

FE Week

ON LOCATION

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BILLY CAMDEN

Senior reporter, FE Week

It is rare that we at FE Week are able to celebrate the brilliance that our sector produces, but that is exactly what I have been able to do in writing about Team UK – the cream of the country’s most skilled young people in trade careers.

After two whirlwind years, my journey reporting on the WorldSkills crew is finally over, ending with an emotional and unforgettable competition in Abu Dhabi.

Around 1,300 competitors from 59 countries, all aged 18 to 25, competed in 51 different skill areas ranging from aircraft maintenance to hairdressing, in front of a crowd of around 100,000 people over four days in the Middle East.

Thirty-four of them came from the UK – and their own journeys to this point have been long in the making. That is where this souvenir supplement, sponsored by Pearson, starts on page three.

We move to the unsung heroes

working behind the scenes to make it possible for Team UK to compete, and on page five our managing director Shane Mann discusses the incalculable passion and energy that’s spent on preparing Team UK for WorldSkills..

We then meet the 34 competitors who have done our country proud, before covering the spectacular opening ceremony – which kicks our competition coverage off on pages 10 and 11.

Then you get a first-hand account of exactly what went on over the four days



of intense competition, which includes a visit from skills minister Anne Milton and words of wisdom from past Team UK champions on pages 12, 13, 14 and 15.

The coverage of the closing ceremony on page 16 celebrates all our winners, and the results tables are on pages 18 and 19.

Reporting on Team UK has been a heck of an experience, and one that I will never forget. A huge well done to all involved, and thank you for bringing me along for the ride.



Team UK & WorldSkills UK official media partner

FE Week

FE Week reporting on WorldSkills 2017 in partnership with



Pearson

What an inspiring two days! It was a real privilege to attend and support our UK team at World Skills 2017. All of the competitors are great national ambassadors for apprenticeships and technical skills worldwide. It was also great to see the presence of the Skills Minister and so many officials over the past two days supporting the team and broader skills agenda.

Over the course of the two days we saw a number of students who have studied BTEC, Higher Nationals and Apprenticeship courses that have led them to be able to compete internationally at the highest level. They include Dan McCabe a former BTEC student from West Cheshire College, taking part in the 3D Digital Games competition; Shane Carpenter, a former NESCOL College student, now working at BAE, flying the flag for the UK in Cyber Security; and Betsy Crosbie who studied a Higher National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at New College Lanarkshire who represented the UK in CAD design. These are just three of the highly skilled and talented individuals we had representing the UK at World Skills 2017 in Abu Dhabi this week.

Skills based learning has traditionally been associated with the hands-on trade. However what was clearly evident at World Skills is how technology and innovation is disrupting and influencing the design and demand for jobs and skills across a range



CINDY RAMPERSAUD

Senior Vice President, BTEC and Apprenticeships, Pearson

Being inspired by our world class apprentices

of sectors including health, retail, logistics and education.

In the UK the Skills Plan, and the Industrial Strategy are at the very heart of the government’s agenda. There is a real focus and commitment on technical education and highly skilled apprenticeships. Probably for the first time in a generation the need is greater than ever. The drivers are well documented – low productivity, technology as a disruptor, shifts in demographics and the potential implications of Brexit.

None of us yet know what the outcome

will be of the Brexit talks and the impact of free movement of workers. There are approximately 2.4M European nationals currently working in the UK and recent statistics tell us net migration has fallen for the first time in 3 years. Unless we invest in upskilling our young people and our current workforce, sectors such as Care, Hospitality, Retail and Construction will find themselves dramatically short of the skills they most need. Recent figures from Nuffield indicate a shortfall of 70,000 skilled workers in the care sector by 2025.

Our recent report, Employment in 2030,

in association with Nesta and Oxford University is an innovative research study that analyses the trends that are influencing the future of jobs. It studied the increasing impact of technology on the future of jobs and the knowledge and skill combinations that are likely to become increasingly important to us all. Attending World Skills really brought to life the findings and recommendations of the report. As we walked around the exhibition and observed the many competitors, what was clear was how much technology is part of the skills agenda. In order to reach their potential, many competitors were using technology to design, scope and complete many aspects of their assigned tasks.

At this time, when we have an opportunity to address the emerging skills shortages facing us in the UK, World Skills is a great exemplar of the value of skills and raising the recognition of skilled professionals worldwide. I feel extremely privileged to have met so many passionate and talented young people at World Skills and within the World Skills UK team.



Pearson

THE ROAD TO ABU DHABI



Earning a place in Team UK is no easy feat. Competitors have had to endure two years of testing and observation, while undertaking their regularly scheduled training and staying in employment.

Each member of the team has participated in the UK selection competitions and finals at the Skills Show, a European competition (EuroSkills Gothenburg), as well as countless training sessions totalling over 70,000 hours, mental agility training to an Olympic standard, and, of course, a 3,000-mile journey to Abu Dhabi.

For many of the competitors, this will have been the most difficult journey of their lives.

The WorldSkills finals are held every two years, and are known as the "Olympics of skills". It has brought the most talented young people from 59 countries under one roof to compete across 51 skills – ranging from aircraft maintenance and mechanical engineering to restaurant service and beauty therapy.

Team UK battled through regional heats in early 2015 against more than 3,000 other top apprentices and learners to make it to the national finals at the Skills Show in Birmingham's NEC in November that year.

Standout competitors were put into a longer squad of just 85 for WorldSkills Abu Dhabi, and 22 were chosen to represent their country at EuroSkills in Gothenburg 2016 – where they brought home two golds, one silver, two bronzes and eight medallions of excellence.

After this, these 22 were plunged back into the main squad, who then all vied for a place at this year's global competition.

Their final chance to shine was in March, when all 85 headed to Manchester for a gruelling five-day team selection competition.

Competitor hopefuls had to wait an agonising two weeks to find out the results and if they had made it into Team UK to compete in Abu Dhabi.

And since then, all 34 of the chosen ones have taken part in Olympic-style training regimes to get them ready for all the tests they'll face during the world competition.

Between all of them, they've put in an estimated 71,000 hours of additional training beyond their employment and



Team UK

learning, to get themselves both practically and psychologically ready.

"I think we have prepared them to a really high level and now it is their chance to really shine on a global stage," said Ben Blackledge, WorldSkills UK's director of education and skills competitions.

