

## Tractor driving course – April 2016

I was recently successful in my application to the Professional Gardeners' Trust for an award. This was used to fund a City & Guilds Level 2 award in agricultural tractor driving and related operations. The training was conducted by John Tangey at Littlefield Manor near Guildford.

Six of us attended the course - three greenkeepers, two of my colleagues and I from Cliveden. We arrived each day as close to 9am as possible although traffic proved difficult commuting to Guildford from Cliveden each day. On our first day we began by introducing ourselves and getting a basic grounding of who had and hadn't used tractors in the past. We then went through some of the theory including health and safety, legislation and pre-start checks on a tractor.

In the afternoon we ran through the pre-start checks and took turns to drive the various tractors John had available – there was a 30hp and 47hp compact to mid-size Massey Ferguson and a larger 110hp Massey. Each tractor had very different controls ranging from a semi intelligent gear box which would select the appropriate gear for the weight and ground conditions to a basic low / medium / high geared compact.

On our second day we began with a few more questions and theory before moving on to hitching and manoeuvring a trailer safely. We took it in turns to have a go with the tractors that we felt most comfortable with. I have a good amount of experience with tractors through two years of practical horticulture and two years working part time on a pig farm. Once this was done we used the loader (*see middle right*) to fill the trailers and practiced reversing and emptying the trailer – this concluded day two.

On our third day of training we went through the pre-start checks again ensuring we understood what we were doing and why they are necessary. After this we went through Power Take Off (*see top right*) and rear mounted implements. For the compact tractor users they attached a fertiliser spreader but I opted for the larger tractor and attached a hay turner (*see bottom right*). We then took it in turns to attach and remove the bucket on the loader which is a simple process if done safely. After this we were given the opportunity to practise anything we felt we needed to – be it questions or practising reversing a trailer. I ran through everything I would be expected to in the test and spent the evening revising the questions to make sure I hadn't forgotten anything.

On our fourth and final day, my colleagues and I were assessed by Steve Porter. I volunteered to go first and began by carrying out pre-start checks talking my assessor through what I was doing. I then ran through the questions with him which I passed. After this was done I took the tractor out and performed the various tasks including



removing and attaching the front bucket, hitching a trailer and reversing around a corner through a gate post, unhitching a trailer, loading a trailer, emptying a trailer – tipping, attaching a three point linkage, attaching a Power Take Off shaft and general manoeuvring of the tractor and implements. My colleagues and I all passed and agreed that the teaching was of a high standard and the assessor had a nice relaxed feel despite watching your every move.

I am very grateful to the Professional Gardeners' Trust for granting me an award and giving me this opportunity. I have always been keen on using machinery and now I feel that I am a fully competent and safe user since my assessment. This will be invaluable at Cliveden where not a day goes by without us using a tractor.

Thank you again,  
**Liam Busby**

City & Guilds  
NPTC

NPTC - Assessment Result  
Advice Slip

Candidate Name: LIAM PAUL BUSBY Assessment Centre Name: S.P.T.C.  
 Candidate date of birth: 24/05/1994 Assessor Name: S G BROWN  
 Qualification Title: AGRIC TRACTOR OPS Assessor No: 051726 Date of Assessment: 22/09/16

This Assessment Result Advice Slip is **NOT** a Certificate, but on the evidence of your performance my recommendation to NPTC is that you are assessed as:

| Unit Number | Competent                                     | Not yet competent                          | Unit Number | Competent | Not yet competent |
|-------------|---|--|-------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <u>205</u>  | Competent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not yet competent <input type="checkbox"/> | Unit Number | Competent | Not yet competent |
| <u>206</u>  | Competent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not yet competent <input type="checkbox"/> | Unit Number | Competent | Not yet competent |

Reasons for results for any units above:

*VERY EXPERIENCED OPERATOR  
 SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF COMPETENCE  
 LEVELS REQUIRED FOR SAFE USE*