



David Golding (centre) with Steve Prinn from Askham Bryan College (left) and Danny Burrows, Course Manager at Flaxby Golf Club



FRENCH STUDENTS



HELP WITH ENGLISH DIPLOMA

As from September 2009, 14-19 year olds, in England and Wales, have had the opportunity to complete a recognised work-based Environmental and Land-based Diploma qualification.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee's Education Director, David Golding, has been involved in discussions with the Lantra Sector Skills Council to ensure the Sports Turf sector is represented at Diploma development meetings and has clearly identified the new option for youngsters as a pathway for a longer-term ambition to join the greenkeeping profession.

Within the greenkeeping industry we have long been used to staff completing work-based qualifications such as the NVQ and the established Sports Turf Apprenticeship. Dependant on the Approved Training Provider, delivery of the vocational qualifications and apprenticeship can vary from part-time learning off the job, whereby trainee greenkeepers attend college for block placements of academic-based learning, or 100% on the job

learning but the key to the Diploma, vocational qualifications including the apprenticeship is the on-the-job work experience. However, as an industry, it is essential that we are not only prepared for how this will affect the future of greenkeeping, but also embrace it as an exciting opportunity which will benefit the trainee, existing greenkeeping staff and the golf club as a whole.

An excellent example of how an employer in partnership with a GTC Approved Training Provider can benefit all concerned came to light when David Golding discussed the new Diploma with Danny Burrows, Course Manager at Flaxby Park Golf Club in North Yorkshire.

Danny now takes up the story:

"At Flaxby Park Golf Club we have had many work experience students since we opened in 2004, usually for two weeks from local schools. Some students leave knowing that greenkeeping is not for them, while others have left thinking that a career in greenkeeping may be something worth considering. The students we have had

have tended to fall into two categories: either both enthusiastic and hardworking, or have made no secret of the fact that they would rather be at home on the Playstation!

"Over the past month Flaxby Park Golf Club has had two French horticulture students, David Coudray and Sebastian Shvent, for work experience. When I was approached by their tutors at Askham Bryan College, over the phone, I was concerned about the practicalities of this arrangement: could they speak English? Where would they stay? How would they get to work? How much do we pay them? And, most importantly, would they be any good? However, a meeting with their tutor from Askham Bryan and a tutor from their French college quickly set my mind at rest. Yes, at least one would have a good basic knowledge of English; they would stay at the college and be transported via minibus each morning even starting at 6:30am. The only thing to concern me was what sort of workers they would be, no one knew, as no one ever does when they have

a work experience student or a new worker starting. One of the biggest advantages was that we didn't have to pay them, so were getting their skills for nothing.

"On their first day, I welcomed them and introduced them to the other staff. With my poor knowledge of French and Sebastian's basic English, undertaking the Health and Safety induction, fire safety and risk assessments were somewhat of a challenge and involved a lot of pointing and actions! Coming from a horticultural background their interest and eagerness was clear from the outset, regardless of the language barrier, and they were keen to get actively involved in all aspects of practical greenkeeping.

"Because David and Sebastian were only with us for a month, their greenkeeping tasks were limited to those of general maintenance such as switching greens, raking bunkers, changing holes but all training was based on the standards within the GTC's training manual.

"Bearing in mind that it takes at least a couple of weeks for experienced greenkeepers to confidently navigate around a 27-hole golf course, David and Sebastian's work ethic during the month was great and they quickly made friends with other greenkeeping staff. Their eagerness to learn had a motivating effect upon existing members of staff, and provided them with an opportunity to brush up on their own knowledge. David and Sebastian's help was especially invaluable with the new 9-hole Temple Course opening to members during their work experience.



French students with Danny Burrows (right) on the course at Flaxby Golf Course

"Also at Flaxby we have Matt, from King James High School in Knaresborough, doing extended work experience every Tuesday until further notice. With Matt only being there for the past month so far his help has been much appreciated and he seems to be enjoying the work based learning scheme.

"I believe all employers have a responsibility to get fully behind the new diploma and encourage students to see if greenkeeping is a career that they want to pursue in the future. It will not only benefit the student but also the golf courses they

are working on, as most managers know you can never have enough staff."

David Golding adds, "following on from my discussions with Danny we are now looking at developing an employers guide to taking on a 14-19 year old as a work placement."

The GTC will be ensuring through Mr Jon Allbutt, our Health & Safety advisor, that all aspects of safety are covered in the booklet and we welcome any input from other employers or Course Managers who have examples or experience of work placements.

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