

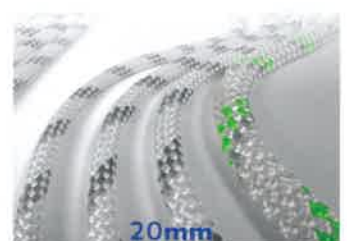
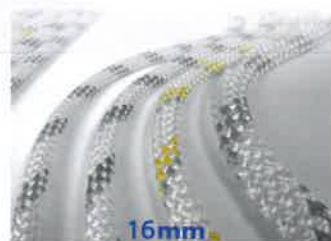
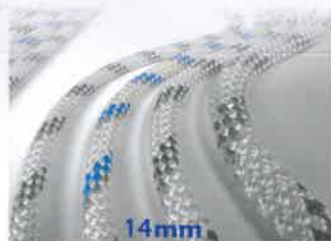
AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF ARBORICULTURE

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INDEPENDENT READING FOR ARBORISTS EVERYWHERE



Aerial rescue training being undertaken.

The 5% Club

THE 5% Club is an employer-member organisation encouraging bosses to ensure at least 5% of their workers are benefiting from 'earn and learn' opportunities. It has 340 members representing businesses across many sectors who liaise closely with organisations such as the Institute for Apprenticeships and further education colleges.

Maydencroft Limited was founded eleven years ago by Tom Williams with three people and now employs over one hundred. The company is based on a working farm near Hitchin, with a regional office in Windsor. It has invested half a million pounds in apprenticeship schemes since 2012 and is a member of the 5% Club.

Glendale of Chorley in Lancashire is also an active member of the 5% Club and in 2011 was recognised as Employer of the Year by the British Association of Landscape Industries. It's a national company offering green space management services in grounds maintenance, tree management, landscaping, landscape architectural services, planning consultancy and

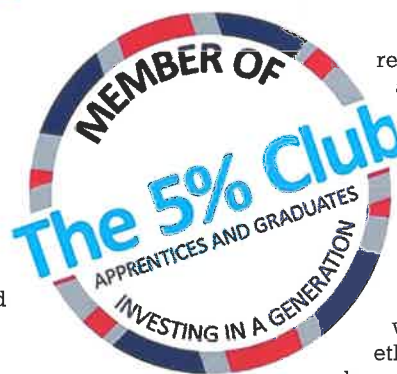
woodland management.

Lady Cobham says: "Over the next few years businesses will face unprecedented change. The increasing use of artificial intelligence, data insight and other technological advances will become the expected norm for businesses in order to thrive and as such, we need to prepare our workforces accordingly."

78% of businesses surveyed by the 5% Club strongly believe that earn and learn training opportunities, including apprenticeship schemes, can help address future changes in the workplace if the UK is to successfully compete in a global market post-Brexit.

An ageing workforce, a continuing skills gap and the rising use of new technology are all challenges which businesses can tackle positively by providing employees with on-the-job training and relevant skills, according to the 5% Club.

Tom Williams of Maydencroft says: "We



recognised immediately, as part of our business model, that the more people we employed, the more teams we'd have on the ground and the more profitable our business would be.

"We're creating and moulding employees with the correct work ethic, culture, skills, and knowledge for them to pass on to following generations. If

they start with us young and then remain in place, with a career structure, it's healthy for our business. We've been particularly successful in the arb division in the area of tree surgery. We work closely with Shuttleworth College near Bedford, Capel Manor College in Enfield and the Berkshire College of Agriculture in Maidenhead, liaising with the tutors to ensure students get the right kind of training support."

Ashlea Lewis is Maydencroft's Human Resources Manager: "Apprenticeship schemes have graded qualifications



starting at Level Two. Most youngsters join us at Level Two, and if they're keen to progress to Level Three we support them through that. Level Four is equivalent to a degree.

"The Apprenticeship Levy introduced in 2017 is largely funded by Britain's major companies with payrolls of more than three million pounds. Smaller companies get grants for taking on apprentices.

