

- Supporting PHM's programmes of events and exhibitions by helping to research and provide objects, and supporting community engagement work
- Providing access to our collections for researchers, community groups and the general public by helping to retrieve objects, supervising research visits (where appropriate) and providing object information
- Tracking and replying to collections enquiries

Collections management

- Documenting and cataloguing the museum's objects, in line with the museum's documentation procedures
- Accessioning and labelling objects
- Photographing objects and editing these for use by the museum
- Researching object copyright
- Helping with the day-to-day management of the collection, including renewing loans, following acquisition procedures, and updating information on our database

Collections care

- Packing and storing objects
- Handling objects and supporting their use safely, including helping to install and remove objects from exhibitions and displays

General support

- Using the museum's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to understand visitor engagement with collections, including enquiries and object offers
- Working across teams and departments to best showcase our stories
- To undertake other duties as may be required which are commensurate with the level of responsibility of the post

2. Values, knowledge and skills:

We are looking for candidates who can demonstrate their knowledge and skills across the following criteria, with the opportunity for ongoing training and development to support the successful candidate once in post.

We are an equal opportunities employer and are fully committed to providing opportunities to all; however, this role involves working in our stores, which are not as accessible as we would like. Please do contact us if you would like to discuss any adjustments you may need, or would like more information about the accessibility issues.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Knowledge of and experience using digital technologies and IT, such as use of social media platforms, writing for blogs, and/or photography and photo editing
- Basic knowledge of social and economic barriers to equality, and an enthusiasm for helping to overcome these
- Basic understanding of British history and/or politics

Skills and Abilities

- Good organisational skills and ability to work methodically
- Strong attention to detail and the ability to undertake repetitive tasks
- Able to work on varied projects simultaneously and to multiple deadlines
- Strong communication skills and an enthusiasm for discovering and sharing stories
- Able to work independently and as part of a team
- Can think critically about situations and information with strong problem solving skills

Values and Behaviours

- A strong commitment to equity and improving diversity and access across the museum and its audiences
- An interest in one or more of the areas that the post holder will be working within, including: the history of ethnically minoritised communities; LGBT+ history; disabled people's history; women's history; political history; collections management

3. Diversity and inclusion information:

PHM prides itself on being a welcoming and inclusive organisation, profoundly committed to advancing equality and diversity in the broadest sense. We value the benefits that diverse perspectives bring to PHM's work for people of all ages to learn about, be inspired by and get involved in ideas worth fighting for; ideas such as equality, social justice, co-operation, and a fair world for all.

We recognise we currently under-represent Black people and People of Colour, disabled, and LGBTQ+ people and those with intersecting identities in our workforce; PHM is actively working to address this and encourages applications from these backgrounds. While the successful candidate will be selected purely on merit, in the event of a tie between two candidates with equal experience, we may select a candidate who helps us better represent the communities the museum serves.

Video applications are accepted for this role. Please note that video submissions cannot be anonymised and by submitting in this format you accept that the short listing panel will have access to information that would otherwise be redacted as part of the blind recruitment process.

This role involves working in our stores, which are not as accessible as we would like. While every effort will be made to accommodate access requirements, we are unable to make certain changes due to the nature of the building. If you would like more information, or you would like to discuss any required adjustments with us, please do get in contact.

PHM is committed to a flexible working policy, and supports job-sharing. Work hours are completed on a weekly-basis (unless otherwise agreed) with any overtime accruing Time Off in Lieu. Very occasional evening and weekend work may be required.

4. How to apply:

To apply, please send a completed application form ([available from on PHM's website](#)) or video application to Charlie.corkin@phm.org.uk. If you require the application form in a different format, please get in touch to discuss.

Video applications should outline how you meet the person specification by answering the questions in the personal statement section of the application form. If you wish to apply this way, please note that the application cannot be anonymised. Please keep videos to a maximum of five minutes and submit in MP4 format.

If you are unable to email your written application, please post a hard copy to Charlie Corkin, People's History Museum, Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3ER.

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 21 July 2021 at 9am. Interviews will be held in the week commencing 2 August 2021. Each application will be assessed against the criteria for the roles, as published in this document.

If you have any questions regarding your application, or would like to arrange a chat to discuss the role, please contact Charlie Corkin at charlie.corkin@phm.org.uk

5. About us:

People's History Museum (PHM) is the national museum of democracy, telling the story of its development in Britain: past, present, and future. We provide opportunities for people of all ages to learn about, be inspired by and get involved in ideas worth fighting for; ideas such as equality, social justice, co-operation, and a fair world for all.

PHM began in the 1960s when a group of activists started to collect radical and working class history material. The collection grew over the years to include the largest Trade Union Banner collection in the world, along with key objects linked to particular events and people, including Thomas Paine, Chartists, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. PHM now holds a collection of over 60,000 objects and an adjoining archive holding over 800 linear metres of archival

materials, which are both designated as being of national importance. Between these, PHM tells the story of over 200 years of people fighting for their ideas and beliefs: from early reformers in the Civil War to climate justice and Black Lives Matter campaigners today.

We are committed to diversifying the stories that we tell, and decolonising our approach to our collections in an intersectional way, bringing minoritised and previously ignored stories to the forefront of history, including the histories of migration and ethnically minoritised communities, Black British history, LGBT+ history, disabled people's history and the ways in which these intersect.

Over the coming three years we will be exploring important subjects and issues relevant to us all today including migration (extended into 2021), disabled people's rights and activism (in 2022-24) and climate change and environmental activism (from 2024). In addition, over the next two years, the museum will be working on a project to improve the records and accessibility of a significant part of this collection: political posters. This will see the cataloguing and photography of the posters held by the museum, allowing more to be used for exhibitions or loans, enabling off-site access through online platforms, and helping us to tell more of the stories we hold.

This role will be integral to the posters project, and also support the wider management of the museum's object collection, working closely with the Collections Officer to acquire new objects, provide access to our collection, answer enquiries, and research our collection.

The museum currently welcomes a local, national and international audience (totalling 125,000 people each year, pre-Covid) as well as reaching significant numbers of people online through our digital activities. We are keen to involve audiences and communities in all aspects of our work and to use models of co-curation, collaboration and crowdsourcing when developing and delivering our programmes of exhibitions and events. Engaging people directly in the work of the museum helps to ensure we are representative of many different communities and able to provide an inclusive space for their voices, stories, and ideas.

The museum employs 36 members of staff and has an additional team of freelance staff, a steering group and community programme team supporting our programmes, and volunteers and placement students.

PHM is an independent museum, charitable trust and company limited by guarantee, and is funded mostly by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Culture and Social Impact Fund. Additional funding is sourced through trust and foundation funding, visitor donations, sponsorship, and our Radicals scheme, along with the work of the museum's Trading Company, which runs our shop, cafe and venue hire services.

For more information about the museum and its collection, check out our [story](#) and [collections page](#).