



HEAD KEEPER

BACKGROUND AND PLACE OF WORK

Hatfield House, the historic home of the Marquess of Salisbury, sits within Hatfield Park, the centrepiece of the Hatfield Park Estate in Hertfordshire. The Estate is a vibrant business primarily focused on let residential and commercial property, along with farming, forestry, development, tourism, leisure and hospitality. Hatfield Park is open year-round to members, with the House and Gardens open to the public from Easter until the end of September. In addition to day visitors, the Estate hosts events, filming projects, parties, weddings and functions across various locations on the Estate.

Gascoyne takes a long-term approach to business and is committed to delivering high-quality economic, social and environmental value. A long-term sense of responsibility is fundamental to the way in which the Estate is managed.

SUMMARY OF THE ROLE

This is an exciting time to join Hatfield Park, as we continue to transform our approach to estate management. The Head Keeper will report to the Hatfield Land Agent and work closely with Lord Salisbury when planning and managing shoot days, with occasional travel required to accompany Lord Salisbury to other shoots when necessary. Collaboration with other teams, including Park & Gardens, Forestry, Events and Filming, will be essential to ensure the smooth operation of the Estate.

The Estate farm, largely arable, is managed in-hand on a contract-farmed basis. Other let farmland is farmed in an arable rotation. The woods are managed in-hand with a consultant forester and in-house foreman, and are in the early stages of conversion to continuous cover principles.

There is an enclosed formal Deer Park within Hatfield Park, managed to maintain a historical link to medieval deer parks at Hatfield and to provide an appropriate level of privacy for the main House. The shoot has been a private family shoot for the last 15 years, providing 8-10 days of sport for the family per season, with the potential for let days in the future.

Conservation is a vital part of the role, involving the implementation of habitat improvements and wider biodiversity measures to balance the semi-wild nature of the shoot.



Job title: Head Keeper

Location: Hatfield Park Estate, Hertfordshire

Contract: Permanent

Hours: 39 hours per week, worked across 7 days

Reporting to: Hatfield Estate Land Agent

Start date: TBC

The shoot comprises approximately 3,000 acres, which includes:

- 370 acres of formal parkland.
- 865 acres of woodland.
- 1,700 acres of farmland.

There is a further shoot in North Hertfordshire that is currently independently keepered full-time and run as a partridge and pheasant shoot. The Head Keeper will be required to provide assistance on shoot days as and when necessary.



OBJECTIVES, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and responsibilities:

- Day-to-day management of the shoot in accordance with agreed policies and procedures.
- Stringent control of all vermin and ground game.
- Management of the Underkeeper, including appraisals and objective setting.
- Control of deer (principally muntjac) outside the formal, fenced fallow Deer Park.
- Budgetary management and performance analysis.
- Conservation of wild bird populations.
- Close liaison with other departmental managers, Security, the farm contractor, the Forestry Foreman and the Land Agent.
- Ensuring security of the Park and its boundaries, which is an important aspect given the semi-rural nature of the Estate.
- Keeping kennels and the family's dogs.
- Any other related duties, particularly those relating to vermin control and security.

Education / certification:

- Competence certificates in spraying, chainsaw operation, brush cutting, quad bike use and other equipment are desirable (training will be provided if needed).
- A full UK driving licence.
- Shotgun Certification (SGC) and/or Firearms Certification (FAC), plus DSC1.

Personal qualities:

- Well-organised and confident, with initiative and enthusiasm.
- A naturally practical person who leads by example.
- The ability to work independently.

DESIRABLE SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

- A skilled keeper with a minimum of five years' experience running small family shoots, preferably within an estate or similar environment.
- We are seeking someone who is conservation-minded and committed to encouraging English partridge and other wild bird populations on our semi-wild shoot.
- Able to manage the balance between providing family days within a busy Park, controlling vermin for the forestry and farms departments, and managing the security needs of the wider Park.
- Proven ability to communicate effectively and maintain a professional manner with a diverse range of individuals, from Estate principals and staff to the visitors of the Estate.

- Skilled in managing difficult or non-compliant members of the public.

DISCRETIONARY BENEFITS

- House – accommodation will be provided within the Estate grounds.
- Perquisites relating to this role include: one shooting suit every other year, and one set of waterproofs or boots in the alternate year; ammunition and cartridges required in the course of your employment for the proper performance of your duties; and feed and reasonable veterinary costs of your working dogs.
- Pension, via salary exchange.
- Life cover.
- Private medical insurance, with the option to add family members at the employee's cost.
- 25 days holiday each year plus bank holidays, with the option to purchase up to three additional days each year.
- Cycle to work scheme.
- Electric Car leasing scheme.
- WeCare – Employee Assistance Programme, mental health support and virtual GP appointments, available 24/7.
- Season ticket loans.
- Eye test reimbursement.
- Programme of wellbeing events and offerings throughout the year.
- Staff recognition programme.
- Additional holiday days offered at long-service milestones – 5 / 10 / 15 / 20 years' service.
- Charity policy with a paid leave day for volunteering.
- Complimentary or discounted events tickets, including tickets for other Treasure Houses.
- Retail discounts in Stable Yard shops, within the grounds of Hatfield Park (including 50% discount at The Coach House Kitchen and 10% discount at The Oak House and others).

JOIN OUR TEAM

This is your opportunity to be part of Hatfield Park's evolution, playing a crucial role in transforming our approach to farming and land management while contributing to the growth and stewardship of one of the UK's most recognised Estates.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please address your CV and covering letter to Holly Banfield, and send them via email to h.banfield@gascoyne.org.

PRIVACY NOTICE

Please visit <https://www.hatfield-house.co.uk/privacy-notice/> to read our Privacy Notice on how we process the personal information you supply with your application. In addition to the third parties detailed in the notice, we will also share your application with a consultant who is assisting us with the recruitment process.