"Further education colleges now offer apprenticeship courses in partnership with employers. These last between eighteen months and two years with a graded system of qualifications controlled through the Institute for Apprenticeships.

"In our field, offering predominantly outdoor skills across forestry, agriculture, horticulture, grounds maintenance, gardening and landscaping, we're well placed to attract youngsters who weren't necessarily academic at secondary school and are searching for careers where practical skills with vocational qualifications are needed."

ARB APPRENTICES

Seventeen-year-old Ben Mansfield, pictured top left, lives in Melbourn, near Royston, in Cambridgeshire. He wants to be a tree surgeon. "I wasn't academic and would spend lessons gazing out of the window wishing I was out in the open.

"After leaving school I worked

for a grounds maintenance company. Then I saw on a website Maydencroft were advertising for arb apprentices. I signed up on a two-year contract. This meant I'd go to Shuttleworth College in Bedford and get the qualifications for tree surgery. Level Two involves basic tree identification, chainsaw work, woodland maintenance, small felling and a range of other stuff like operating wood chippers, and brush cutters etc. At Level Three we study pests and diseases, invasive species and look into the biology behind trees.

"Early in my career I'll specialise in aerial cutting but you can't go on climbing trees forever so maybe I'll progress to Level Four to become a specialist tree consultant.

"I've learned a lot being around highly-qualified people. It makes you want to learn more yourself. My advice is to find something that interests you, send out CVs and see if you can get there."

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Twenty-eight-year-old Chris Fitzgerald, left, was working for a firm of solicitors in Birmingham only a few years ago but now he's doing an arb apprenticeship Level Two course at Berkshire College of Education in Maidenhead.

His employer is Maydencroft. "Life

changed for me when I met my girlfriend, Lily, whose parents had bought a farm near Beaconsfield. I cheerfully gave up the law and went to work on the farm while Lily later became a student at Cirencester University.

"I enjoyed the farm work but there was a 15-acre ancient wood planted with oak, beech and black pine on the farm. Gradually I took over the management of it and realised I'd found my career path. I enrolled at college in May 2018 on a two-year course and am particularly enjoying aerial recovery work but may graduate later to levels three and four which involves consultancy."

Chris has recently been working on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's estate, Dorneywood near Maidenhead, and finds his time learning to be a tree surgeon very stimulating.

THE FARMING APPRENTICE

Chloe Glenn, pictured left, a Level Three agriculture apprentice, is the nineteen-year-old grand-daughter of a sheep farmer and wants to be one herself. She's never found her gender a disadvantage as a farm worker and recommends farming apprenticeships to other girls. She got her own opportunity with Maydencroft through the website Indeed. Chloe owns a one-acre field and keeps four Shetland ewes and three pigs on it as well as her horse. She even breeds ferrets to control the rabbits around her home in Flitwick, Bedfordshire.

Since January 2018 Chloe has attended Shuttleworth College every week where she does paperwork related to agricultural management as well as practical days.

"We do tractor driving and in the winter, when all the animals are in, we look after them. A couple of weeks ago we were show-prepping some cows. The written and practical work covers livestock transport, indoor waste disposal and maintaining machinery.

"At Maydencroft Manor Farm I'm doing something different every day. This morning we looked for calves on common land where our Longhorn cattle are grazing. Later we'll muck out trailers. Every day is different."

GLENDALE CASE STUDIES

Kian Smith joined Glendale as an apprentice in 2017. The seventeen-year-old is based at the company's tree services contract in Rotherham. He is currently completing a two-year apprenticeship course. The apprenticeship is teaching him both the practical and theoretical elements of arboriculture, leading to the qualifications and hands-on experience he needs to become a fully fledged arborist.

He is completing an NVQ Level 2 in Trees and Timber in association with Askham Bryan College, which he attends once a month. The success of Glendale's apprenticeship scheme relies in part on its mentoring programme, which is an inherent part of the scheme's overall structure.