"Since the team selection the guys have taken part in a combination of technical training, looking at each of their 30-odd skills and doing really intensive last minute things to get them up to the standard of international competitions."

Over the two year cycle the team has taken part in eight boot camps, focusing on their mindset and the way they approach competition. These involve yoga, for example, and situations where they feel uncomfortable – to boost their ability to handle the kind of pressure that they would experience at international competitions.

"These sessions are also about them growing as a team," Mr Blackledge explained. "The competitors can use their experts, performance coaches, employers and providers wider Team UK delegates and their friends and family when they're out there."

The curtain finally closed on their training at the beginning of October.

To give them a final boost for the event, the prime minister sent FE Week a good-luck message to share with the team.

"I'd like to wish the best of luck to our talented team



Theresa May



Ben Blackledge



of apprentices taking part in this year's WorldSkills competition in Abu Dhabi, and congratulations on making it this far," she said.

"Your achievements set a great example for other young people looking to carve out a vocational career, and demonstrate how important practical skills are in the workforce."

Following this, a send-off event was held in Parliament the day before the team flew out to the Middle East where they were bid farewell by family and government officials.

Speaking at the event was Anne Milton, the apprenticeships and skills minister, who said the UK "desperately" needed their "skills and inspiration" when they return from Abu Dhabi.

"I'm sure you're nervous, apprehensive, excited," she told the team. "But irrespective of what happens in this competition, your job when you come back is to pull another person to do what you have done."

"We desperately need your skills, we desperately need you as ambassadors and, more importantly than anything, we desperately need you as an inspiration to the generation that are coming up behind you."

32
Skill experts supporting the training of TeamUK

29
Skills TeamUK competing in

4
Competition days

34
Members of Team UK

71,000
Hours of training across TeamUK



TEAM UK'S UNSUNG HEROES

Behind every one of the UK's 34 competitors is a team of unsung heroes, in the form of dedicated training managers, support staff, FE providers and employers who've all contributed to their success.

In fact, over the two years, roughly 30 experts have put in around 14 weeks of additional support, on top of their day job, to ensure each competitor is as technically ready for global competition as possible.

They've travelled the breadth of the country to do this, leaving a burden on their employers to commit to a rigid training regime, and it mustn't go unmentioned that the role is unpaid.

So why do they do it?

"We're passionate about developing the next crop of skills professionals," explained Christian Notley, who is head of furniture studies at Chichester College and Team UK's cabinet making training manager.

"We travel around the country doing this in different workshops and environments for their benefit as it puts them in different and strange situations they are not used to, like they'll be at an international competition.

"We see the benefits obviously for those students going through the programme and how much it transforms them into the best at what they do in the world."

This is Mr Notley's sixth year and third cycle of WorldSkills. At the previous two competitions in Leipzig and São Paulo, he helped produce two gold medallists.

But it isn't just about the medals: "For me it is also about the benefits it can bring back to the college.

"Chichester College has been fantastic in supporting me doing this because it can be a burden on them having me away for parts of the year, so this is a two-way street. The additional coaching skills at WorldSkills level is something that we learn and I utilise those skills and experiences with all my students in the college."

Skills experts join the team at various points in their careers and some, like Jenna Bailey, are former WorldSkills competitors themselves.

She competed in beauty therapy at WorldSkills Montreal 1999, and told FE Week the experience left her "determined to stay involved".

"For me, taking part in skills competitions had a huge impact on my career," she said. "I run my own consultancy and am using the knowledge I gain from the WorldSkills community in the training I deliver.

"They say once you have been bitten by

the competition bug, you don't ever lose it. For me, that's true and I want to ensure that skills competitions underpin every training programme delivered in the UK."

The competitors' training providers have also been there, committing time and resource into supporting Team UK.

Nescot College has been one standout provider that offers constant support to their apprentice, Shane Carpenter, to prepare him for competing in IT network administrations.

Suresh Kamadchisundaram, a tutor from the college, told FE Week that Nescot had provided its facilities for training at no cost.

"We have done this because as a college we recognise the important role competitions play in developing our learners," he said.

"It not only allows Shane to practise for the competition, but also engage the wider college community. Often, they can't quite believe the level of task being carried out, but it shows them if their peers can

achieve it after working hard, so they could they."

WorldSkills involvement for Nescot even affected the college's last Ofsted report, in which inspectors commented on how the competition activity had a "positive impact" on students.

Also benefitting from an apprentice involved in the competition is EAS Mechanical, a private training provider in Northamptonshire.

Eamon Wilson, the organisation's owner, told FE Week that he had also given his space to WorldSkills UK for free, and even hosted competitors from China, Malaysia and South Korea to train over the summer.

"It pumps our other students up when they see the competitors in action," he said. "It really enthuses them. We send our students to the Skills Show to show them what level they can strive to."

And while training providers give up their centres, employers are allowing chunks of time off for their employees to prepare for the testing international

competition.

Debra Billington, from Pride Hairdressing and Barbershop in Herefordshire, employs hairdressing competitor Bridie Thorne and admitted her training regime has been "demanding" but "well worth it".

"She gets paid while she's training even though she's not working with us and so losing one of our key stylists has obviously been tricky because we are a very small salon," she said.

"But of course we get value from it. For us as hairdressers it is time that we sell and as a result of this process Bridie's speed has increased greatly and her confidence in herself and work has really improved."

Competing on the international stage requires extensive access to the latest industry equipment and technology. Many providers in the UK don't currently have such kit, especially in such skills as CNC milling, where new machines can cost upwards of half a million pounds.



Team UK training managers after the closing ceremony of WorldSkills 2017

WorldSkills UK therefore relies on the generosity of partner employers and companies to provide free access to competitors to use.

“To the training managers who have put in thousands and thousands of hours. A lot of weekends given up getting these young people ready to compete on the world stage - a huge thank you from me

Anne Milton, Skills minister

Matt Booth is from Electroimpact, who employs CNC milling competitor Ethan Davies, and explained how the competition has been “really beneficial”.

“Through the training for the WorldSkills competition, Ethan came back to the job he was working on, applied the training and knocked 20 minutes off a two-hour

machine cycle time. This meant savings in production time and manufacturing costs – reducing the cost of our products and getting better quality.”

