

Angus and Dundee Ancestral Tourism Initiative Roots Festival Volunteer Programme

Do you have a passion for family or local history? Do you enjoy meeting people from different cultures? If the answer to either of these questions is YES, then you could become a VOLUNTEER at the inaugural Angus & Dundee Roots Festival!

Background

Local authorities in Angus and Dundee have joined forces in a bid to attract tourists from across the world to come to the area and walk in the footsteps of their ancestors. A major two-year initiative, the aims are to capitalise on increasing interest in family history worldwide, and to tap into the estimated market of 50 million people across the globe with Scots ancestry, many of whom have their roots in Angus & Dundee.

The Angus & Dundee area has an extremely rich cultural and social history. Patterns of emigration caused by the downturn in traditional industries such as jute and fisheries in the early part of last century led to large numbers of people leaving the area for countries such as the United States, Australia and New Zealand. An upsurge in interest in researching family roots means that there is an active market of potential tourists out there who are keen to visit Angus & Dundee to experience the way of life of their forefathers and see where they lived, worked and in many cases died.

The area's inaugural Roots Festival is planned for 6th – 13th September 2008. The Festival will provide a focus for people whose ancestors came from Angus & Dundee to visit the area to find out more about their ancestral homeland whilst at the same time forging new friendships with like-minded people from across the globe.

The Festival will include a packed programme of activities with visits to ancestral sites, workshops, living history re-enactments, talks, demonstrations, workshops, film shows and much more, and will be launched in style at a glittering Gala Dinner at Guthrie Castle near Forfar, with guest speaker Nick Barratt from TV's 'Who Do You Think You Are?'. Other activities will include a nostalgic trip on the Caledonian Steam Railway, workshops on tracing ancestors, a visit to Arbroath Abbey - site of the Declaration of Arbroath and 'birthplace' of the modern concept of democracy, tours of Verdant Works to see how Dundee's jute workers lived and worked, graveyard tours, 'Gathering Stories' oral history sessions, a traditional music workshop, a whisky tasting and a golf heritage session. The week will be rounded off in style by a grand farewell ceilidh.

In order to ensure the smooth running of the Festival, the organisers have set up a Volunteer Programme with the aim of ensuring visitors to Festival have a dedicated point of contact during the week long core package programme. As a volunteer we can offer you the chance to work with a great team of volunteers and staff, the opportunity to meet interesting and diverse people from across the world, and above all, fun!

Volunteers should have good local knowledge and be available to welcome visitors on arrival at their accommodation, accompany visitors on day and evening trips/journeys, as well as being able to answer queries on any aspect of the programme or their stay. They will be required to assist flexibly on a shift basis during the week of the Festival, 6 -13th September 2008.

Briefing sessions will be arranged for volunteers prior to the festival where they will be provided with detailed information to enable them to carry out their volunteer role.

What kind of people are we looking for?

Ideally you will have the following attributes:

- Ability to work flexibly
- Friendly and approachable

- Strong communication skills and ability to communicate with people of differing ages, nationalities and backgrounds
- Enthusiasm for Ancestral tourism
- Good knowledge of local area
- Knowledge of local family history research resources and ancestral sites
- Organisational skills
- In depth knowledge of all aspects of the Roots Festival Core Package Programme and fringe events (this will be provided at briefing events detailed above)

Description of volunteer responsibilities

As a volunteer you may be asked to help with any of the following:

- Welcome visitors to their destination and accommodation
- Distribute visitor packs on arrival
- Be available to answer queries on the core package programme content/arrangements, as well as the fringe events
- Ensure visitors are aware of travel arrangements and accompany visitors on buses to individual venues
- Signpost visitors to ancestral sites in the local area
- Network with visitors at social events
- Check tickets at specific events
- Provide directions and answer general queries from visitors during their stay

Although this is an 'unpaid' role, you will have the opportunity to see local ancestral sites, hear interesting speakers, meet new friends, learn new skills, have fun, and feel good about a job well done!

To register interest in becoming a Roots Festival volunteer, please contact Gillian Harrower, Project Manager on Tel. 01738 860523, E: gillian@tals.co.uk