

Museum Staff Profile

**Sarah Mc Hugh, Manager of Museum Services,
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council**



One of the best aspects of working in museums is that there is no such thing as an average day. Working as a manager within a community-focused local heritage service necessitates taking on many different roles and responsibilities from forward-planning to funding applications to managing staff, collections and buildings. My calendar for this week has included holding the weekly staff meeting; collating and reporting facts and figures for the quarterly business planning process, as well as attending recruitment and refresher training. Today involves event management at an evening 'Light Show' within the Castle grounds.

I've stopped making detailed 'to-do' lists because it's depressing when I can't tick anything off, as days rarely seem to go to plan. Not becoming swamped by emails is a challenge for most jobs today. It can be difficult too if a week consists of back-to-back meetings with little opportunity of getting any work done in-between. It is easy to get overwhelmed by conflicting priorities, but I've never lost the pleasure of uncovering objects and sharing stories with people. It is also really fulfilling when different parts of a project and people come together to create a successful end-result. I love the word 'dovetail' and enjoy the process of thinking laterally and working in partnership with others.

Managing a museum and heritage service relies fundamentally upon the support of a team. Three key elements required from the role are 'planning, prioritisation and delegation'. Some days those three simple words are more aspirational than actual. My advice to anyone wanting to become a Museum and Heritage Manager would be to be aware of personal strengths and limitations and be open to learning from experiences – both positive and negative. I would like to think that I am much better at the role now than when I first started!