

Archaeology and... ...volunteers



As well as formal working holidays, volunteers help the Trust in many different ways. The help of local archaeological groups is often enlisted, and NTS Conservation Volunteers frequently lend a hand with weekend fieldwork. A steady flow of school pupils, students and recent graduates assist with longer-term office-based work, including detailed historical research, and help keep our records up to date. This help is invaluable in the conservation and management work of the NTS Archaeologists.

Shirva Mill on Fair Isle is one in a system of nine mills which even includes a man-made reservoir. The mill has been falling down since it was abandoned in the early 20th century. It is nevertheless still in relatively good condition, and is due to be restored.

Volunteers helped in the detailed recording of the building and also in the excavation of buried deposits. This led to the discovery of many clues about how the 'horizontal mill' was used – information that will be used for interpretation once the mill has been restored.



Volunteers excavating the remains of Shirva Mill



Shirva Mill, behind New Mill, in the early 1900s



Culzean fieldwalkers, showing off their finds

NTS staff are often keen to help. Countryside Rangers from Culzean were amazed to find three Neolithic stone axeheads on the surface of a ploughed field on their estate. This complements the discovery of a Neolithic burial cairn at Culzean, showing a good deal of activity in this part of coastal Ayrshire at this time.



The 5000-year-old axes from Culzean

Volunteer at Venniehill



Volunteers searched for prehistoric remains at Venniehill, overlooking Gatehouse of Fleet in Dumfries and Galloway. Trust properties are often situated in beautiful locations like this, and volunteers really appreciate being able to get into the countryside to help with interesting archaeological conservation work.

For more information about NTS Conservation Volunteers, visit our website at: www.nts.org.uk



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