

GPS ALUMINI - Katie Smith - Archaeologist

At George Pindar School I studied all the usual subjects but then also Art, German and History. I loved my History GCSE, I was taught by Mr Kirkman and he made it really interesting and engaging to the point where it affected my choices of college and university subjects. I wanted to do something a little more practical than just essay writing, and with a bit of research and with help from mum I found an archaeological training dig run by York Archaeological Trust over the summer. As well as sounding really interesting it fit the criteria for my final residential section of my Duke of Edinburg Gold Award, it also related to my decision to study Archaeology at university.

I've been a field archaeologist for nearly 5 months now and I love every day at work. Field archaeology requires working in challenging conditions and often far away from home, or for very long days, due to the weather or location of a site, but it is just as fascinating as when I first started out in 2012. People think archaeology is all about the finds, and yes, finds are important but we certainly don't expect to uncover coin hoards or massive elaborate burials all the time, indeed they are rare things! I have found wonderful things that are fine examples of human craftsmanship but archaeology is also about discovering clues that allow us to understand the history of a place, who lived there, what they did and so on. It's also much more than just digging! As well as initial on-site recording and photography, all the objects we find have to be cleaned up and preserved, the information we gain from excavating sites has to be written up in coherent format for reports so we can share findings with the public, and that's just the post-excavation process! Pre-excavation we have to research the historical background for a site, survey sites with geophysics and such, all so that we can show up on a site with a rough idea of where to dig and what to expect and even then something unexpected will be found. I love the variation of the job, no week is the same as the next, I learn new things all the time and I face new challenges every day.

