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I was unable to get a job in my chosen field of Industrial Microbiology and did a number of temporary jobs, until I enrolled on a government scheme to introduce graduates into small companies. I worked on a BS5750 quality system for a Sheffield company called *Panel Systems ltd*. They employed me full time after completion of my 3 month project, to help the company obtain BS5750 accreditation for their sandwich panel manufacturing operation. After seven years and retraining in quality systems I needed a new challenge, I began working in chemical cleaning and descaling, particularly Legionella control.

This lead to a job as a chemist with *Cleanaway ltd*, who were the market leader in technical waste management, after 7 years I needed a change and began building and operating a chemical treatment plant for *Parkwood Group*, a local waste management company. They were taken over by *Viridor Waste Management ltd* in 2003, and I now have a national role in organic treatment environmental compliance, which I really enjoy.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

My present role allows me to use all my experience and academic knowledge to the full. The job involves a lot of problem solving and investigation to determine why biological systems are not performing correctly.

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What was the best thing about your time as a PhD student here?

The ability to work and concentrate on a single issue and overcome many problems that stand in your way. The need to always have an open mind and consider all aspects of a problem, the small things can change the whole picture.
My social life was also very full, with weekend nature conservation work with a local group.

In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

Birmingham is always painted as a dull city, but I found the people very friendly and the multicultural inter city life style was very enjoyable. It was during this period that I developed a liking for Indian cuisine.

What advice would you give to current PhD students?

It is nice to get a PhD with a state of the art problem or industrially relevant topic, but that is if you are lucky or gifted. However, the disciplines that you acquire will always make you different from the non-academic world. Your skills will be seen as valuable by employers even if you take twenty years to return to your real passion, mine being industrial biology, because you will always want to understand and know how things work/behave no matter what the challenge is.

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