

apprenticeships

at Bridgwater College

launch of 100 day apprenticeship challenge



Bridgwater College is working with the National Apprenticeship Service and other training providers to help secure 100 new apprenticeship places from employers in Somerset in just 100 days! The challenge was launched on 12 January at a special event attended by over 100 local employers who are already supporting the apprenticeship scheme, and much media interest was generated. Turn over the page to find out what some of the guests had to say about the project....

we offer apprenticeships in:

- Agriculture
- Light Vehicle Maintenance
- Body & Paint (Body Repair)
- Body & Paint (Refinishing)
- Heavy Goods Vehicle Maintenance
- Bricklaying
- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Engineering
- Horticulture
- Leather Goods
- Apparel
- Creative & Cultural Technical Theatre
- Plumbing
- Sports Turf
- Vet Nursing
- Business Administration
- Early Years
- Hairdressing
- Health & Social Care
- Accounting
- Hospitality

special apprentice recruitment event at Bridgwater College

On Thursday 17 March from 6.30pm until 8.30pm, local employers will be attending our March Open Evening to offer a wide range of apprenticeship vacancies. If you are an employer and you would like to attend, please contact Catherine Davies on 01278 441349 or via daviesc@bridgwater.ac.uk – demand is expected to be high and priority will be given to early bookings, so don't leave it too late! If you are a young person looking for an apprenticeship, there's no need to book – just turn up!



apprenticeship ambassadors attend 100 launch

A number of local employers were at the recent launch of the 100 Day Apprenticeship Challenge, keen to share the positive messages about employing apprentices. These included local farming expert Andrew Speed (pictured back row on the right) who has employed 12 apprentices over the last 20 years, all of whom have gone on to have great success in the industry. Lesley Watson of Serco (pictured front row) spoke passionately about the apprentices she employs and announced she would be offering seven new apprenticeship vacancies that night. Another local supporter was Paddy Maclennan of TMB Patterns in Bridgwater (pictured back row second from left), who said, "The 100 in One Hundred project is a great project to highlight the benefits of apprenticeships to employers and the wider communities – and give young people in Somerset the chance to earn while they learn real jobs and the kind of skills that are needed in this area."

over 40 apprentices – and counting!

Family business Brick Peers has been established for over ten years and offers extensive experience across a wide range of building services. To date they have employed around forty apprentices - with about 80% of those through Bridgwater College. Project Manager Mark Ambrosini explains, "We've always taken on apprentices - as long as both parties put in the effort, the result is a fully trained and skilled employee which really benefits everyone. At Brick Peers we find it satisfying when you take on a youngster, help them through their studies and training and know that you've helped to produce a good tradesman for years to come." He adds, "We've employed apprentices from other colleges over the years, but Bridgwater College stands head and shoulders above the rest. We will definitely be taking on more apprentices in the future, and would recommend other businesses to do the same."



Wedding dress designer Sassi Holford has boutiques in Taunton and London, although her gowns are all handmade in her Somerset studio. She designed the wedding gown worn by Autumn Kelly, who married Peter Phillips (son of the Princess Royal) in 2008. Sassi explains, "I had never even thought about taking on an apprentice. I wasn't aware that there was a scheme or qualification that would be relevant to the industry. Having an apprentice is a two way exchange – Lucy, our apprentice, gains the training she requires, and we benefit from having a motivated employee who helps us with our day to day work." She also said, "The service we have received from Bridgwater College has been very good and I would recommend taking on an apprentice to other employers."



apprenticeship with royal connections

local landscaper takes on first apprentice

Stephen Gibson is the owner of 'Landscape My Garden', based in Keinton Mandeville. He used to hire in the services of Tom Brock, a young gardener who worked hard and was keen to learn, but Stephen was unable to offer him a full-time position. Then when he heard about the apprenticeship scheme, it presented him with the ideal opportunity. He explains, "I'd never had an apprentice, so it was all new to me! Working with an apprentice means I can pass on my skills and knowledge to someone who wants to learn – it means I can delegate where appropriate and we get our work done more quickly. I'm lucky I've got Tom as my apprentice, as he's really good to work with, but I'd recommend the scheme to other employers – it really does benefit both parties."

Bradley secures festival farm job



The College is delighted to have its first apprentice at Worthy Farm in Pilton, home to the famous Glastonbury Festival for the past 40 years. Bradley Haldane from East Pennard started his agriculture apprenticeship in August last year. Training Officer John Lockyer said, "Bradley had to really persevere to get his apprenticeship organised - Michael Eavis was busy with the Festival when Bradley first asked about a job, but he kept on asking and his efforts eventually paid off. His duties now include feeding the 400 dairy cows, assisting with milking twice a week and various yard duties. I am told the Farm Manager is very pleased with Bradley and we all think he has a very bright future in farming."



vets recommend apprenticeships on local radio

Polden Hills Vet Centre is based in Cossington and is run by vet surgeons John Smith and Margaret Walker. They were recommended to approach Bridgwater College in order to train their new staff, and they now have two vet nurses based with them while they complete their qualifications at Bridgwater's Cannington Centre. Margaret said, "By attending college, our nurses become formally trained, ensuring they are fully competent in the underpinning knowledge they need to do their jobs. We then build on this knowledge by practical work in the centre, which allows them to apply their classroom learning to their everyday work." Margaret was happy to recommend the project to other employers on BBC local radio, as part of the launch of the 100 Day Apprenticeship Challenge.

dream job for creative Nathan

Concert promoter Live Nation has just started working with Bridgwater College and employed its first Creative and Cultural Skills apprentice. Over 250 people applied for the job and the successful applicant was Nathan Bridle, who is now working towards the brand new qualification in Front of House Operations at Cardiff International Arena. Nathan said, "I can hardly believe my luck! I still keep expecting to wake up at any moment and find it was a dream!"



