

Matthew Coates, Canterbury Historic River Tours

I first started working in tourism whilst I was a student in Canterbury. I had come to study History in Canterbury, and very quickly fell in love with the city. Canterbury is a wonderful vibrant place, full of life and energy, and with loads to see and do. I was very keen to be able to stay and enjoy in the city during the university holidays.



The problem was, I needed a job to be able to afford to do this. I was very keen to get a job where I would be working with people, as I was quite a shy person at this time, and felt that getting out of my shell would help me enjoy my time at university even more. I started off looking around the pubs and bars of Canterbury, without much luck. I was however lucky enough to get an interview at Boho café a short distance away from the riverside, actually now one of

my favourite cafes in town.

I did not realize it, but the owner of Canterbury Historic River Tours was sitting at the next table along during my interview. He was impressed by what he overheard, and very quickly afterward offered me a job as a tour guide for his company! Needless to say, this sort of customer facing role was exactly the sort of thing I was after, so I leapt at the chance to work for them.

I found working for Canterbury Historic River Tours to be simply amazing fun. I was out in the sun, doing great exercise and working with a welcoming and fun team full of amazing characters. It was hugely rewarding to entertain guests on the river, and compared to the other jobs I had worked at before the pay was quite good too. I had never considered a job in the tourism sector before, but after trying it I never looked back. I worked at Canterbury Historic River Tours throughout my time as a student.

After graduating, however, I found myself at a bit of an impasse. I really enjoyed the work, and was very keen to stay on, but at the same time felt a strong need as a graduate to start working on a career. Luckily, the owner of the company had taken notice of my enthusiasm during my time on the River and at this time offered me a position as a senior boatman within the company. After this point I started learning more about the business and tourism in general, and I had never realized how many opportunities there are for advancement within even a smaller business like ours. I have since been promoted again to the position of assistant manager, and am now earning a decent salary in addition to enjoying the other benefits of the business. I am also gaining lots of experience in the fields of marketing and management, all of which will be highly useful in any future move I take within the industry. The overwhelmingly positive time I have had working for Canterbury Historic River Tours has firmly cemented my desire to stay and build my career within the tourism industry as a whole, and I am greatly looking forward to my next steps going forward into the future.