

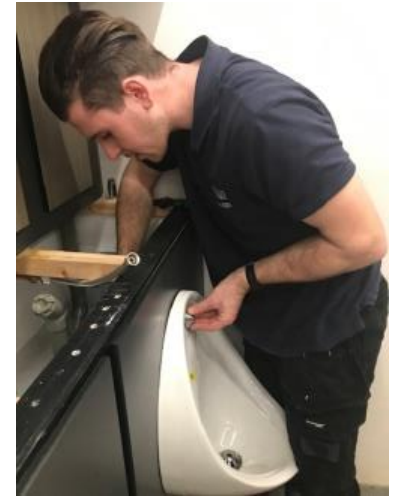
Plumbing Apprenticeship- St Paul's Cathedral

How did you go about organising your apprenticeship?

When I first came to St Paul's Cathedral, I had the opportunity to do an apprenticeship in one of the many trades that we have working here, such as Stone Masonry, Carpentry, Electrics or Plumbing and Heating.

For my first six weeks of employment I spent time with each of the different trades and helped them out with their jobs to see which trade I most enjoyed and preferred. I loved the challenges that plumbing and heating threw at me and the variety of jobs covered, so decided to opt to get into plumbing.

I spoke to my manager at the time and he got the ball rolling with sorting out a local college for me to go to one day a week and work the other 4 days.



Installing the new public urinals in the crypt.

What are the challenges and highlights of working in an old building like St Paul's?

The Cathedral is such an old building it requires constant maintenance and repairs. One of my main roles as apprentice plumber at St Paul's is to carry out Lead Roof repairs with the lead worker Jim; because it is so old the lead roof leaks like a sieve in some places and so requires whole new sheets of lead to be installed. These roof projects get all the other trades involved too as stone work has to be altered along with the oak beams that support and hold up the lead.

Whilst working at St Paul's there have been some amazing moments, such as being able to be a part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. I have also had the opportunity to meet some very interesting people through all the different events and services that happen at the cathedral.

What do you like most about your role?



My role at St Paul's is great because there is so much variety in what I get to do, in regard to the plumbing and heating of the building. Part of my role is to maintain and install new bathrooms and heating systems in Amen Court, which is where all of the Canons and Priests live.

Soldering copper pipework under a boiler I have just installed in the Amen Court.

Plumbing Apprenticeship- St Paul's Cathedral

What is your favourite part of the building?

My favourite part of the building is the roof, especially in the summer. On a clear day you can see for miles around London, it's great working up there repairing the roof in the sunshine.

How is it working in a team like this one?

It is great working in the Works department team at St Paul's because we are able to have a good laugh together when we work and are always able to help each other out. I have also learnt a lot from the other trades who are employed here.

Carrying out lead roof repairs and forming new gutters.



What have you learnt about yourself during the training?

My apprenticeship has not only taught me about the obvious things such as plumbing and heating but it has also taught me how to manage my time efficiently, which in turn has made me a lot more productive and organised.

There have been some big head scratcher moments when I have been on site and with the training that I have done I have been able to improve my problem-solving ability.

What advice would you give to a student considering apprenticeship?



Make sure the company is sound and invested in not only sending you to college, but actually in your progress and learning.

Have patience as you are not always able to control things and they can take a lot longer than expected.

Make sure you have a great support network and have fun whilst learning and always ask plenty of questions when you don't 100% understand something.

Oliver Salmon.