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Being there for gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies

## Tips for the budding gamekeeper and his parents

***Being able to load a toy rifle before he can walk, digging up mole hills with a plastic spade, taking the ferret to bed, graduating to camouflage and wearing a flat cap at all times; all these are symptoms of a born keeper.***

So what do you do now apart from tell him he will never make any money, it is a vocation not a job and he won't have time or money to go out with his mates. If none of this has worked by the time he leaves school, how best to help him achieve his dream?

A first step may be to find out the whereabouts of colleges for appropriate courses and apprenticeship schemes. There are advantages to both, but a good rule of thumb is to basically take courses suited to academic ability. There are a number of courses in countryside management and gamekeeping from NVQ level 2 up to degree level. For a list of colleges and further information check out the NGO Educational Trust website.

Employers are increasingly looking for lads not only with basic knowledge and a keenness to learn but a confident articulate young man who can communicate on shoot days and with the public at large. Ability with IT is a distinct advantage too, game crop plans as well as budgets, all these are skills expected in the keeper of the 21st century.

When applying for a position, prepare a good C.V, check spelling and provide relevant information. Always enclose a covering letter. When attending an interview make sure you allow plenty of time, and make the effort to be smart and appropriately dressed. It is a competitive world, making the extra effort is always worth taking and doing the best you can. If you are having difficulties finding a position ask after an unsuccessful interview what the reason was for not being considered. Keep trying and in the meantime offer to work on a game farm, local shoot to gain experience, contacts and a reference.

Word of mouth is perhaps the most usual method of finding jobs but The Shooting Times is a valuable source of information and positions vacant too. Use all means available, be proactive and take advantage too of the Gamekeepers Job Register run by the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust. This is another tool for engaging with prospective employers as well as a source of information and advice.

Finally an appointment to a new position, well done! Work hard and learn as much as you can - a keen lad should be soaking up work methods and practices like a sponge. For Dad's who are not already in keeping there may be occasionally an opportunity to go pigeon shooting, picking up and rabbiting. There is an upside for Mum's too; when your son has a cottage of his own, this is your chance to offload your old sofa, cooker etc and then of course you will naturally need all new!

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Your first job is a wonderful opportunity but it is also a major adjustment, leaving home, fending for yourself, and sometimes lonely too. If you have a problem - talk about it - speak to your headkeeper, college support worker or ring Gamekeeper Welfare Trust to speak to someone who understands and will listen.

### **Gamekeepers Job Register**

Join the register by completing a simple form which captures your details and experience. Sending in a CV, either electronically or hard copy is also useful.

The register works by employers contacting us with a particular type of job or required person, we then give them a list of people from the register who matches their requirements and then they will get in touch with you directly.

Email: [gamekeeperjobs@btinternet.com](mailto:gamekeeperjobs@btinternet.com)

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