

UK SKILLS - a new era begins

I've been asked to record my thoughts on taking up the post of Chairman of UK SKILLS, to succeed Sir John Cassels.

After so many years in the wilderness, skills and vocational education and training are now being taken seriously. There is increasing national determination to ensure that the skills of our workforce are sufficient to meet the challenging demands of the knowledge economy over the next decade.

UK SKILLS, under the able management of John Cassels and Pat Snell, both of whom leave us at the end of 2000, has played a key role in this by ensuring we recognise that skills are not only about competence and capability, but at their pinnacle are about world class excellence.



The development of the national framework of over 70 skills competitions which led to the year long Skills Festival in 2000, culminated in two key milestones - the national Skills Show in Birmingham in July, and the announcement of the UK team for the 2001 World Skills Olympics in Seoul, Korea in November.

In acknowledgement of that success, we enter 2001 not only with a significantly increased budget for UK SKILLS, but also responsibility for the future development and organisation of the National Training Awards. I can't think of a more fitting culmination to ten years of dedication and commitment from both Sir John and Pat. I am delighted that Linda Ammon will be joining me in January 2001 as UK SKILLS' new Chief Executive, and I hope that our new team at the helm can build successfully upon the remarkable platform they have established.

Both Linda and I look forward to building strong relationships with all the partners who are critical to the future success of UK SKILLS - the National Training Organisations; the UK's network of training providers and FE Colleges; our supporter and national partner in the Skills Show, The Prince's Trust; the Department for Education and Employment; the WorldSkills organisation; and most importantly, the young people who enter the skills competitions with such energy and passion, their employers and their sponsors who provide the essential encouragement and support.

Chris Humphries CBE



Celebrating Skills at the Dome



WorldSkills 2001 Team members



Farewell to Pat and Sir John



Our new Chief Executive



National Training Awards



Welcome to other new staff

A Celebration of Skills



Pic: Jacky Chapman

David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment (r) with Chris Humphries, UK SKILLS Chairman, and UK SKILLS 2001 WorldSkills Team members

More than 500 guests of the partner bodies (UK SKILLS, The Prince's Trust, the New Millennium Experience Company, Manpower plc and the Department for Education and Employment) joined representatives from skills competition organisers, sponsors of the various industry skills competitions, National Training Organisations, employers, Further Education Colleges, Birmingham City Council and sponsors, exhibitors and conference organisers at The Skills Show gathered at the Millennium Dome on 16 November to mark the achievements of the Manpower National Skills Festival 2000 and The Skills Show.

The event was compered by television and film actor Razaaq Adoti, whose career had been 'kick-started' by a grant from The Prince's Trust. Musical entertainment was provided by Oscar-winning composer Stephen Warbeck's band The hKippers; and soccer stars Gary Mabbutt MBE and Paul Williams added their congratulations to the UK team selected for Korea.

Guest of honour was the Rt. Hon. David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, making his second appearance at a festival event to announce the team that would represent the UK at the World Skills Competition to be held in Seoul in 2001. Expressing the hope that the team would be as successful at these 'Skill Olympics' as Britain was at the

Olympic Games and the Paralympics in Sydney earlier this year, Mr Blunkett congratulated the chosen individuals and wished them good luck in their quest for gold.

He pointed out that the announcement of the team was the culmination of two years hard work by hundreds of young people who had taken part in skills competitions around the country. Many of those selected had achieved their success by competing in the national finals at The Skills Show, which he had visited in July, and he went on to praise that event as an excellent and effective way of spotlighting skills to demonstrate the impressive range of skills available in

the UK and to show everyone how crucial it was to develop and maintain world-class standards. He expressed his pleasure that The Skills Show would be a regular event and that the team for World Skills competitions would be chosen at those events in future. He congratulated UK SKILLS and The Prince's Trust on their work which aimed to encourage young people into training by raising the credibility of vocational skills and by promoting excellence thereby generating high-quality jobs for the future.

Concluding his remarks, Mr Blunkett spoke of the importance of a properly skilled workforce for Britain's economy and spoke of the challenge ahead. "To succeed in this skills challenge we need individuals and industry to play their part. That is why I am doubly pleased to be here today. With the success of the Manpower National Skills Festival 2000 and a strong team to take our hopes forward for gold in Seoul next year, I feel confident that we have made a good start towards giving this country the skills it needs for a successful and prosperous economy."