Mr Booth added that Ethan is now “leading by example”, and as he improves, his other apprentices are “nipping at his heels to keep up and develop their skills”.

Last but not least are the WorldSkills UK’s performance coaches. They mentor, taking care of pastoral support and any wider needs the competitors may have.

In competition they turn into team leaders. Three have gone to Abu Dhabi, and are responsible for all aspects of logistics, meals and all psychological support.

“When the team are on the competition stand and if they have a snag or an issue we have a Team UK flag and if they put that down only we are allowed to go and provide that support,” the chief team leader, Jo Maher, said.

“We do it because we are passionate about FE. All of us team leaders have got backgrounds in FE and we are passionate about supporting young people and developing their potential.”



Anne Milton



SHANE MANN

Managing director, LSECT publisher of FE Week

It’s not all about the competitors: In praise of training managers

I have been attending skills competitions since the UK hosted WorldSkills way back in 2011. This competition is the tenth I’ve attended – on every occasion I have left feeling that the spotlight has only been shone on half of Team UK.

It is of course right that the competitors have their moment in the spotlight – it is no easy feat earning a place on the team. But there is another group of immensely talented professionals supporting the competitors, and without whom we wouldn’t come home with a single medal.

Team UK has a skilled and committed infrastructure around it. Made up of training managers, skills experts and performance coaches. They work with the team from day one – years before any world finals – to ensure that they are both mentally and physically prepared for competitions.

Since FE Week became the media partner for WorldSkills UK and Team UK, I have seen first-hand the incalculable energy that is spent on preparing contestants.

Team UK has collectively undertaken over 72,000 hours of training – which often takes place out of normal working hours and more usually during holiday periods.

Over the years I have seen countless examples of training managers forfeiting their summer holidays and weekends.

The relationship between a training manager and a competitor is beautiful to witness. They will spend thousands of hours in each other’s company or in communication.

Many competitors will start the process in their late teens. Training managers will watch their competitor evolve from a talented teen on an apprenticeship to the crème de la crème.

As an observer of this process, there are many moments which cause the hair on your neck to stand up, but there is nothing quite as emotionally overwhelming as seeing the embrace between a training manager and their competitor when the final whistle blows.

Both know they’ve come to the end of

their journey together, all that is left is a period of reflection before the closing ceremony, when they’ll both discover whether their efforts have earned a medal.

As I sit amongst the training managers at the stadium waiting for the results to be announced, and in turn watch the winners trot up to the podium, I wish they could run up with their charges. They deserve their moment too.

Training managers, like competitors, only learn of the results at the closing ceremony.

When they hear the words “United Kingdom”, there isn’t a dry eye in the team. I can’t comprehend the pride a training manager must feel.

Having spoken to many of them over the years it has become evident there are clear benefits – for them and their employers. In terms of professional development there really is no better option.

Colleges, providers and employers who release their staff in order for them to support TeamUK also deserve recognition. It isn’t easy releasing staff – but their commitment to UK skills is evident and greatly appreciated.

I spoke with the skills minister Anne Milton on Wednesday, while we walked around some competitions, and she was speechless about the efforts undertaken by Team UK in order to compete. We spoke about the commitment from training managers, and she wanted to record a special thank-you message for them.

Having the skills minister here in Abu Dhabi was immensely important for all involved. The minister’s public expression of thanks of the training managers is leap in the right direction.

Here at FE Week, we go to great lengths to report on Team UK. But I must hold my hands up and acknowledge that we haven’t always given them their due.

Whenever we next speak about the success of Team UK, we should always ensure we acknowledge the achievements of those who supported them through their WorldSkills journey.

COMPETITORS & THEIR TRAINING

CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING TECHNOLOGY

This sector covers all of the skilled areas related to the construction world – encompassing everything from the foundation, grounds, building, finishing and maintaining of all sorts of buildings.

Thirteen skills feature in this category, and Team UK had a competitor in each, bar refrigeration, air conditioning and concrete construction work.



Adam Ferguson

	Electrical installation Matthew Doe Employer: Rogers Restorations Training provider: Bridgwater College		Training manager Gareth Jones Employer: Coleg Gwent
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	Joinery Conor Wilmott Employer: Cambridge Conservatory Centre Training provider: West Suffolk College		Training manager & deputy chief expert Andrew Pengelly Employer: Didac Ltd
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	Landscape gardening Adam Ferguson Employer: Hillsborough Castle Training provider: CAFRE		Training manager Simon Abbott Employer: Simon Abbott Landscapes
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	Landscape gardening Will Burberry Employer: Radial Landscape Construction Training provider: Merrist Wood College		Training manager Simon Abbott Employer: Simon Abbott Landscapes
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	Architectural stonemasonry Archie Stoke-Faiers Employer: www.archiefaiers.co.uk Training provider: Weymouth College		Training managers Kevin Calpin MBE & Marc Pate Employer: Caplin Associates Man of Stone	
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	Bricklaying Josh Hunter Employer: Geo Houlton & Sons Ltd Training provider: Hull College		Training manager & deputy chief expert Mike Burdett Employer: York College
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	Cabinet making Angus Bruce-Gardner Employer: Silverlining Training provider: Waters & Acland		Training manager Christian Notley MBE Employer: Chichester College
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	Carpentry Cameron Nutt Employer: J & R Snodgrass Training provider: North West Regional College		Training manager Gareth Evans Employer: Construction Wales Innovation Centre
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Josh Hunter

ING MANAGERS

	<p>Plastering and dry wall systems</p> <p>Harrison Moy</p> <p>Employer: British Gypsum & Property Enhancement</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>David Kehoe</p> <p>Employer: British Gypsum</p>
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	<p>Plumbing and heating</p> <p>Daniel Martins</p> <p>Employer: Briggs and Forrester Training provider: EAS Mechanical</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Paul Dodds</p> <p>Employer: Skills, Educational Training (SET) Ltd</p>
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	<p>Wall and floor tiling</p> <p>Armondas Tamulis</p> <p>Employer: DLP Tiling Training provider: Southern Regional College</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Paul Doran</p> <p>Employer: Southern Regional College</p>
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	<p>Painting and decorating</p> <p>Jordan Charters</p> <p>Employer: George Charters Training provider: Edinburgh College</p>		<p>Training manager & chief expert</p> <p>Peter Walters</p> <p>Employer: Stoke-on-Trent College</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Mark Nevin</p> <p>Employer: Nevin of Edinburgh</p>
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SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES

Skill areas covered in this category are related to the service industry. It includes those in the food and beverage industry as


well as those in hospitality and personal care. Team UK had competitors in all categories except bakery and health and social care.





