

Ralph Mills PhD MA

Curriculum Vitæ, March 2020

My professional background can be divided broadly between commercial and freelance activities – writing, editing, marketing, business development and research – and field archaeology and historical/academic exploration. This interwoven mix has provided me with a unique and valuable range of experience, skills and knowledge.

For further background information, see www.ralphmills.com and www.firesofprometheus.org

Skills and experience:

- **General:** My interwoven and extensive commercial career has been complemented by my archaeological and academic interests by involving leadership, communications, writing, editing, IT skills, sales, research, desktop publishing, public relations, marketing and photography.
- **Writing:** communicating lucidly and accurately with all audiences and all print media, specialising in presenting complex technical information in a reader-friendly manner that attracts and retains readers. Successful interaction across continents with stakeholders, colleagues, clients and contacts from the shop floor to CEOs and top civil servants.
- **Editing:** Turning the raw materials of communication into attractive, meaningful end-products. Copy and sub-editing of everything from children's books to scientific journals.
- **IT:** significant experience of desktop publishing, web site creation, office programs and image manipulation software.
- **Volunteer management:** Having been involved in volunteering since my teens, I am a natural, committed leader, able to enthuse and motivate others to achieve goals safely and effectively.
- **Archaeology:** supervision of first-class excavation under challenging rescue conditions. Whole site and feature recording (site plans, feature recording, surveying, finds illustration and photography). The safe and effective leadership and motivation of large teams of volunteers and professionals.

Recent activity:

Freelance research and report-writing, Institute of Coding/Manchester Metropolitan University: 2018/2019

I researched and wrote two significant reports on the UK digital skills gap, the first specific to higher education, the second relating to advanced manufacturing.

Project Placement: Leeds Industrial Museum: 2019

I carried out a review of Leeds Industrial Museum's collection of about 54 industrial railway wagons, many of which had not been looked at since the early 1990s. I located and recorded the wagons, most of which had been stored outside, reported their condition and made suggestions as to their subsequent treatment and potential display.

PhD student: 2012-2017

Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design, (MIRIAD), Manchester School of Art.

My research topic was "Objects of Delight: An investigation of miniaturisation focusing on nineteenth century mass-produced miniature objects in working class contexts."

MA Tutor, University of Salford: 2015

Working one-on-one with two Heritage Studies MA students to mentor completion of their dissertations. Both achieved distinctions.

MA student 2009-2010:

Historical Archaeology (distinction). Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Leicester.

Writer/Editor (freelance) 2007-present:

Director: ConBrio Associates Ltd.

I co-own this marketing communications and business management consultancy that doubled its turnover in only three years. Researching and writing complex technical features for lay readerships. Report research and writing. Web copy and access consulting.

Marketing and Communications Manager: 2004–2006

Ergo Computing UK Ltd, Nottingham,

Led the UK marketing team in a medium-sized IT manufacturing company. Created new department and team. Managed upgrades of marketing functions, exhibitions, print materials and web site.

Previous activity:**Field Archaeologist, 1970-1998:**

Kent Archaeology Rescue Unit: Volunteer, then supervisor. Faversham Roman villa; London Forum; Horton Kirby granary; Dover Roman forts; Dover *mansio* ("Painted House"); other minor excavations in Kent (4 years).

English Heritage: Planning and photography supervisor, Piercebridge Roman fort (2 years).

National Trust: Assistant Director, Hadrian's Wall excavations (6 years).

Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust: Director, Chells excavation, Stevenage.

Other short-term rescue projects in Northamptonshire, Essex, Yorkshire, Somerset, Monmouthshire.

Writer/Editor (employed and freelance) 1973-2007:

Printing trade magazine, Children's books (*I-SPY books*, London); local newspaper (*Faversham News*, Kent); scientific journals (Elsevier/North-Holland Scientific Publishing, Shannon, Eire); corporate communications (Dewe Rogerson, London). Wrote and designed websites and collateral for public sector and private sector clients.

Business Development Manager:

PLATO Learning Inc, Vancouver, BC, Canada (1994-1997), and PLATO Learning Ltd, High Wycombe, Berkshire (1998-2000). Business development for an education software company. Top salesperson in Canada and in top 5 per cent of parent company. Exceeded sales targets every year.

Business consultant:

Self employed; London, Canada.

Corporate communications. Research and encouragement of community engagement for public sector clients.

Education:

- PhD: Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design (MIRIAD) Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University, January 2017.
- MA (Distinction) Historical Archaeology: University of Leicester, August 2010.
- BSc (Hons) ARCS, Zoology (2:2): Imperial College, University of London, July 1970.

Recent publications:

- Mills, Ralph (2018). 'A chimney-piece in Plumtree-court, Holborn': Plaster of Paris "Images" and Nineteenth Century Working-Class Material Culture. In *Paraphernalia! Victorian Objects*. Kingstone, Helen and Lister, Kate (Eds). London: Routledge, pp 99-121.
- Mills, Ralph (2016). Everyday Magic: Some Mysteries of the Mantelpiece. *Public History Review*. Vol 23, pp 74-88.
- Mills, Ralph (2015). The prosaic platter. In Brown, Steve, Clarke, Annie and Frederick, Ursula (Eds) *Object Stories: Artifacts and Archaeologists*. Walnut Creek CA: Left Coast Press, pp 139-146.
- Mills, Ralph (2015). Material Culture in Miniature: The Historical Archaeology of Nineteenth Century Miniature Objects. In Brooks, Alasdair (Ed) *The Importance of British Material Culture to Historical Archaeologies of the Nineteenth Century*. Lincoln NA: University of Nebraska Press, pp 243-273.
- Mills, Ralph (2014). Why your trash is an archaeologist's treasure. *Popanth* January 6th. <http://popanth.com/article/why-your-trash-is-an-archaeologists-treasure/>
- Mills, Ralph (2010). Miniatures in historical archaeology: Toys, trifles and trinkets re-examined. Master's thesis, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester. http://www.firesofprometheus.org/dissertation_1.pdf

Volunteer activities and interests:

Volunteering: Leader, Waterway Recovery Group Canal Camps; MIRIAD Student Representative, MMU Graduate School; Vice-Chair, MMU Mature Students Society; curatorial volunteer, Nottingham Industrial Museum; other volunteer activities have included chair and secretary of allotment committee, Canadian Cancer charity, Douglas College language mentor etc.

Interests: music (oboe/cor anglais; performance – classical, folk); photography; running; hiking; cycling.

Online presence:

Web sites: www.firesofprometheus.com (historical archaeology); www.ralphmills.com (professional).

Social media: Twitter: @archaeologyman

Ralph Mills
140 Austhorpe Road, Cross Gates, Leeds LS15 8EJ
07799 897 597
ralph@ralphmills.com