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Journeymen tradition lives on

Dressed in their medieval costumes, Welf and Dirk attract many curious stares and occasional questions in the city Centre of Wiesbaden, Germany.

They soon explain they not only wear the costumes of medieval journeymen craftsmen, but are actually living out those traditions in today's modern day society.

Welf and Dirk belong to an association which began in 1950 to offer young people the experience of learning and practicing their trade while travelling throughout the country and in other parts of Europe, which was customary in earlier times. Similar associations operate in Germany and other European countries such as France and Switzerland, with some hundreds of young Journeymen and women travelling at any one time.

Welf, a master carpenter, and Dirk a joiner specialising in restoration work, have travelled together and separately for nearly seven years; however the average period of a modern day journeyman is two or three years on the road.

"We are closer than best friends because we not only travel together, but share the same philosophy of

using our skills as a more than just a way of earning a living, but rather as a means of acquiring and sharing new skills and experiences which would not otherwise have been opened to us. Sometimes, we offer to work for no pay if it is something we believe in and from which we and others will benefit from in different ways" Dirk said.

As proof that the respect for the Journeymen tradition lives on, offers of free or cheaper food and lodging are made to them on their journeys, but they have also experienced the realities of getting by with very little. "I remember an old woman approaching me one day when I had had not eaten anything and she offered me an apple because she admired the Journeymen tradition, and that was the best apple I have ever eaten!" said Welf.

Welf has recently begun his own carpentry business, trains other apprentices and continues his involvement with their journeymen association. Dirk is currently employed by the Mainz Museum for Ancient Shipfaring where one of his interesting projects has been to recreate a mounted wooden gun which self loaded and rapidly fired arrows in Roman times.

The only source for the design was a carving and ancient texts discovered by the museum archaeologists.

Neither Welf or Dirk have had the opportunity to see a WorldSkills Competition but Welf knew the results of the Carpentry competition in St Gallen in 2003 and said the "Skill Olympics" was well known among German craft apprentices.

"Many apprentices participate in skill competitions at the various stages of their training. The appreciation of high quality skills exists in Germany, and this connects with the support for us on our journey" Welf said.



Welf (left) and Dirk (right) talk with Christmas holiday makers in the city centre of Wiesbaden, Germany

Marketing the WorldSkills brand: Who is next?

Switzerland has now added the WorldSkills logo with an active link to www.worldskills.org to their website. Which countries are next? For assistance please contact David Hoey david.hoey@worldskills.org.

Indonesia applying for full membership

Our Indonesian members have expressed their interest in becoming a full member at the last Executive Board meeting in Helsinki. They have now officially applied for full membership and have registered their competitors for the WorldSkills Competition in May. Are you in contact with a non member country who is interested in joining us then please let us know? For information on how to become a WorldSkills member, please [click here](#)

Demonstration by Skills Competition Medallists at JIMTOF 2004, Tokyo

The 22nd Japan International Machine Tool Fair, JIMTOF, took place in Tokyo on 1-8 November 2004. This event was organised by the Japan Machine Tool Builders' Association and attracted more than 140,000 visitors, including 11,000 thousands visitors from overseas. Two medallists from the Japanese National Skills Competition demonstrated their excellent skills in Conventional Machine Milling. JAVADA, member of WorldSkills, took the opportunity to promote the WorldSkills Competitions for its high level of skills to the visitors.



View on WorldSkills future: by the Chairman of the Technical Committee

When Liam Corcoran was elected as Chairman for the Technical Committee in 2003, he felt greatly honoured. Liam is a Senior Member of the Inspectorate, Department of Education and Science, in Ireland and represents Ireland as Technical Delegate in the WorldSkills Organisation. His election also represents Ireland's prominent status on a global scale.

New life has been brought to the WorldSkills Organisation since his election. In an article published right after the election he stated "I am promising change. I want to change the way we have been doing business in the past 20 years. I want to change the idea of 40 countries sitting around and all talking to each other for the full duration of the meetings into a situation where we have sub-committees as specialist working groups reporting back to the large group, and making decisions." The Technical Committee meetings he has chaired since his election have proven the value of these changes in the decision making process. All change is geared to ensuring that WorldSkills competitions are at the forefront of skills development in the modern technological world. "We are now including higher technological skills, many of which will involve team work and multi-skilling which is a reflection of the modern technological world".

