

Mapping Popular Politics Project

The role of volunteers Q & A

Introduction

Put simply, this is a volunteer project! It can't run without people who involve themselves for fun and hopefully, for enlightenment! True, there will be two part-time paid co-ordinators specific roles but for a project so broad in its geography, chronology and themes lots and lots of people are needed.

What does a volunteer do?

There are two broad categories; archive searchers and oral history interviewers. The archive searchers will work in groups at specific archives (though more than one archive is possible). They will look for evidence, list and forward it.

The oral history interviewer will visit subjects found by themselves or for them, interview the person, transcribe the interview and forward the recording and transcription.

Are there any other volunteer tasks available?

For those who like the project but don't see themselves in either of the above roles there are many areas where help is need. They might include booking premises & refreshments, arranging rooms, offering transport, helping to put an exhibition together and helping with project publicity. Other task will crop up as the project moves forward.

There will also be a management committee of people with special briefs: monitoring and encouraging progress in subject areas (the Co-operative Movement, women's history, trade unions, popular movements and campaigns, political parties, ethnic groups, social welfare issues and education.), media publicity, regional coherence. Members of this committee would be expected to be involved with the main volunteer task too.

Will the volunteers receive training?

Training sessions will take place in November and December 2010 at locations to be arranged. The tutors will be experts in the fields and will seek to equip everyone with the projects methods, archive searching skills and in the case of interviewers with the skill to handle recording equipment, digital sound files and interviewing techniques.

Volunteers will also be invited to take part in regular seminars where they can bring their findings and if they wish, learn how to write up material for possible publication.

How much time is involved?

This is entirely up to the individual. The project is interested in people who can give a lot of time and those who only have a small amount to spare. As a rule of thumb an archive visit needs at least an hour long session with travelling time added. An oral history interview should take an hour with two hours for transcription. (These are approximate times). A training session may be round six hours split into two.

Would there be any travel expenses?

There is a small travel budget. It will be available to those travelling significant distances and should be discussed with the Project leader.

Register your interest or get further information from John Charlton at: ppp@nelh.org

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