	<p>Beauty therapy</p> <p>Kaiya Swain</p> <p>Employer: Kaiya Rose Beauty Training provider: Sussex Downs College</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Jenna Bailey MBE</p> <p>Employer: Jenna Bailey MBE Training and Consultancy</p>
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	<p>Cooking</p> <p>Ruth Hansom</p> <p>Employer: Hansom Lambert Training provider: Westminster Kingsway College</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Michael Godfrey</p> <p>Employer: Chartwells, Brunel University</p>
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	<p>Hairdressing</p> <p>Bridie Thorne</p> <p>Employer: Pride Hairdressing and Barbershop Training provider: Train with Pride</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Linzi Weare</p> <p>Employer: Reds Hair Company</p>
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	<p>Patisserie and confectionery</p> <p>Steven Lodge</p> <p>Employer: n/a Training provider: Hull College</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Philip Dixon</p> <p>Employer: Hull College</p>
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	<p>Restaurant service</p> <p>Elizabeth Forkuoh</p> <p>Employer: The Gleneagles Hotel Training provider: Coleg Sir Gar</p>		<p>Training manager</p> <p>Dr Shyam Patiar MBE</p>
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COMPETITORS & THEIR TRAINING

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

Six skills from the transportation world are covered in this sector, which includes creating, repairing and maintaining transportation vehicles.

Team UK had a competitor in three of the skills, but didn't enter anyone for automobile technology, freight forwarding, or heavy vehicle maintenance.



Andrew Gault

	Aircraft maintenance Joseph Massey		Training manager Martin Yates
	Employer: Airbus UK Training provider: Coleg Cambria		Employer: Self-Employed

	Autobody repair Andrew Gault		Training manager Frazer Minskip
	Employer: Glenn Allen Accident Repairs Training provider: Riverpark Training and Development		Employer: EMTEC Colleges Limited, Central College Nottingham

	Car painting Daryl Head		Training manager Richard Wheeler
	Employer: Nationwide Repair Training provider: Thatcham Automotive Academy		Employer: Coleg Gwent

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY



Shane Carpenter

This sector encompasses everything from network creation and maintenance, to development and finishing information technologies.

Five skills feature in this category including web design and IT network systems

administration, of the only ones contested by Team UK this year.

The other skills in this category are IT software solutions for business, information network cabling and print media technology.

	IT network system administration Shane Carpenter		Training manager Kevin Large
	Employer: BAE Systems Training provider: Nescot College		Employer: Remote Training Solutions Limited

	Web design and development Alfie Hopkin		Training manager Mike David
	Employer: n/a Training provider: Coleg Sir Gar		Employer: Coleg Sir Gar

MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY



The biggest of all the sectors, manufacturing and engineering technology covers 14 skilled areas that are related to industrial development and creation.

Team UK did not enter in eight areas

— CNC turning, electronics, industrial control, industrial mechanic millwright, mobile robotics, plastic die engineering, polymechanics and automation, and prototype modelling.

	CNC milling Ethan Davies		Training manager Mike Watson
	Employer: Electroimpact UK Ltd Training provider: Coleg Cambria		Employer: GKN Aerospace

	Construction metal works Macaulay Reavill		Training manager Andy Whitehouse
	Employer: Allied Protek Training provider: Grimsby Institute		Employer: Dudley College of Technology

	Manufacturing team challenge Alexander McCluskey		Training manager Wyn Rowlands
	Employer: Carnaud Metalbox Engineering Training provider: STEGTA		Employer: Self-Employed

ING MANAGERS



3D digital game art

Dan McCabe

Employer:
Codemasters
Training provider:
West Cheshire College



Training manager

Mike Spence

Employer:
South Thames College



Jewellery

Alexander Wood

Employer:
N Goves Ltd
Training provider:
The Goldsmiths' Centre



Training manager

Steven Jinks

Employer:
Self-Employed



Visual merchandising

Catherine Abbott

Employer:
Topshop
Training provider:
Windsor College



Training manager

Julianne Lavery

Employer:
Istituto Marangoni

CREATIVE ARTS AND FASHION

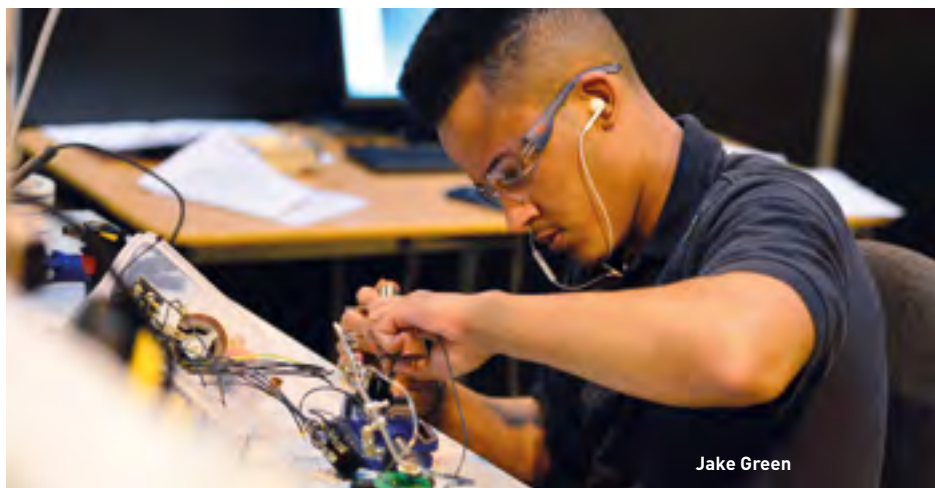


Catherine Abbott

Fine arts and fashionable design and creation are all included in this sector, which has six skills.

It covers everything from multimedia creative, interior decoration and fashion.

Team UK entered competitors in half of the areas. The categories not entered are fashion technology, floristry, and graphic design technology.