Sarah is on track for plumbing success

Getting an apprenticeship is a competitive business, and many young people find themselves without a placement and opting for a full-time course while they secure an apprenticeship. Sarah Almond of Wellington found herself in that position last year and studied the Level 1 Diploma in Plumbing, but has since gained employment with Epswell Plumbing and Heating Services in Wellington and now attends college one day a week. Her training covers all domestic bathroom and central heating installations and maintenance. Sarah's Training Officer Sarah Meade said, "Sarah is really enjoying putting her classroom studies into practice and she has good experience of what it's like to start at the bottom and work her way up. She is well on her way to her advanced apprenticeship and becoming a fully qualified plumber."



HGV apprenticeships are picking up speed

The College has won numerous awards for its automotive training services and is a Centre for Vocational Excellence for advanced technology in automotive engineering. The HGV apprenticeship is very specialist and attracts applicants from all over the country. Avinash Spry from Weston was lucky enough to get on the course and combine it with his job in a garage. He says, "I travel around the country with my job, using different specialist equipment and learning different techniques. Attending college helps me to reinforce what I am learning on-the-job and gives me the chance to ask questions. I feel really lucky that I get to train at Bridgwater College, as the subject is so specialist yet the facilities here are excellent."

greenkeeping apprentice appears on film

Matthew Mackenzie has been working as an apprentice at Oake Manor Golf Club in Taunton while completing his training at Bridgwater College's Cannington Centre. Matt was selected from numerous students to star in a film promoting vocational training at the Centre. In the film Matt says, "I was really lucky to get my apprenticeship at Oake Manor. Working on a golf course means I earn a wage and am getting experience in the workplace, while I get all my qualifications at college. I have lots of support from my boss, work colleagues, college tutors and training officer, which is very reassuring. My brother is also a Sports Turf Apprentice and is a year ahead of me - we would definitely recommend the apprenticeship programme!"



saddlery firm considering second apprentice

Mendit Saddlery in Dorchester started life in 2000 in a garden shed, repairing and hand washing rugs! Since then it has grown and now serves customers with bespoke saddlery, saddlery repairs, rug washing, repair services and dog coats. Mendit's first apprentice, Sammy Mowatt, started last year. Joint owner Hayley Legg explains, "We'd tried to find an employee who had the experience we needed in sewing manufacturing, but there is a real shortage of skills in this area. We phoned around a number of training providers, and it was Bridgwater College who was able to help us. We decided this would be a good idea as we could train the apprentice specifically to the needs of our business, and he or she could grow within the company. We really like being able to teach Sammy and enjoy watching her develop her skills and increase her knowledge of the industry." She adds, "If the business continues to expand, we would consider employing another apprentice. We have been very happy with Bridgwater College and their service, and Sammy's tutor is brilliant."

engineer Simon is award winner

Nineteen year old Simon Tottle is one of eight apprentices working at TMB Patterns in Bridgwater and is due to complete his apprenticeship shortly, progressing onto the Higher National Certificate in Engineering at Bridgwater College. Simon was a runner-up in the recent hotly contested EEF Apprentice of the Year competition. He says, "The apprenticeship route gave me the chance to learn in the workplace, which is what I wanted. The training programme is very structured and provides me with all the technical qualifications I need to progress. My employer has been really supportive, encouraging me to enter the competition and even supporting me to take a university level qualification. And since many of the supervisors, managers and directors at TMB are all former apprentices, I can see progression within the company is a very real possibility."

hairdressing numbers on the increase

Since Bridgwater College opened its new training facility for hair and beauty, the number of apprentices has increased dramatically. The College now has five hair salons, which are open to the local community who can benefit from great hair cuts and colours, and since the students are still training, they also benefit from great prices! Susan Randall is in her second year of her apprenticeship and says, "I really wanted to do something practical when I left school, so this style of learning suits me. The teachers have been very helpful and supportive and they have helped to build my confidence. This is so important when you are cutting and colouring – you need to feel sure about what you are doing. For me, it's the best way to learn."



electrical apprentices are world class!



Two Electrical Installation apprentices have been selected for Squad UK, a team who will be training to take on the very best from 50 nations during WorldSkills London 2011. Scott Wigmore, who works for PRP Electrical, and Chris Young, who works for Rogers Restorations, recently attended a reception at the Houses of Parliament in recognition of their achievement. John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education Skills and Lifelong Learning, said at the event, "A highly skilled workforce is vital to the economy and Squad UK will be at the forefront of the drive to improve skills. The young people competing in Squad UK are living proof of the standards of excellence found in our vocational learning programmes and fine examples of the talented, dedicated and committed apprentices we have in this country."

did you know...

- 80% of those employers who employ apprentices agree they make their workplace more productive.
- 81% of consumers favour using a company which takes on apprentices.
- The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is £2.50 per hour. Many employers prefer to pay more however, and research shows that the average salary is approx. £170 per week.
- Employers who take on a 16-18 year old apprentice only pay their salary. The Government will fund their training.
- There are over 85,000 employers offering apprenticeships in more than 130,000 locations; there are almost 200 frameworks suitable for hundreds of job roles.
- 88% of employers who employ apprentices believe that apprenticeships lead to a more motivated and satisfied workforce.
- 83% of employers who employ apprentices rely on their apprenticeships programme to provide the skilled workers that they need for the future.
- One in five employers are hiring more apprentices to help them through the tough economic climate.