

From the Hunting Office Hunting Apprentices Delighted to Gain Distinctions

After a difficult year, in which both their learning and their jobs have been interrupted by Covid, two hunting apprentices are delighted to have recently received top grades upon completion of their courses. Harry Mayo, at the Berkeley and William Hand at the Pytchley with Woodland, sailed through their final assessments this month to be graded a Distinction by LANTRA for their Level 2 Animal Care and Welfare Assistant qualifications.



Above: Harry Mayo

The Hunting Apprenticeship has been in operation for over ten years, the aim of it being to support and encourage young hunt staff in their first jobs in hunting and help them gain a good foundation of knowledge at the same time as a formal qualification. Now under the umbrella of the Hunting Office, the apprenticeship is delivered by Haddon Training, an established training provider based in Marlborough which works with many top equestrian and animal facilities.

The Animal Care qualification covers a wide range of knowledge and practical skills. It is based on practical training within the working kennels environment, supplemented by group teaching days throughout the course. The syllabus centres around the Code of Practice for the welfare of hounds in hunt kennels and gives an insight into all aspects of hunting.

Placements start during the summer and last for eighteen months - meaning that candidates remain with the training hunt for at least two seasons, building a good foundation of knowledge

to further their careers in hunting. Alongside their work routine, students also have to put together an extensive evidence folder, log hundreds of hours of experience and pass a final assessment with an independent examiner. This cohort is the first to go through the new, more rigorous apprenticeship framework since the government's overhaul of vocational courses and everyone involved is delighted with the exceptional results of the two students, who have completed so far.

"I've learnt a huge amount and I feel so proud to have achieved a distinction," says Harry Mayo. "I didn't find the school environment very easy and I have always known I wanted to go into hunting, so it is great to have had the opportunity to gain this qualification. I want to thank everyone who has helped me, especially the teams at the Avon Vale, the Berkeley and at Haddon Training."

William Hand, who moves on to the Dulverton West in May, commented "I am really pleased that I completed the apprenticeship. There was a lot of material to cover but it was great to have the support of everyone in kennels and at Haddon Training. I want to thank the Oakley and the Pytchley for supporting me throughout the whole apprenticeship as it has been a valuable experience".

Archie Bramwell, second whipper-in at the Portman, is the final candidate in this year's cohort of apprentices and will undertake his assessment later this month. The Hunting Office aims to start a new cohort each year with four new apprentices started last August and aim to finish next spring.

"It is hugely important for the future of hunting to keep encouraging and supporting the younger generation in hunt service, and we enjoy the chance to be able to offer them a formal qualification," says Mark Hankinson, director of the MFHA. "Haddon Training do an excellent job in delivering the programme and all the hunts are hugely supportive and offer the apprentices an invaluable learning opportunity. Everyone at the Hunting Office is very proud of William and Harry for working so hard and flying the flag for the programme with such impressive results."

Chris Hewlett, managing director of Haddon Training, commented "These apprenticeships give young people a valuable qualification with transferable skills, that will enable them to progress with their hunting careers. We are delighted with Harry and William's results and their well-earned distinction grades, which reinforces all the hard work and dedication they have put into the qualification and into the hunting industry. We would also like to wish Archie the best of luck as he approaches his end-point assessment."

For details of the Apprenticeship scheme, please contact the Hunting Office.

Alice Bowden

Below: William Hand