Jake Green



Manufacturing team challenge

Jacob Parker

Employer:
Carnaud Metalbox Engineering
Training provider:
STEGTA



Training manager

Wyn Rowlands

Employer:
Self-Employed



Manufacturing team challenge

Jake Green

Employer:
Carnaud Metalbox Engineering
Training provider:
Bradford College / STEGTA



Training manager

Wyn Rowlands

Employer:
Self-Employed



Mechanical engineering CAD

Betsy Crosbie

Employer:
n/a
Training provider:
New College Lanarkshire



Training manager

Barry Skea

Employer:
New College Lanarkshire



Mechatronics

Sam Hillier

Employer:
Toyota Manufacturing UK
Training provider:
Toyota Manufacturing UK



Training manager

Calum Knott

Employer:
Middlesex University



Mechatronics

Tom Revell

Employer:
Toyota Manufacturing UK
Training provider:
Toyota Manufacturing UK



Training manager

Calum Knott

Employer:
Middlesex University



Welding

Josh Peek

Employer:
L&G Engineering
Training provider:
Great Yarmouth College



Training manager

Clive Bell

Employer:
Lakes College



Sam Hillier

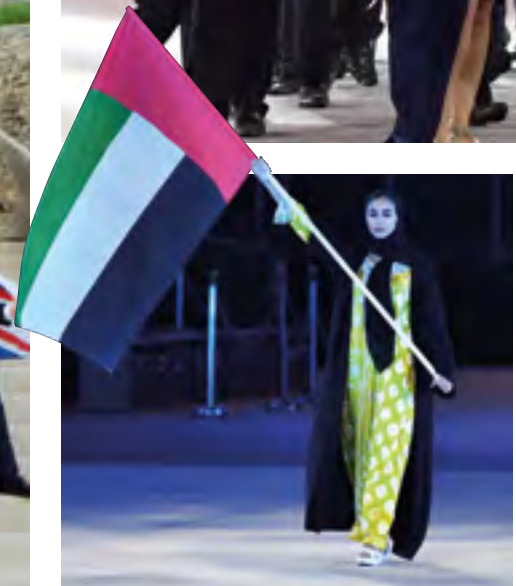
A SPECTACULAR OPEN



Team UK



Team UK



The best of British had the eyes of the world on them as Abu Dhabi put on a spectacular opening ceremony to officially open the 44th WorldSkills.

Around 10,000 people were packed inside the du Arena on Yas Island for the opener, which was live-streamed around the globe and featured authentic Arabic dance performances and a 60-piece orchestra.

But it was a breathtaking display by the gymnastic troupe Spelbound, who rose to fame in the TV Show Britain's Got Talent, who really stole the show.

They followed a centrepiece performance based on the theme of "progress through skills", in which live dancers demonstrated the role skills have had in the development of the UAE.

"It was truly an outstanding opening

to the competition," said Peter Lauener, chief executive of the ESFA and the UK's official delegate for WorldSkills.

"To see so many UK supporters out here, friends, family and of course the WorldSkills UK experts and team, was heart-warming. The atmosphere they created when the team walked through the arena waving our flag was really something.

"To see a British act be the pinnacle of the evening made me even more proud of our nation and our education system.

"Tonight's opening ceremony reflected on the importance of technical and vocational skills. Team UK is a fantastic example of the world-class talent we have in our country.

"I wish all of the team the best of luck

over the coming four days."

The opening ceremony was slightly delayed due to the sheer volume of spectators attempting to enter the arena.

To kick proceedings off, the audience stood for the UAE national anthem, which was followed by music and dance performances featuring a massive orchestra and a 100-member choir, made up of local and international residents of the UAE.

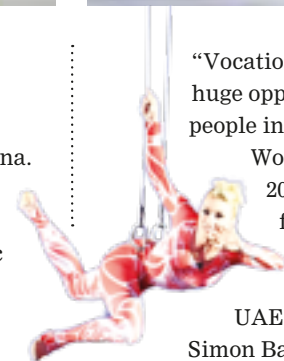
The parade of nations saw all 1,300 competitors from the 59 participating countries brandish their flags across the stage.

"Hosting WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 is an honour and an important moment for the UAE", said Mubarak al-Shamsi, the director general of ACTVET.

"Vocational skills present huge opportunities for young people in this country, and WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 is the perfect way for us to introduce these prospects to tens of thousands of young UAE nationals."

Simon Bartley, the president of WorldSkills, took to the stage at the end and thanked the crown prince of Abu Dhabi and the other leaders of the UAE for hosting WorldSkills in the Middle East for the first time.

"Their vision acknowledges that to transform and develop an economy you have to put skills at the very heart of your efforts," he said.



ING TO PROCEEDINGS



VIP's in the royal box at the opening ceremony



The first ever WorldSkills to be held in a Middle Eastern country had a fittingly spectacular venue. Boasting an inside space of 105,000 square metres, it's big enough to accommodate 4,500 double decker buses.

The Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, or Adnec, is the largest exhibition venue in the Middle East, and is no stranger to skills competitions, having held both the Emirates and the Gulf Cooperation Council regional skills competitions.

More than 100 events are staged here every year and there are around 1.8 million annual visitors, but it has never had this volume of spectators pass through its turnstiles for a single event as it has with WorldSkills.

In all, more than 100,000 people will have visited the venue during the competition. These include 80,000 UAE schoolchildren, 10,000 international guests, the 1,300 competitors from 59 competing countries, and 500 high-profile guests including ministers, representatives and policymakers.

It also had around 1,000 members of the worldwide media, and 1,000 volunteers.

To cater for the sheer volumes of competitors, an enormous amount of equipment was required. A total of 22,500 bricks will for example be used in the bricklaying competition, 12,180 flowers will be used for floristry, and 1,000 tonnes of sand has been bought in – the volume required to build a 5km motorway.



BTEC taught me the importance of time management, allowing me to train, compete and study at the same time.

Max Whitlock MBE

Double Olympic Gold Medallist,
BTEC Sport



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A young man with short, light brown hair and a slight stubble is looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a bright blue tank top. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a gym or a warehouse, with wooden beams and shelves visible. There are blue geometric shapes overlaid on the image: a large triangle in the top right and a smaller one in the bottom left.

Learn more.
ichoosebtec.com

DAY ONE AND TWO CO

WORLDSKILLS 2017: A SOLID START FOR TEAM UK

The opening couple of days at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi saw most of Team UK head back to their hotel rooms in a positive mood.

