

My first Jobs

Times are hard and jobs are difficult to find but this is nothing new when I started my career jobs were hard to find particularly ones related to the environment. I am a product of Thatchers Britain and was encouraged to get on my bike to find work. This is what I did and took my first job as an employment trainee with the Ethrow and Goyt Valley Ranger Service.

I got paid my unemployment benefit and cycled 15 miles per day to work walked another 15 miles as part of the job cleaned the toilets, picked up litter, reported graffiti and took groups around the park. It was a great time and I loved not being paid much because I had just returned from 6 months travelling around Africa and had seen people in real poverty so my hardship was easy.

From this I worked in the Council doing environmental projects and got an opportunity to help set up a company in the Shetland Islands. To move to the remote Scottish Islands from the centre of Stockport was quite a challenge but it was exciting and while in Shetland I was able to learn about business in a challenging but supportive environment. This together with earlier part time work as a silver service waiter (which I was fairly hopeless at -too much a gangly teenager) set me in good stead to create an ecolabel for tourism.

In 1997 with the support of Visit Scotland and the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Company we set up the concept of green tourism and SEA Ltd created Green Business UK and designed a set of criteria to be used for the programme. SEA has worked consistently with Green Business UK and are the custodians of the standard which we research and produce with a new version every 3-4 years.

We are now on Version IV and the work for version V is beginning. The IP for the criteria and the programme remains the property of SEA Ltd a company born in the Islands of Scotland now working internationally with project work throughout Europe, Canada and the British Isles. Our programme is a catalyst for businesses to engage with greening their operations and supply chains and has over 2000 active participants.

So if you are feeling that there is no opportunity to get work in your chosen field look at being creative and work with every opportunity you are given. Be like a great footballer on the field and be the best player you can be work hard and even if you have great talent remember to redouble your efforts and support those around you and then you will find you are successful.

This piece was written after seeing a programme called the Chinese are Coming and their work driven commitment to a better lifestyle. We need to teach others that there are some economic growths that we just don't need and in fact the planet cannot afford. Change is coming and we will have to redouble our efforts in the coming years to ensure we do not lose all the beauty and diversity we have only just begun to witness.

Jon Proctor February 2011