Liam Corcoran introduced the Quality Management System in Seoul 2001 with the full support of his colleagues. This model is built on three pillars of the WorldSkills Organisation: Integrity, Fairness and Transparency. In his new approach, Liam has introduced two further pillars: Inclusiveness and Innovation. Every member of the Technical Committee has become involved in furthering the development of improved competitions. From a competitor's perspective, mindful of the variety of languages and cultural differences, he wishes to create an ideal environment in which all competitors are enabled to present their best work. For the first time ever, experts will have to undergo an electronic test to ensure that they have national or international competition experience and appropriate knowledge of WorldSkills competition rules and procedures. No person could achieve these goals alone and Liam Corcoran expresses admiration for the enthusiasm, unstinting support and hard work shown by all his colleagues in the technical committee and in what he calls 'the WorldSkills family'. "Together, we can make the Helsinki 2005 competitions the best ever."



Liam Corcoran, Chairman of the Technical Committee

2005: The Year of Vocational Training and Young Professionals in Finland

The year 2005 has been declared the "National Year of Vocational Training and Young Professionals" by the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education in Finland. During this year VET, craftsmanship cooperation with education providers, and working and business life organisations will be introduced. The 38th WorldSkills Competition is the main event of the year. During the next 12 months Finland will promote VET by organising regional and local events, fairs and workshops. The significance of VET is increasing by rising demands of working life

standards and labour shortage. The employment structure is getting biased in Finland as in many countries all over the world. The objectives are: to launch the down-to-earth and versatility of VET and the eligibility of further studies in polytechnics and universities via the vocational route and to provide more information on vocations and trades. The main target group are young people who are on the edge of a career choice. During the jubilee year, collaboration among education providers, business life and working life organisations will tighten up in order to improve the effectiveness, quality and productivity of VET. But before that, the Finnish Vocational Education and training will celebrate its jubilee year by staging

the Finnish National Skills Competitions FinnSkills 2005 (Taitaja) in the midst of the Turku Archipelago landscape from 19-21 January. Over 500 competitors will occupy the Turku Fair and Congress Centre as well as the Elysée Arena during this period. 41 vocational trades' championship-titles, from autobody repair to landscape gardening, will be contested during the FinnSkills 2005 competition. The competition consists of semi-finals in 28 WorldSkills Competition trades as well as Taitaja 9 (FinnSkills 9) hand skills competitions for comprehensive schools' students. FinnSkills will be the big rehearsal for the upcoming WorldSkills Competition.

Strengthening European Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training

Ministers of the European Member States gathered at the EU 2004 Conference "Strengthening European Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training" in Maastricht, the Netherlands last week (16 Dec 2004). An Open Space and Info Day was especially organised by the Dutch Ministry of Education, the European Commission and the Dutch National Agency Leonardo da Vinci at the MECC Conference and Exhibition Centre for the general public. The WorldSkills Secretariat, accompanied by its member organisation Skills Netherlands, was present to promote WorldSkills, the Competition, the WorldSkills Leaders Forum and the Global Skills Village. Contacts were made with non member countries such as Hungary and Slovakia. A presentation on Skills Netherlands and their upcoming national Competition "Skills Masters" and WorldSkills was given by the Dutch Technical Delegate Jos de Goey. An elaborate Leonardo da Vinci Exhibition presented 30 success stories of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, coming from the Member States. Dutch Leonardo da Vinci projects were given the opportunity to present their experiences and results to an international audience. They illustrated and discussed the importance and value of their work in workshops and seminars. Main stakeholders in the field of Vocational and Educational Training have also given 'acte de présence' in order to be able to exchange information on the broad spectrum of developments and innovation in the VET sector.



Events January/February 2005

19 Jan - 21 Jan Worb, Switzerland
 19 Jan - 21 Jan Turku, Finland
 20 Jan - 22 Jan Nantes, France France

[National Competition painting Skills](#)
[Finnish National Competitions](#)
[French National Competitions](#)

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