One person particularly pleased with his progress on day one was Shane Carpenter, the UK's competitor in IT network system administration, who works for Britain's biggest defence manufacturer, BAE Systems.

"I was very very happy with the progress I made; it went amazingly well and I have had the day of my life," he said.

Shane put his early success down to the mammoth three months that his employer allowed him off to train for the competition.

"BAE Systems is a pretty awesome company to work for," he said. "I took about 12 weeks off work to train for the event in which me and my expert went to

college every day during the holidays and studied and practised there from 8am till 5pm, just constantly doing work to prepare for it."

Betsy Crosbie, Team UK's competitor in mechanical engineering CAD, also had a smile on her face.

The 21-year-old, who won a medallion of excellence at EuroSkills Gothenburg 2016, is one of only two women competing in her skill, out of 25 in total.

But despite working in a male-dominated arena, Betsy felt confident she would go far.

"Today went really well. I got everything finished and to a good standard that I was happy with," she told FE Week.

"There is still a little bit of pressure obviously being male-dominated, but I just come in every day and feel confident I know my skill and smash it."

On day two, Josh Peek, a welder from Norwich who has a family history in the trade, described how he aimed to replicate his golden success at EuroSkills in this year's competition.

"I won gold in Gothenburg so I'm definitely hoping to repeat that success, but it is a different level here," he said. "We've got Korea and America, Australia and loads more completely different countries so it is a different atmosphere to Gothenburg."

And Team UK's car-painter Daryl Head said that although he was having to use different paint from what he was used to, he was pleased with how he started his competition.

"I'm using paint I'm not used to but I've had lots of training to prepare for this scenario," he said. "I'm really happy with my progress."



Tom Revell



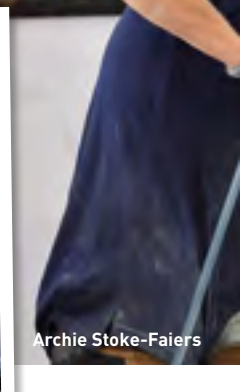
Ethan Davies



Daryl Head



Daniel McCabe



Archie Stoke-Faiers



Steven Lodge



Bridie Thorne



COMPETITION COVERAGE

HIGH PRAISE FROM FIRST SKILLS MINISTER TO VISIT IN EIGHT YEARS



Sam Hillier



The skills and apprenticeships minister has pledged to bottle the “essence” of WorldSkills Abu Dhabi and “sprinkle it around the UK” in her bid to breakdown “the barriers” our country faces in bridging the skills gap.

Anne Milton became the first UK minister to attend the competition in eight years, and said all her dreams would “come true” if she were able to spread what she has seen to young people back in the UK.

The minister started took a tour of the Adnec arena, and visited the stands where each of our 34 competitors were vying with the most skilled young people from 58 other countries.

Accompanied by the ESFA’s chief executive Peter Lauener, WorldSkills UK chief executive Dr Neil Bentley, the organisation’s chair Carole Stott, and its

director for skills Ben Blackledge, Ms Milton spoke with training managers and the friends and family of the competitors to get a feel of what the event is all about.

“I have heard a lot about WorldSkills but like many things, you can be told about it but it is not until you get here and see it in action. The size and scale has blown me away,” she said.

“Having 34 competitors here from the UK makes me feel humbled. They’re the stars and I am dipping in the end of what has been an enormous programme of work.

“It is moving to meet the parents out here and see their pride in their children. It is also the diversity of skills that are being tested – landscape gardening, hairdressing, jewellery-making and the rest.”

WorldSkills Abu Dhabi has come at a critical time for the UK, given the

prime minister’s new skills agenda. But for WorldSkills UK, the organisation that runs the nation’s skills competitions, funding has been squeezed by half in the last four years.

“One of the reasons I am here is because I don’t think it has ever been higher on a government’s priority,” she said. “Of course we face quite tight financial times, but this is critical not only for economic prosperity. It is about the country and all of that talent amongst young people that we are not able to use.”

Ms Milton also admitted that the UK is “absolutely not” good enough at spreading the benefits of skills competitions.

“If I could put in a bottle essence of this competition and sprinkle it around the UK then all my dreams would be answered,” she said.



Neil Bentley, Anne Milton and Carole Stott



Anne Milton



Anne Milton



Alexander Wood



Adam Ferguson



Kaiya Swain

DAY THREE AND FOUR C

TEAM UK'S PAST CHAMPIONS SHOW SUPPORT BEFORE THE FINAL HURDLE

Anxious, tired and excited – that's how Team UK were feeling after day three of WorldSkills Abu Dhabi, at least according to past champions watching from the wings.

With a single day to go until competitions were over, FE Week caught up with two former gold medallists to get a sense of the pressure our 34 competitors would be experiencing the night before the final day.

"By day three, competitors have had roughly 18 hours in action. A slight bit of tiredness will be setting in so they've got to keep the energy levels up by drinking lots of water and eating plenty of food," said Ashley Terron, who won gold for Team UK in bricklaying in Leipzig 2013.

"Sometimes the mind can be wandering as they start to have a look at the other competitors' work so they can be swayed by that but they've got to stay mentally strong, stick to their game plan, stay within their own team, and listen to their own training manager.

"They've got to trust their plans so that they know at the last second they will be finished and they've given their best shot

and left everything on the stand and have no regrets."

Rianne Chester, who won gold in beauty therapy in Sao Paulo in 2015, and took the illustrious Albert Vidal award for scoring the greatest number of points amongst all competitors from every nation taking part, said competitors would be feeling a mixture of anxiety and excitement.

"Each competitor will be different right now," she said. "Some will be coming off happy but some will be crying their eyes out because they might have messed up on a section and that could be them basically blowing their chances of getting a medal."

But when that buzzer goes on day four, Rianne said they'll all meet conflicting emotions.

"When they're finished what they'll experience is either that feeling that comes all over your body like you're all white and going to be sick, and you either cry or you get tired or get buzzing. It is different for everyone," she said. "They'll also feel really relieved."

Every competitor in Team UK will have put in at least two years of determined

training to get to this point.

Terron said they must stay confident in themselves to get over that final hurdle on the last day.

