



Hobbies

Here's something you didn't know about me...



Name: Ian Stephens
Club: Carholme GC, Lincoln
Position: Head Greenkeeper
Hobby: National Trust Volunteer

How long have you worked for the National Trust?

"I started off at 19 and am now double that – so in answer to your question probably too long!"

In exactly what capacity do you work for them?

"I am a volunteer and a member of the South Downs National Trust Volunteers (SDNTV) that involves carrying out conservation work at the weekends. At the moment I am a 'sleeping' member as it is a bit far to travel from North Notts down to Sunny Sussex. In my years with the group I have been a work party, social and fundraiser organiser, as well as Chairman."

How and when did you get introduced to this hobby?

"I found out about volunteering in my Dad's Daily Telegraph. There was an article on weeklong conservation projects. My best mate and I decided to go to a property in Northumberland working on Hadrian's Wall, doing a bit of archaeology. I definitely got the bug for the work from that!"

What is it about the work that appeals to you?

"I have always loved the outdoors and having been brought up on wildlife, walking and the countryside it was a perfect way to keep busy over the weekends doing stuff that I enjoy, doing my bit for the environment and meeting friends from many walks of life.

"The biggest reward and appeal by far for me is meeting my wife Jenny when we were both starting out in the SDNTV. We've now been married for 15 years. Our friends in the group even changed our 'work in progress' sign to 'wedding in progress' and posted it outside the church.

"Our biggest honour came in 1995 when I was Chairman and we were invited to attend a Centenary event for the NT. We were introduced to Princess Alexandra as representatives of conservation volunteering.

"It's a great way of making friends. I would recommend this to anyone wanting to get out and about and active in the countryside. The skills I've learnt from this work really help in the work environment - fencing, hedge-laying and coppicing."

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