This was the final event of the festival and had been designed both to celebrate a memorable year of promoting vocational skills and as a way of expressing thanks to the thousands of individuals and organisations without whose help neither the festival nor The Skills Show would have been possible.



Pic: Barney Gibbens

Millennium Dome Chief Executive, Pierre-Yves Gerbeau, talking to Pat Snell during the event

A Personal Thank You

Those of you who read our Autumn Newsletter may remember that I looked back over UK SKILLS first ten years and reviewed the enormous distance we had travelled since August 1990. This, my last column, is more of a personal reminiscence and provides an opportunity for me to thank and pay tribute to all those we have met on our travels and who have given us the help we needed to achieve the goals we set along the way.

With that help, we began by setting up what we now know as the national framework of skills competitions.

This was formed in order to involve as many organisation and individuals from industry and education as possible to promote skills, select a UK team for the Skills Olympics and to celebrate excellence. Sir Geoffrey Holland at DfEE kick-started us, John Barnes, Director-General of City and Guilds, gave us an office to live in and an 'umbrella' to shelter under, and Sir David Woodbine Parish with the Clothworkers' Foundation believed in our aims enough to come forward with a sizeable donation that enabled us to start work on a structure without worrying too much about wolves at the door.

That structure has today turned into quite a 'building' composed of a huge variety of skills competitions across all major sectors and at different levels; a new development with schools; a Further Education Council dedicated to the growth of skills competitions within its sector; the responsibility for the management of National Training Awards; and a strong and much valued partnership with The Prince's Trust set up to run biennial National Skills Festivals and Skills Shows.

Continuing the analogy of a building, I am the first person to acknowledge the extraordinary skill required to create structures – as my friends in the construction industry will acknowledge. The bricks, cement and decoration of the structure we have today at the end of 2000 have been provided by hundreds of helpers from an equal number of organisations prepared to give us their support and expertise, whether in the form of time, cash or 'in kind'. And so the building has grown and prospered, our journey has been challenging, full of variety with twists and turns and we have made many friends.

I count myself immensely lucky to have had such a varied and enjoyable job. Perhaps I may be permitted to single out a few names from all of you who are too numerous to mention.

First and foremost – Sir John Cassels, whose wisdom, kindness and humour have been of inestimable value to me and to the organisation as a whole. Jim Hammer, too, started with us in the early days and put in hours and hours of superb work at international level to greatly improve the technical aspects of the work of WorldSkills. Mary Scrutton and Jonathan Freeman – from our first days in Portland Place were the pioneers who laboured practically day and night to help set those early foundations. Basil Henson, who has puffed his pipe and cursed every computer in the office, provided many of our policy papers and given invaluable advice all along. The Board members who have stayed the course throughout the whole ten years are Barney Gibbens, our Company Secretary, and David Bartley from the electrical installation sector. Derek Grover, from DfEE, started with us in 1990 and has constantly provided quiet encouragement, much needed financial assistance and the public support from Ministers and Secretaries of State.

I wish I could mention all of you – our excellent staff, other Board and committee members, technical experts, team leaders and competitors, competition organisers, FE college staff, NTOs, TECs/LECs, trade unions, The Prince's Trust who generously welcomed us to 18 Park Square East, our members and all who have joined in generously with projects of one kind or another. It has been great fun, immensely worthwhile and I hope that many of the young people we have in some way influenced have benefited both personally and in their careers.

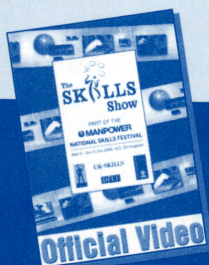
I must not forget my friends and colleagues in WorldSkills (formerly IVTO) many of whom I have known since 1965 when I was first involved in what used to be known as the International Apprentice Competition. It was a great privilege and pleasure to know Sr Albert Vidal, the founder of the organisation, and his family. I also acknowledge Drs Cees Beuk's recent contribution and take this opportunity publicly to wish Tjerk Dusseldorp, the new President, every success in his efforts to make WorldSkills a truly worldwide influence for the development and promotion of vocational skills.

A huge thank you to all of you and my warmest wishes to the new Chairman and new Chief Executive for an even more enjoyable and successful next decade.

You can be sure I shall be cheering from the touchline.



