

Julian Richards - archaeologist



Julian became interested in the past when he was at primary school through his Grandma whose house contained many old things he didn't know anything about. He decided he wanted to become an archaeologist after going on his first dig aged 18. He became very excited when he found a big door key and began to wonder who had dropped it and how they felt when they realized they had lost it.

He studied History, English and French at A level then went to Reading University to study. However archaeology is mostly about digging which Julian enjoys doing most. Archaeologists find out about the past by digging things up and then being a detective, trying to work out what the finds tell us about how people lived in the past - maybe thousands of years ago or much more recently. People were just like us, needing food, housing, clothes etc. Skeletons are treated with great respect but can tell us the person's age, what they ate, what they looked like and where they came from. As they dig, archaeologists make many notes, measure, make plans, take photographs and then study all these before giving the finds to a local museum.

To be an archaeologist you need to be nosy but be patient; you need to work hard and not mind getting dirty, working outside or living in a tent. Julian likes being wrong - he likes to discover something different from what he had expected. He thinks that being an archaeologist is great fun and although he has been one for 40 years he is still not tired of it. He gets very excited by finding objects last touched by people thousands of years ago.

The oldest thing he has ever discovered was a stone hand tool used for cutting up meat. It was found in a gravel pit and was 250 000 years old. The person who used it would not have looked like modern day man.

The best thing he has ever discovered was a bronze dagger which was buried with a person in a burial mound. It was 3 500 years old.

If you would like to find out more about archaeology, visit the following website: www.britarch.ac.uk/yac/ You can also email Louise Mansbridge who runs a West Wilts branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club for young people aged 8-16yrs louise.mansbridge@gmail.com or find out more at <http://wwayac.googlepages.com>