"This is everything they've trained for," he said. "Some people train for this for four or five years, so they've got to remember they've made it to the top of the pyramid. So stick to your plans: you know you can do it, that's why you're on the stand and everyone else believes in you, so believe in yourself and you'll get through it."



Daniel McCabe



Betsy Crosbie



Elizabeth Forkuoh



Alexander McCluskey



COMPETITION COVERAGE

EMOTIONS RUN HIGH AS TEAM UK FINISHES THE JOB



Bridie Thorne



It was an emotional final day of competition as Team UK completed their tasks in front of huge crowds of supporters.

After four intense and exciting days, personal battles in 51 different skills came to a close at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi.

This part of the competition is always the most invigorating, as friends, family, experts, team leaders, delegates and staff gather around each of the stands to applaud competitors as the buzzer goes to signal that time is up.

First to finish for Team UK was Jordan Charters from Edinburgh College, who is employed by George Charters. The painter and decorator ended his run wrapped in his dad's arms, and nobody could hold back to tears.

"The relief is incomparable," he said.

"I'm feeling a bit emotional as well which is all good. It's quite special. I'll probably

never feel like this again."

Angus Bruce-Gardner, who trains at Waters & Acland and is employed by Silverlining, also had family by his side for his big finish

"My mum, dad and sister have been out all week, supporting me through this whole journey," the cabinet-maker said.

"I don't think I've done as well as I could have done; things have gone wrong, but overall I've got the piece finished [a cabinet] and it's all done in time."

Daniel Martins, from EAS Mechanical and Briggs and Forester, also shared his thoughts after competing in plumbing and heating.

"I'm pleased with my overall performance. It was a really tough few days and I'm absolutely shattered now but happy with my work, glad it is all over," he said.

Andrew Gault said he would "go away with my head held high" at the end of the auto body-repair competition.

"It feels great to be done and I'm glad I never have to do that again, but I'm happy with what I've done - I don't think I

could've done any better," he added.

Harrison Moy, from British Gypsum and H&R Property Enhancement, said it was "absolutely amazing" to have finished the plastering competition.

"All of the hard work has come to an end, I'm looking forward to the closing ceremony and going home to relax."

The final word went to Daniel McCabe, Team UK's competitor in 3D game art design who works at Codemasters and trains at West Cheshire College.

Even though his computer broke on the third day of the competition, he said he was "made up" with what he had on his screen by the end.

"The atmosphere has been electric and when you're competing and you hear different countries coming past it gives it a great dynamic which makes it feel special," he said. "I've moved halfway across the country to do a job I didn't even dream of getting and I'm now half way across the world competing at this competition. The whole WorldSkills experience has been unbelievable."



Steven Lodge, confectionery, final submission



Kaiya Swain

TEAM UK STRIKES GOLD

Team UK retained its top-10 position at WorldSkills this year, after our competitors bagged one gold, three silvers, three bronzes, and 13 medallions of excellence in Abu Dhabi.

Our competitors went home with their heads held high after pulling in a medal haul that better rivals Germany and over 45 other nations, at the “Olympics of skills”.

Picking up Team UK’s gold was Kaiya Swain, who was voted the world’s best young beauty therapist.

The 22-year-old, who trains at Sussex Downs College and runs her own business called Kaiya Rose Beauty, said she “couldn’t describe” how she felt after winning the top prize.

“The competition was so tough this year, the girls were all brilliant and I kept saying ‘I won’t win, I won’t win’ but I’ve just gone up and got gold,” she added.

“I’m in shock and just so happy. This is the first medal I’ve ever won so this means more than anything in the world.”

Kaiya celebrated her gold medal at a spectacular closing ceremony in front of 15,000 spectators tonight at the du Arena, which was broadcast for the world to see.

Team UK’s silver medallists included architectural stonemason Archie Stoke-Faiers, 22, from Weymouth College, carpainter Daryl Head, 21, from Thatcham Automotive Academy, and visual merchandiser Catherine Abbott, 21, from East Berkshire College.

“I was happy with what I did by the end

but the competition was so fierce I didn’t think I’d get anything but I’m so happy I did,” said Catherine.

“Over this two-year process I’ve missed so many weddings and birthday parties to train but it has all been worth it in the end. Second best in the world is pretty crazy.”

And picking up our three bronze medals were plumber Dan Martins, 20, from EAS Mechanical, cabinet-maker Angus Bruce-Gardner, 22, who trains at Waters & Acland, and auto-repairer Andrew Gault, a 20-year-old from Riverpark Training and Development.

“I’m still in shock,” said Angus as he left the podium. “To be honest I thought I’d be low down on the list. It is pretty impossible to put into words what I felt like walking up to that stage.”

Team UK finished 10th in the medals table and was the smallest team to make the global top 10, ahead of Germany which was joint 12th with Finland.

Thirteen other members of Team UK were awarded a medallion of excellence for reaching the international standard in their skill.

These included Elizabeth Forkuoh in restaurant service, Betsy Crosbie in mechanical engineering CAD, Josh Hunter in bricklaying, Jordan Charters in painting and decorating, Conor Willmott in joinery, Alexander Wood in jewellery, Bridie Thorne in hairdressing, Ruth Hansom in cooking, Adam Ferguson and Will Burberry in landscape gardening, Tom Revell and Sam Hillier in mechatronics,

Josh Peek in welding, Joseph Massey in aircraft maintenance, and Shane Carpenter in IT network admin (cyber security).

This year’s competition was seen by many as a litmus test for the UK’s ability to cope when Brexit kicks in from 2019.

Neil Bentley, chief executive of WorldSkills UK, said the nation’s young people have done the country “proud”.

“If we celebrate Team UK’s success and use it to inspire others to follow in their footsteps – the future of the UK is in safe hands,” he added.

Apprenticeships and skills minister Anne Milton, who visited the competition to support the team this week, called upon parents to take note of the results.

“I have been blown away by Team UK,” she said. “They have done fantastically well – this is the UK competing on the world stage for skills and achieving great things.

“There will be huge celebrations when they come home. To get to this level is brilliant.

“There is a message here for parents: university is not the only option. The opportunities are boundless if they overcome any bias that they might have. We must ensure that the young apprentices here become an inspiration to others.”

China led the medal table with 15 gold medals, seven silvers and eight bronzes. Korea came second on medal points with eight golds, eight silvers, and eight bronzes. Switzerland was third on points, winning 11 golds, six silver, and three bronze.