Patricia Snell OBE



The Skills Show 2000 Official Video

This video is now available from The National Skills Festival Company Ltd,
18 Park Square East, London NW1 4LH Price £10 (includes postage and packing)

Looking back – and forward



Sir John Cassels CB

Medals should be struck for the volunteers of Skill UK who kept the banner of participation in the Youth Skills Olympics flying in the lean years of non-existent resources and scant official support. They did magnificently in their garrets and garages, but they were up against countries like Germany, France, Japan, Korea and Taiwan which have never had any hang-ups about the importance of practical skills. It was amateurs versus professionals, and the going was tough.

UK SKILLS took over 10 years ago with the official backing of the government and City and Guilds. Not much money ('get industry to pay') but we soon found plenty of goodwill – often expressed in

blessedly practical ways – and a host of people willing to give personal support far beyond the call of duty.

Of course, the job was never just about international competition. You don't win the world cup in any sport which isn't thriving in your own country. So the way forward was to promote skills competitions locally, regionally and nationally, to foster new ones in the latest skills (IT, mechatronics for example) and to celebrate achievement by putting excellence in skills on show. The national framework is not perfect but it does now exist.

This year we achieved a milestone, not on our own but in partnership with The Prince's Trust which is every bit as committed as ourselves to promoting skills for young people ('Yes You Can'). A National Skills Festival took place which saw scores of local events being held throughout the country. The centrepiece was the first ever national Skills Show in Birmingham in July, a truly vibrant event

which brought together most of the country's skill competition finals, together with much else: 'have a go' opportunities for the many thousands of (mostly young) visitors, highly colourful schools competitions (thanks to support from the Clothworkers' Foundation), much live music, international conferences, company showcases of skill and hot-lines to careers advice. We've also helped the international skills organisation, now re-named WorldSkills, to get moving into the 21st century, looking outwards not inwards.

And now? It is no time for sitting back when we've just about reached the starting blocks. There is a new National Skills Agenda in place and a brand-new national Learning and Skills Council, with 47 local LSCs, gets going in April 2001. UK SKILLS has been asked to take over the management of the National Training Awards. The next decade is one of unparalleled opportunity for vocational skills in this country. It's a huge opportunity for UK SKILLS!

National Training Awards Competition

UK SKILLS has agreed to take responsibility for managing the National Training Awards competition from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) which will retain policy responsibility, including liaison with ministers. UK SKILLS will assume responsibility for running the competition on 1 April 2001 following a six-month hand-over period.



Sophie Byatt

These Awards provide an annual showcase for training excellence. They are won by employers and individuals who demonstrate excellence in their use of learning, training and development to achieve business and individual success. This approach is directly relevant and closely allied to our aim of promoting the importance of vocational skills to national prosperity at a time of increasing global competition. A separate NTA unit, reporting directly to the Chief Executive, has been established within UK SKILLS to administer the awards and Sophie Byatt has been appointed as head of the new unit. We are delighted to welcome Sophie who joined us on 1 December from Pitman Training Group where she had many years' experience in a training environment with responsibility for managing large budgets and dealing with contract issues to ensure delivery of outcomes on target and within budget.

UK•SKILLS

UK SKILLS aims to help British industry by promoting world-class standards of vocational skills through competitions.

WorldSkills – mission, goal and objectives WorldSkills' mission is to challenge young people, teachers, trainers and employers to achieve world-class standards of competence in commerce, services and industry, and to promote the status of vocational training.

To this end, the organisation runs the WorldSkills Competition; promotes the exchange of ideas, experience and contacts between vocational training organisations through seminars, meetings and competitions; disseminates information on world-class standards of competence; encourages the exchange of trainers and trainees between member countries.

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New Organisational Structure

The continuing expansion of the national framework of skills competitions, the development of skills competitions in schools and colleges, biennial National Skills festivals, an increase in the activities of WorldSkills and the additional task of administering the National Training Award competition requires a different organisational structure to reflect the various staff responsibilities for effective and efficient performance.

As from 1 November, four units have been established, reporting to the Chief Executive either directly or through the Deputy Chief Executive.

Several posts have yet to be filled and, especially within the Competitions Unit where Hilary Jennings has been promoted to Head of Development and Operations, individual responsibilities have still to be defined.

