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Modern apprenticeships still 'doing time'



■ **ELECTRIC:** Apprentice electrician Steve Cornish, left, and electrician Nick Tinsman. 2502/a

APPRENTICESHIPS have always been an excellent way of learning skills in a real working environment.

Unfortunately, however, they were often unstructured and the standards and range of experiences available to an apprentice often varied from employer to employer.

Steve Cornish is approaching the end of his apprenticeship and will soon be a fully qualified electrician.

Employed by AMS Electrical, he currently works under the guidance of electrician Nick Tinsman on a wide variety of electrical engineering projects from domestic wiring to complex industrial installations.

This breadth of experience will mean that Steve will be qualified to work in almost every sector of the electrical engineering industry.

"I've gained a lot of experience," he says. "I've done basic wiring and trunking and went on to specialist work installing different types of three phase industrial motors. I've got a couple of projects left to do, including inspection and testing, and then I'm finished."

And that's exactly the purpose of an apprenticeship – hands-on practical work coupled with technical and craft training.

Today, the standards of apprenticeships are more consistent and the progress of an apprentice is more carefully monitored and evaluated. They have become known as the 'modern apprenticeship'. They are available to young people, offering the ability to gain skills

An apprenticeship used to be known as 'doing time'. Times have changed and so have apprenticeships. Richard Hill, who served 'his time' as an apprentice electrician in the 1970's, meets a 'modern apprentice' Steve Cornish, 22, from Burnham to find out more.

and qualifications by working and studying. They are open to everyone.

Modern apprenticeships are available in over 80 different sectors of industry and commerce. Opportunities are wide-

ranging: Working with animals, vehicle maintenance, construction or in the media, for example.

Modern apprenticeships are becoming available at two levels: Foundation Modern Apprenticeships (formerly known as National Traineeships) and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are a two-way deal – the apprentice getting the training, wages and qualifications they need now while business and industry get the trained employees they need for the future.

The Foundation Modern Apprenticeship leads to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 and the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship to NVQ level 3. NVQs are important qualifications. They show that a potential employee can do a job to the high standards employers require, which is why employers value them so highly.

Apprentices are also trained in key skills, such as team working, communication, IT and problem solving – in fact, everything they need to become a success in the workplace.

For local information on electrical apprenticeships call JTL on 01344 319 306.

For further information on modern apprenticeships call Freephone learndirect on 0800 100 900.