



# Passport to your future

## Your future, your hands

### A candidate's experience of the second round interview.

Never has a title so specifically appealed to me as 'Passport to your future'. Given I'd left my previous career, in journalism, and spent recent months doing bits of travelling, I did indeed need to decide what came next. On noticing the advertised position of apprentice, at a series of National Trust locations, I was intrigued to find out more. What appealed above all else was the contention that this was genuinely open to all people, whatever their background. It was my main concern, in beginning to pursue a career outdoors, in nature, that I had no prior qualifications in that field to help me. With this opportunity I felt included and part of the equation, whatever I had done up until that point in my 31 years out and about in the world. I applied almost immediately, answering three questions via a website link, and uploaded my CV. Sadly I had already missed the date of a taster day at the property I'd applied for - Nostell Priory, near Wakefield - but there were still opportunities to volunteer and/or attend the property to learn more. Everyone involved seemed very helpful. Once the deadline had passed, I received an email informing me all those who had applied were invited to an informal interview day, at the site. A few weeks later I was there, among as many as 30 others, one morning. What followed was an immensely enjoyable day, as we were divided into various groups and each tried our hand at various outdoor tasks, supporting Nostell's volunteer team. There was a real satisfaction, and also genuine fondness for each other, despite the fact that ultimately we were each competing with one another for the position available. Ultimately, perhaps, we were all quite similar people, with similar goals, as we had applied for this position. Toward the end of the day, perhaps owing to my surname being low in the alphabet, I eventually had my interview, the makeshift venue a greenhouse next to the field we'd spent much of the day grafting in, and I was delighted with the nature of the process. Both interviewers, head gardener Paul Dibb and National Trust worker Sarah Rogers, were friendly to the point of becoming friends after the 15-minute process was up. I expressed my enthusiasm for such work, my hopes of securing the role, and went away confident I'd done my best. Even so, said other workers there, other ways in were always available if I was not to be so lucky to get any further. A week or so later I was delighted to be informed, via email, that I had made the second round of interviews, and in the intervening week or two I prepared as best I could to expand on a couple of previous answers and prepare a relevant presentation. Sadly, after a second interview more formal but still as friendly as the first, I was informed the next day I had not secured the position. Devastated is the only word I can use. However, a weekend now having passed to accept the outcome, I can look back on a process which - though ultimately unsuccessful - was very rewarding in numerous ways, not least good day of work in the field, of meeting like minded people, of learning more about the work of The National Trust. I don't believe this is the end for me, in terms of work among nature, and I will continue to look for ways in. But I'd strongly recommend anyone reading this to apply for a Passport to your Future apprenticeship. It is a genuine opportunity, genuinely open to all, to try to change your life for the better. I'm proud to have been part of it, as brief as my involvement was.