- **Chief Executive**
Linda Ammon CBE
Katy Pettit (personal assistant)
- **Administration/Finance/Human Resources Unit**
David Innes-Wilson
Carmel Eilon
- **Communications Unit**
To be appointed
- **National Training Awards (NTA) Unit**
Sophie Byatt
- **Competitions Unit (national framework, international, schools, colleges, special projects, NSF liaison)**
Dr Graeme Hall (Deputy Chief Executive)
Joanne Purcell (personal assistant to DyCE)
Hilary Jennings (Head of Development and Operations)
Charles Turner
Heidi Agbenyo
Ian Credland (part-time)



Carmel Eilon



Ian Credland

New staff members

We welcome the following individuals who have joined UK SKILLS staff

- Carmel Eilon
Administration/Finance/Human Resources Unit
- Joanne Purcell
Personal assistant to the Deputy Chief Executive
- Ian Credland
Competitions Unit (part-time)

Good-Bye Basil

Yet another of the original team will be leaving us at the end of the year. Basil Henson has given us two days per week for no remuneration (except lunches!) over the past ten years during which he has written innumerable policy papers, helped to establish administrative and financial procedures, and made a most significant contribution to our involvement with the IVTO (now WorldSkills). We shall greatly miss his weekly appearances.



Basil Henson

New Chief Executive



Linda Ammon CBE

Linda Ammon has been appointed Chief Executive in succession to Pat Snell who retires on 31 December 2000.

Linda joins us after 13 years experience in senior posts with the Employment Service, the Employment Department and the Department for Education and Employment. For the past two years she has been Head of the Workplace Learning Division at DFEE with responsibility for developing policies for learning in the workplace and has had a close involvement with UK SKILLS. She was a welcome visitor to the 1999 World Skills Competition in Montreal and to The Skills Show in July this year, providing invaluable support to our aim of promoting vocational and practical skills as a valid and credible career choice.

Her undoubted commitment to the need for a highly-skilled and high quality workforce, her vibrant personality and her knowledge of the key players in vocational education and training will win her many new friends as she leads the UK SKILLS team in the coming years.

We greatly welcome Linda's appointment and wish her well for the future.

36th WorldSkills Competition Seoul, South Korea, September 2001

UK SKILLS TEAM

Trade

Fitting
Mechatronics
Mechatronics
CADD
CNC Turning
CNC Milling
Information Technology
Welding
Pattern Making
Wall & Floor Tiling
Autobody Repair
Industrial Electronics
Bricklaying
Stonemasonry
Painting & Decorating
Plastering
Cabinet Making
Joinery
Carpentry
Jewellery
Ladies' Hairdressing
Men's Hairdressing
Automobile Technology
Car Painting
Refrigeration Technology
IT PC & Network Support

Competitor

Ian Walker
Sidney Bell
Stuart Edmead
Matthew Cluff
James Butcher
Ian Caldicott
Alistair Watkins
Tony Murray
Jamie Sykes
Andrew Tovey
Lee Bench
Gareth Willis
Darren Davies
Michael Goulding
Andrew Hare
Craig Fountain
Brian Ludlow
Ian Russell
Richard Rooney
Richard Talman
Kelly Hodges
Tracy Megoran
Gavin Lester
John Goldson
Mark Durant
Alex Ellis

Employer

ABRO Donnington
Ford Motor Co Ltd
Ford Motor Co Ltd
Baynfax Ltd
Shearline Precision Engineering
Delcam UK Tooling Services
Student, University of Greenwich
Interserve Industrial Services Ltd
Pentag Power Transmissions Ltd
Keith Carter
Fred Smith & Sons Ltd
BAe Systems
Generation Foundations
S & J Whitehead
Self-employed
Reproduction Plaster
Colin Angell Ltd
Tristan Ltd
PM Construction
David Lawes Jewellery
Cutting Edge
Sweeneys
Cooks of Stamford Ltd
Karl Vella Ltd
Carter Refrigeration
Student, Deacon's School, Peterborough

National competition

Tom Nevard Competition
SkillMECHATRONICS
SkillMECHATRONICS
SkillCAD
SkillCNC
SkillCNC
SkillIT
SkillWELD
SkillFORM
SkillBUILD
SkillAUTO
SkillELECTRONICS
SkillBUILD
SkillBUILD
SkillBUILD
SkillBUILD
SkillBUILD
SkillBUILD
UK Fine Jewellery Competition
SkillHAIR
SkillHAIR
SkillAUTO
SkillAUTO
SkillFRIDGE
SkillIT

Team Leader Bruce Robinson, Brathay Hall Trust



Pic: Jacky Chapman

David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment with Chris Humphries, UK SKILLS Chairman, and guests pictured with the UK SKILLS 2001 WorldSkills Team members