Andrew Gault (centre) with fellow award winning competitors in Autobody repair

GOLD IN ABU DHABI



Jordan Charters & training manager Mark Nevin



WORLD SKILLS 20

Achieving a medal is always the end goal for every competitor competing in WorldSkills.

Top prizes up for grabs are golds, silvers, and bronzes, as well as medallions of excellences.

“**It was an absolute honour to represent my country. This is a dream come true, I never expected to come out on top**”

Kaiya Swain

Each skill was scored differently, but competitors had to reach a minimum of 500 points to claim a medallion, which meant they reached the international standard in their trade.

The top three medals were handed out at the closing ceremony, where each of the winning competitors took to the stage to stand and celebrate on a podium before being sent backstage to be interviewed by the media.

WorldSkills UK then puts on an after-ceremony awards reception with all of the Team UK supporters, and of course the competitors, where the medallions of excellence were handed out.

At this year's reception, WorldSkills UK chair Carole Stott told the audience: “Well done to all of Team UK – you've done yourselves and your country proud. We've all seen how you've all performed in a spirit that is exemplary.”

Ben Blackledge, WorldSkills UK director for education and skills competitions, added: “I hope all of Team UK will hold this whole experience as really valuable to them. Thank you for everything you've done, and letting us all be part of the team.”

“**The feeling is unreal, it has been so much hard work but so worth it**”

Daryl Head

Well done once again to all of Team UK - here are our medallists.



Beauty therapy

Kaiya Swain

Employer:
Kaiya Rose Beauty
Training provider:
Sussex Downs College



Car painting

Daryl Head

Employer:
Nationwide Repair
Training provider:
Thatcham Automotive Academy



Plumbing and heating

Daniel Martins

Employer:
Briggs and Forrester
Training provider:
EAS Mechanical



2017: THE RESULTS



Architectural stonemasonry
Archie Stoke-Faiers

Employer:
www.archiefaiers.co.uk
Training provider:
Weymouth College



Restaurant service
Elizabeth Forkuoh

Employer:
The Gleneagles Hotel
Training provider:
Coleg Sir Gar



Mechanical engineering CAD
Betsy Crosbie

Employer:
n/a
Training provider:
New College Lanarkshire



Bricklaying
Josh Hunter

Employer:
Geo Houlton & Sons Ltd
Training provider:
Hull College



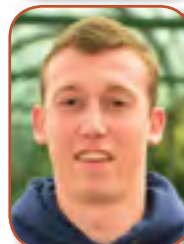
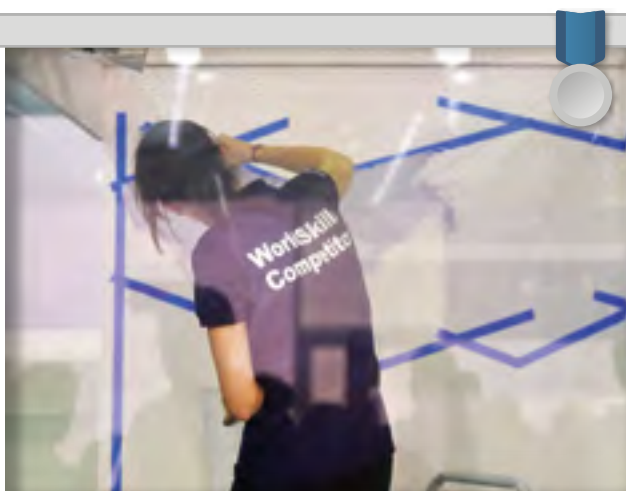
Painting and decorating
Jordan Charters

Employer:
George Charters
Training provider:
Edinburgh College



Visual merchandising
Catherine Abbott

Employer:
Topshop
Training provider:
Windsor College



Jewellery
Alexander Wood

Employer:
N Goves Ltd
Training provider:
The Goldsmiths' Centre



Hairdressing
Bridie Thorne

Employer:
Pride Hairdressing and Barbershop
Training provider:
Train with Pride



Mechatronics
Sam Hillier

Employer:
Toyota Manufacturing UK
Training provider:
Toyota Manufacturing UK



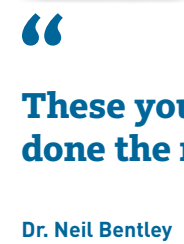
Mechatronics
Tom Revell

Employer:
Toyota Manufacturing UK
Training provider:
Toyota Manufacturing UK



Cabinet making
Angus Bruce-Gardner

Employer:
Silverlining
Training provider:
Waters & Acland



Welding
Josh Peek

Employer:
L&G Engineering
Training provider:
Great Yarmouth College



Aircraft maintenance
Joseph Massey

Employer:
Airbus UK
Training provider:
Coleg Cambria



Cooking
Ruth Hansom

Employer:
Hansom Lambert
Training provider:
Westminster Kingsway College



Autobody repair
Andrew Gault

Employer:
Glenn Allen Accident Repairs
Training provider:
Riverpark Training and Development



IT network system administration
Shane Carpenter

Employer:
BAE Systems
Training provider:
Nescot College



Landscape gardening
Adam Ferguson

Employer:
Hillsborough Castle
Training provider:
CAFRE



Joinery
Conor Wilmott

Employer:
Cambridge Conservatory Centre
Training provider:
West Suffolk College



Landscape gardening
Will Burberry

Employer:
Radial Landscape Construction
Training provider:
Merrist Wood College

“
These young people have
done the nation proud
”

Dr. Neil Bentley

WELL DONE TEAM UK



Team UK arriving at the Medallions of Excellence ceremony



Team UK arriving at the Medallions of Excellence ceremony



Medallion of Excellence medals Team UK



Team UK before competitions commenced on a desert safari



Daryl Head



A jubilant Team UK following the closing ceremonies



Angus Bruce-Gardner



Peter Lauener, Josh Hunter and Neil Bentley



Dan McCabe (right) with his mother

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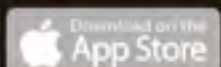
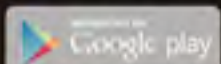
- Get involved with our Have a Go experiences
- See presentations from industry leaders
- Sign up for education, training, and live job vacancies
- See competitors battle it out in the WorldSkills UK Competitions National Finals.

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