

Excavators' Testimonials

"My first season as a volunteer at Vindolanda opened my eyes to a whole new world. I was welcomed immediately by the excavation team and I felt like I was a part of the group right away. Although I had no excavation experience before I arrived, I was shown how to begin digging and developed skills throughout the weeks in order to work in different areas of the archaeological site. Plus, as an American, I was introduced to the fabulous cultural phenomenon of Tea Time." - *Beth, North Carolina, USA*

"Vindolanda is a great place to excavate. We've been coming for 10 years. Exciting finds every year. The opportunity to dig with top Roman Britain experts and to enjoy discussing the latest information from a site which existed throughout the Roman occupation." - *Ian, Edinburgh*

"Vindolanda gets under your skin and keeps bringing you back. The breadth of the archaeology, the beauty of the countryside, the knowledge and wit of the excavators. It's a place where you can make a real contribution, learn more than any classroom could ever teach, and have a blast doing it." - *Harry, Maine, USA*

"I have never worked so hard in my life, but the opportunity to find something that has not seen the light of day since the Romans were here makes it all worth while. The excavation teams are great and the supervisors are really supportive. I keep coming back for more." - *Barbara, Northumberland*

"Even for a comparative oldie like me, digging at Vindolanda instilled new energy into one's ageing back, as the opportunity to gaze into the lives of those who inhabited this unique place renewed itself each morning. Although a modicum of competition exists between the volunteers and each one hopes to be the 'victor of the day' with even a small find, we all share in the delight of each other's work. Each of us knows that with the constant help and advice of professionals, he or she is adding in some small way to the years and years of work which contribute to make Vindolanda unique in the world of Roman Archaeology. It's quite nice after a short while being able to answer some of the questions put by the many visitors." - *David, Northumberland*

"We are a husband and wife team who have been 'digging' for two seasons now. We really enjoy working at Vindolanda and have learnt a lot more about Roman Frontier Britain in the process. The best part about excavating at Vindolanda is working with people from all walks of life and ages, who are just as enthusiastic as we are about building on the knowledge of Roman military and civilian life in this area. The supervisors are great fun and make things really interesting for the excavators as well as the general public. You really feel you are making a difference, and part of something that is greater than yourself. In conclusion, it's hard work, however, the bonus is we eat well, we sleep like logs - it's the best form of relaxation we know of, and importantly, it's

something we share together. So much so, we are planning to come for four weeks next year, instead of two!" - *Jim and Dilys, St Helens*

"Digging at Vindolanda is a unique experience! Working with friendly people from all walks of life, together with enthusiastic and inspiring archaeologists, the hard work becomes fascinating and enjoyable. The thrill of easing out of the soil, a black leather boot shaped to the foot of a soldier living at Vindolanda nearly 2000 years ago is never to be forgotten." - *Liz, Northumberland*

"I thought that excavating at Vindolanda would be both rewarding and hard work. It was harder than I thought it would be, but it was also ten times more rewarding. My week on the dig saw me and my dig partner unearth two 1800 year old iron bolts, two fine bone hairpins, an iron knife, pottery and many different animal bones, which were the remains of people's meals. As a first time excavator, it could not have been better. I can't wait to sign up for the 2007 dig, and I will come for two weeks this time instead of one!!!" - *Kate*

"I visited Vindolanda in summer 2003 from the US and worked with Justin Blake for two weeks. Of course as you know at that time Vindolanda was pronounced the number one British national "treasure" and for good reason. I feel blessed at having had the opportunity to participate at such a prestigious site as Vindolanda. The entire staff was helpful, attentive and totally unpretentious, despite the fact that such important work is going on there. I look forward to a future opportunity to meet and work with our Vindolanda friends". - *Doug, Miami, USA*

"It is thrilling to be gently scraping at the earth with a trowel and suddenly to see a small piece of red pottery shining amongst the dark earth. There is excitement in wondering what it will turn out to be. A decorated piece of Samian ware, perhaps with a maker's mark on it or piece of tile with an animal's footprint? Patience is needed to gently move the earth and perhaps a stone resting on it and find out what it really is. Whatever, you are the first person to see it for about 2000 years." - *Averil, Edinburgh*

"What makes Vindolanda unique is that people from all walks of life are provided with the opportunity to excavate one of the best preserved sites in the Roman Empire. At many other archaeological sites, this opportunity is only available to university students. Everyday objects such as shoes, gaming counters, keys, and hairpins to the more exciting objects such as rings, brooches, writing tablets, and statuary are unearthed. Excavating at Vindolanda offers more than just the chance to dig up these artifacts, but to learn about them in their original historical context both within the site and within the Roman Empire at large. In addition, due to the nature of the site as a visitor attraction, excavators have the chance to meet and converse with visitors (not to mention other excavators) from all over the world." - *Brittany, Boston, USA*