

By hiring two young apprentices through the SNIPEF training programme, **Graeme Blair** is demonstrating his firm's new commitment to moving away from sub-contractors and growing skills within the business



Left to right: Graeme, Iain and Alasdair at Crinan Harbour

Building for the future

Two plumbing apprentices have hit the ground running after Graeme Blair implemented a new business plan to grow his company.

Alasdair McDougall and Iain Winnard joined Blair Plumbing & Heating Solutions through SNIPEF's Apprentice Training Programme, after Graeme decided to move away from sub-contractors and grow skills within the business.

With their boss covering a wide range of work, the duo have already seen their skills quickly develop through on-the-job training.

And while they followed different paths into plumbing, they're both relishing the opportunity to learn new skills that will set them up with a fantastic career.

Alasdair said: "When I left school I thought I wanted to be an electrician and didn't consider plumbing at all.

"I had no idea how extensive the range of work in plumbing was. I'm now in the third year of my apprenticeship and am really happy that I chose a career in plumbing."

By contrast, Iain always wanted to be a plumber but couldn't find a suitable apprenticeship until he met Graeme at the age of 22. Now in the second year of his apprenticeship, he says plumbing is even better than expected and he's confident he made the right career choice.

Graeme says introducing the apprentices has helped his company to grow, creating a strong team ethos that



QUICK FACTS

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produces a high quality of work, with a focus on friendly customer service.

He said: "Getting involved with SNIPEF's Apprentice Training Programme has really taken my business in a great direction.

"My apprentices have become an integral part of my team and it's fantastic to see them learn and grow.

"I'm also extremely pleased with the off-the-job training they're receiving at Glasgow Clyde College, where I'm proud to say Iain has just been awarded SNIPEF Apprentice of the Year."

Graeme, who is based in Crinan near Lochgilphead, Argyll, now plans to extend both lads' training with practical business skills.

They'll be shown the paperwork side of the business and taught how to quote, order and invoice a job to increase their confidence and all-round skills. ■

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