

TRAILBLAZERS: GETTING STARTED AS A RURAL PROFESSIONAL WITH AN APPRENTICESHIP



PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Name: Thomas Saunders
Job: Apprentice Rural Surveyor (Berrys)
Age: 19



Thomas Saunders



DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO UNDERTAKE AN APPRENTICESHIP?

I knew that once I finished school I wanted to do a degree. Initially, I was looking at studying Geography or Real Estate at university. However, I then spotted Harper Adams were offering a degree apprenticeship which involved eight weeks of study per year for five years. The opportunity to start working at a younger age and gain experience in the industry was a deciding factor for me.



DO YOU HAVE A FARMING BACKGROUND?

My Dad is a farmer and my Mum also hails from a farming family in Bedfordshire. A farming background sparked my interest in rural matters and I also wanted to try to encapsulate my other interests in geography, economics and politics. Therefore, rural surveying seemed like a good way to encompass all of these factors. However, there is definitely no need to have a farming background to join the industry.



WHAT SORT OF JOBS DO YOU GET INVOLVED WITH?

Every day is different and you never encounter the same situation twice! In my 14 months at Berrys, I have assisted with compulsory purchase and compensation work, mostly on the subject of HS2. I have also helped draft grazing agreements, farm business tenancies and stocktaking valuations. At Berrys, I found that I can ask for advice from anybody within the firm and they will be pleased to help answer my questions.

? WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY?

Harper Adams is a fantastic place to build future connections, as even being in this industry for a short time, I have found myself contacting other apprentice surveyors, placement students and alumni of Harper Adams. The university has a very positive feeling on campus in that everybody is there to work hard and do well. I think that it is a fantastic institution to be a part of.

? WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE AN APPRENTICE?

As an apprentice, you undertake a very quick learning curve in that you learn that you are now accountable to clients on a daily basis. Whereas in the past, I was only accountable to myself in the form of my exam grades. An apprentice obviously needs to balance work with their studies. However, I have found through planning and good organisation, this is very achievable.

? DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOMEBODY LOOKING TO GET INTO THE INDUSTRY?

I recommend that you undertake some work experiences and 'get the feel' of an office environment and the type of work that takes place. There is an excellent website called 'Grow Your Future' which provides plenty more information than I can! Apprenticeships are a great opportunity, so if you want to apply for one, then back yourself and go for it!

**If you would like to discuss apprenticeships or any other matters, then
please email thomas.saunders@berrys.uk.com**