



Will: What about, what about this for a story?

Jing: Go on, tell me.

Will: It's the "Royal Parks apprenticeship programme". They teach you about how to work in the Royal Parks.

Jing: You mean you might actually get your hands dirty?

Will: Just you wait and see!

(off) I went to London's famous Hyde Park to spend the day with Paul and Rachel, two of this year's apprentices. And what made you guys decide that an apprenticeship was for you?

Paul: I've always enjoyed being outdoors and I adore the work. For me, it's the way to go.

Rachel: I really wanted to get involved with nature, working outdoors, understanding the environment. And also to have a pleasurable, hard-working day, not in an office.

Will: (off) First job of the day, the litter pick. So how often do you guys go round collecting litter and making sure the park is free of ..

Rachel: (interrupts) Every morning is a litter pick for a good hour and a half. Obviously in the summer there will be a lot more litter to pick because people are enjoying the park amenities. Yeah, it's sort of constant really.

Will: (off) Then off to the Rose Garden for some weeding.

Paul: Part of the job is getting out weeds I'm afraid. They can get everywhere. So if we go over here, I'll show you.

Will: Great. So what's your programme for each day?

Paul: I check all the paths, all the rose-beds for any litter and make sure it's clean and tidy. After that's finished I would do any maintenance that's required.

Will: So is the Rose Garden really famous?

Paul: Oh definitely, I'd say it's very well-known. You can't get nothing better than an English rose.

Will: (off) And then back to help Rachel.
(on) Tell me a bit about the apprenticeship.

Rachel: The "Royal Parks apprenticeship" is a three year programme. It involves ten people a year working in any one of the eight London Parks. We work in the park four days a week. One day a week we go to college. In our first year we're doing horticultural exams, which is very good I love that. And the rest of the week anything in the park. Right, well that's enough questions for now, get back to the mulching.

Will: You're worse than Jin.

(off) I was getting the hang of this gardening stuff. So what next? So what is Paul doing there?

Man: Paul is cutting out the dead wood on this climber. You can see there is quite a lot of dead wood here.

Will: Is it alright if I have a go? Get hands-on?

Paul: Yeah I don't see why not.

Man: Yeah as long as you're wearing the safety-gear. The hat and the visors.

Paul: Ok so there's quite a few pieces of dead-wood here. So if you have a look, it's mainly all these light-brown colours.

Will: (off) In the afternoon, I met with Deputy Park Manager, Rob Dowling.

(on) Why are the Royal Parks so important for London?

Rob: Well the Royal Parks serve a variety of functions, for bio-diversity, for events and for people to just enjoy the Parks.

Will: How important are the apprentices to the parks?

Rob: Without skilled gardeners, we don't have a park because we've got areas like the bowling green, the Rose Garden that need highly-skilled gardeners and if we're not training young people to work in these areas then the whole quality of the park deteriorates.

Will: So Rachel, what is your favourite, favourite thing in the park?

Rachel: My absolutely favourite thing in the park is being here first thing in the morning. The Park is quiet and empty, you see the sun come up. You say good morning to the animals, good morning to the people and throwing myself in for the rest of the day.

Will: And Paul would you recommend apprenticeships to other people?

Paul: Oh definitely. If you love being outdoors and you've got a passion for plants, then this is your first stop.

Will: Well I have to say, I've had an absolutely brilliant day. It's been fantastic. Thanks so much for letting us look around. And my co-presenter Jing is never going to believe half the stuff I've done today. These hands got dirty, unbelievable.

End