



Passport to your future

Leon's Story

Leon is presently working at Clumber Park and Mr Straws house

My name is Leon Sloman and I've been working in house and collections management.

I've been getting to grips with the tasks and challenges that face everyone working in house and collections management. I've met loads of great people, both paid staff and volunteers and I've dipped my toe in the lake of information that I have a year to absorb. It's a challenge I'm looking forward to taking on.

My Background

A year ago I never would have imagined being in such a position though I certainly dreamed of it. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do when I left school so I applied to study history out of love for the subject but luckily for me one university offered me archaeology as an alternative. I loved my time there and the opportunity to work so closely with historic objects and also in the field.

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When I left university I couldn't find work and after a year of being unemployed I managed to land part time work as a van driver, quite a departure. The firm went under and various medical issues made me pretty much unemployable. I spent a year volunteering in a charity shop and later at a heritage site before again finding part time work, this time making sandwiches in a deli. I felt completely without direction and I was desperate to find a job that would help me grow, when I saw the Passport to the Future role I knew it couldn't be more perfect.

The Property

I'm lucky enough to be split over three properties and all of them are very different. Clumber Park may be lacking its house but the grounds are vast and the chapel isn't referred to as 'a cathedral in miniature' without good reason. Mr Straw's House is a relatively more modern property, which I love, and its huge collection seems all the more immense on account of being squeezed into a single semidetached house. I'll also be doing some time at the Workhouse.

What was involved

Knowing I had some great support behind me, people to guide me forward and the opportunity to build a future for myself was completely life changing and I've loved throwing myself into it. So far I've been getting to grips with opening the properties up in the morning and shutting them down at night, daily cleaning and some of the more in depth cleaning tasks too. I've also worked with the volunteers both on reception and room guiding but when I'm not talking with the public I'm often squirrelled away in the archive learning how to record the collection and keep it safe.

There's a lot to take in but group training has provided great opportunities to share information and discuss concerns with other trainees. It's been great making new friends at these events and the information we receive from the various National Trust experts who come to talk to us is really invaluable.

The first lot of group training was at headquarters so it was great to see the heart of the organisation. The building



itself was also incredible and though there was a lot of information to take in I found it reassuring to learn that the training for the year would be structured so I came away from it with more of a sense of direction. The second lot of training took place at Lyme Park so it was an exciting opportunity to go behind the scenes of another National Trust property. The training was fascinating and though at times the wealth of information seemed almost overwhelming I always knew there were people to support me through it, experts and fellow trainees alike as well as all the great people I've met at my properties.

'I know it's going to be a hectic year ahead but that only makes it all the more exciting and I really can't wait to dive in!'