

The cook

Giles Mildmay, 24, has been a professional cook for three years. His father, George, owns a two-hundred-acre farm in Devon. The family have farmed in Devon for over three hundred years. Giles' younger brother Tobias is studying farm management at Exeter University. Giles and his father talk about his choice of career.

Giles

I think I've always been interested in food. My grandparents (on my mother's side) lived in a huge old manor house in Lincolnshire and they had a wonderful cook. She made fantastic standard English food; her roast beef and Yorkshire pudding was out of this world. I used to love going down to the kitchen and watching her work, and I picked up a lot of cooking tips from her. I realized that I wanted to be a cook when I was about 12. I went to a boarding school and when other boys chose to do sport, I chose cookery. By the time I was



'My grandfather thinks I'm mad!'

15 I had taken over the cooking at home for my parents' dinner parties, and I had started to make up my own recipes. I knew my parents would not approve of cooking as a career, so I decided to introduce them slowly to the idea. I told them that I wanted to do a

30 cookery course for fun, and I went for a month to a hotel in Torquay. I enjoyed it so much, I knew I couldn't put off telling my parents any longer, so I brought the subject up one night over dinner. At first there was 35 silence, and then my father asked me why. I explained that cooking was like painting a picture or writing a book. Every meal was an act of creation. I could see that my father was not convinced, but he didn't get angry. 40 he just patted me on the shoulder and smiled. My mother kissed me. And now that I have opened my own restaurant, I think they are very proud of me. However, my grandfather (on my father's side) is not so kind, he thinks 45 I'm mad to have given up farming.

Giles' father

I know that times have changed, but I was brought up with a butler and a cook to look after me, and I never went near the kitchen. I 50 was taken aback at first when Giles announced what he wanted to do. His grandfather still hasn't got over it, but his mother and I are delighted that he is doing something he enjoys. Nowadays anyone with a job that they enjoy is 55 very lucky.

The gardener

Hugo Grantchester, 26, has been a gardener and a tree surgeon for four years. He went to Oxford University to study archaeology, but he dropped out after just one term. His father, Hector, is a surveyor and his mother, Geraldine, is an interior designer. Hugo and his mother talk about his choice of career.



Hugo

When I was 11, we moved to a large Tudor house in East Anglia which had three acres of garden. We had a gardener who lived in a little cottage at the end of our drive. I used to spend hours watching him work and talking to him. I think I picked up a lot about gardening without realizing it, because one summer, when I was still at 20 school, I took a job at a garden centre and I knew all the names of the plants, and I could give people advice. Then I went to university and it was a disaster. After a term I told my parents that I was going to give it up and go back to work in the garden 25 centre. They were furious, we had a terrible row, and they didn't speak to me for months. But I knew it was a waste of time to carry on studying archaeology, and the moment I started gardening again. I knew 30 I'd made the right decision. I've enjoyed every moment of the last four years and my parents have learnt to accept what I do, not only because they can see how happy I am.

'My parents were furious.'

35 but also because a lot of my university friends have found it difficult to find good jobs or have been made redundant. Sometimes people are quite taken aback when they find out that their gardener went 40 to university, but I think it makes them respect my opinion more when I'm helping them plan their gardens.

Hugo's mother

His father and I were so delighted when he 45 went to Oxford, but when he gave it up so soon we were very, very angry. We thought manual labour was not the career for our only son. We fell out for months. Hector refused to allow Hugo into the house, and we all felt thoroughly 50 miserable. But our daughter told us not to worry because Hugo would be a millionaire by the time he was forty. Anyway, we've made it up now we can see how happy he is, even though he hasn't become a millionaire yet! 55 Times have changed and all kinds of people do all kinds of work, and I think the world's a better place for it!