

Westbury firm sets a shining example



Martin Cox and Kevin Payne with Tony Greenslade and his Hungarian guests

HUNGARIAN lecturers recently visited a Westbury joinery firm to learn about British methods of vocational training and its impact on business.

The three lecturers and their interpreter, from the Handler Nandor Vocational School in Sopron, which lies on Hungary's western border with Germany, were the guests of Trowbridge College estate manager, Tony Greenslade, who has been involved with modernising Hungarian teaching methods since 1986. Tony said he chose Oaktree Joinery as the focus of the visit due to their use of cutting edge technologies and techniques.

Oaktree Joinery co-owner Martin Cox said, "We both strongly believe that technology is the way forward and the only way to survive. It's the only way to be competitive."

As well as receiving a demonstration of joinery techniques used by Oaktree and a display of their modern computer-aided machinery, the Hungarian lecturers were also there to see how successful the results of a vocational course can be.

Owners Martin Cox and Kevin Payne have a long history with Tony Greenslade who taught both of them during their time at Trowbridge College. Now owners of a successful and expanding independent business at the forefront of its field, Martin and Kevin epitomise everything that the vocational training system aims to achieve.

Interpreter Eموke Somobuvari, head of languages at the Handler Nandor Vocational School, said that the concept of the small independent business was a relatively new one in Hungary which had only become a capitalist economy since 1989.

Tony Greenslade said, "The lecturers will be taking away a working knowledge of what companies in England are about."

Since starting the company 17 years ago, Kevin and Martin have seen Oaktree Joinery go from strength to strength. They have recently doubled their floor space to accommodate some of the latest machinery available for window production and are about to open a showroom.