

# I LOVE MY JOB!

## Matthew Perrin, Assistant Civil Engineer, Volkerfitzpatrick Rail



- **Where did you go to school?** Eastbrook Comprehensive
- **What path did you take to get to your current position?** I actually started working as a trainee carpenter but luckily, for me it did not work out. I then found an apprenticeship for a rail engineer with Volkerfitzpatrick and three and a half years later I am on my third apprenticeship with Volkerfitzpatrick which now has me attending London Southbank University for a BEng Hons Civil engineering degree part time.
- **What subjects did you study?** I studied construction and the built environment and resistant materials in year 10&11 at school, before carpentry and joinery at college.
- **How many jobs have you had, and can you name them?** I have had 5 jobs, my first being a Christmas temp at Debenhams before staying on, a 2 month placement with a carpentry firm, football stewarding at Dagenham and Redbridge, then a year at a carpentry firm where I realised it wasn't for me before finally starting with VolkerFitzpatrick where I have been ever since.
- **What school subjects link to your career?** Maths, English, Science, Resistant materials/design technology and construction.
- **A typical day in your current role looks like:** I will arrive on site before my start time of 7:30am to ensure I prepare for the day ahead, preparing any drawings/documents that may be required for the works ahead. However, as an engineer every day is different there may be multiple concrete pours one day followed by a day of writing method statements.
- **What skills do you use daily that you learnt at school?** Maths and plenty of it! Although designers do most of the hard work, you will always need a good understanding of maths, for setting out, for procurement of materials, for calculating areas and voids. English is another key one, having to pass on accurate and clear information to designers, sub-contractors and clients it is important I make no major errors.
- **What is the number #1 piece of advice you've been given that helped you with your career choice?** Find what you love doing, then get good at it so you never have to quit. Which was the advice from my supervisor when I was still on the carpentry firm it never really made sense until I started work as an engineer.
- **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?** In 5 years' time, I would like to see myself in a sub agent/site agent role, working my way towards full project management and ideally becoming more hands on with the apprentice schemes in VolkerFitzpatrick.
- **What is the average salary for this role?** For an assistant engineer anywhere between £20,000-£25,000 depending on location, responsibilities etc.
- **If you could have done anything differently on your career journey, what would it be?** For me I have been lucky that something that at the time seemed so negative (carpentry not working out) that I fell into engineering and found my love for it. So I don't think I'd change my career journey at all as I learned large amounts from each job I have done in the past.

### Why do you love your job?

I love my job because I have always been passionate about construction and found a real love for engineering. There is something extremely satisfying about seeing a job from start to finish, knowing you are directly involved with all the major changes, improvements and construction. I am nearing the end of my current project and its incredible just to reflect on all the work that went into it. I have been very lucky because I have been able to learn from some of the greatest project teams and engineers throughout my time at Volkerfitzpatrick so far, I am constantly being pushed in the right direction and supported when making big decisions. Due to those around me, I have been able to develop at a very high rate and as mentioned am now undertaking a degree, which seemed unachievable only a few years ago.