



Tony Andrews

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I remember approaching the end of my time at high school with everyone asking me what I was planning on doing after I left. I can honestly say that I had no idea. I tried to buy myself some time by continuing on at my high school's new 6th Form Centre, thinking that maybe I'd have a better idea after getting my A-Levels. But before the year was up I knew that 6th Form wasn't for me and left in search of a job.

After going through a month's worth of job sections in the local paper I registered with my local Careers Advice Centre. I wasn't holding my breath, as all the jobs I'd seen advertised were administration type roles. But I got a call and was told about a job that had come up at the County Council as a 'Survey Assistant', and that's how I strayed into surveying. It's fair to say that I had very little knowledge of what a 'surveyor' did; well let's say I had no idea.

I got a copy of the job description, which read:

Collect information in the field by any of the standard methods of topographical surveying, including traversing, levelling and detail survey methods. This will require an understanding of the use of the 'Moss Site Measurement Module' and how it is used to produce a digital ground model and topographical survey drawings.

After reading that, I decided that this was the job for me even though I had no idea what 'standard methods of topographical surveying' meant, nor did I have an understanding of the use of the 'Moss Site Measurement Module'. But I could learn, right?

Being a surveyor, I'm not chained to my desk and the best part of my work involves being out on site at different locations across the county. You will need to be comfortable with computers as the majority of survey information is recorded, processed and delivered digitally. I process all my own jobs right through to the CAD drawing or 3D model stage which gives a good sense of achievement.

You'll also have to learn to apply your knowledge to unusual or difficult situations. These days modern instruments are equipped with lasers for non-contact measurement enabling you to achieve your measurements without having to go near that angry looking dog over the fence.

You'll be taught to think in 3D for the most part and I like to think my spatial awareness comes from my skills developed whilst building with Technical Lego as a youngster. Recent advances in surveying are in 3D laser scanners which are used to create an exceptionally detailed 3D model of the surrounding environment, which is something I'd personally like to get into. These instruments are also used in the entertainment industry to create digital 3D models used to create realistic virtual environments for both movies and video games!

I came to a point where I'd been working as a surveyor for a few years and gained a lot of on the job experience, but I wanted to learn some more about the theory of what I was doing and get a recognised survey qualification. I enrolled on The Survey Association

training course 'Introduction to Surveying' which is a technician level training course. The course was run over two years divided into six two-week blocks. This course gave me the background knowledge and theory behind what I'd been doing day to day at work, and I made new friends and had good times along the way.

After completing The Survey Association course I decided to take my education a step further, the next stage being a degree! I'm currently studying part-time, one day a week at the University of East London working towards my Bachelor of Science degree in Surveying and Mapping Sciences.