

Skill-UK

The flower of the UK's young craftsmen and women will this month (February 1988) be proving their worth and the success or otherwise of their country's training systems.

Twenty-five of them, chosen at highly competitive events held throughout the UK in 1987, will be taking part in the 1988 International Skill Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Hopes are high that they will win their fair share of 'golds' this year, although the opposition facing them from hundreds of competitors from 18 other countries is going to be very strong. But, on this occasion, it is hoped the UK can do better because a great deal of effort has gone into preparing the team to face the mental as well as physical pressures and stresses of an international event.

The other skills for which the UK has competitors are fitting, press toolmaking, turning, milling, CNC machinery, sheetmetal work, automobile mechanic, plant mechanic, wood patternmaking, plumbing, brickwork, stonemasonry, painting and decorating, plasterwork, cabinet making, joinery, carpentry, industrial electronics, radio and TV repair, house wiring, industrial wiring, men's hairdressing and cookery.

There are 19 countries taking part: Korea, Taiwan, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Australia, France, United States, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Liechtenstein, Ireland, Bermuda, Brazil, Macao, Portugal, New Zealand, and New Guinea.

A noticeable exception from the countries competing is Spain which was responsible for organising Skill Olympics when they first started in 1950. This year, 1988, is the first year in which Spain has

It is hoped that all those industrialists and others concerned with training in the UK, who believe that it is essential for the UK's international prestige to do well in '89, will give their support.

Firms, in particular, will benefit greatly from the opportunity for publicity which will result from the limelight of TV cameras, radio and press that will be concentrated on the event.

By the time this article is read the results of the '88 competition should have started coming in. Skill-UK naturally hope that the UK will do well and so give a boost to its own hosting the following year.

Any enquiries about the Skill Olympics can be made to the '89 Organising Committee Chief Administrative Officer, Peter Whaley, Skill-UK, at City and Guilds' Portland Place address.

Peter Whaley



Courtesy Skill-UK

The Skill-UK team pictured during a weekend session at Bircham Newton Training Centre, with Team Leader Archie Sharkie (extreme left) and Skill-UK Chairman, Eric Tindall (extreme right).

Everyone – Skill-UK who are responsible for choosing the team, the City and Guilds of London Institute, ITBs like the Construction Industry Training Board, Hotel & Catering Industry Training Board, Road Transport Industry Training Board, and Engineering Industry Training Board, the education service and employers – is well aware that the young men and women carrying the flag for Britain are the product of the training system in which they have all had a part in developing.

Arrangements were made early in 1987 to arrange intensive training for the UK team and weekend sessions were organised at the CITB's Bircham Newton Training Centre in Norfolk. Attending the weekends were team members and the experts and shopmasters looking after them in each craft. The idea was to get together for briefing sessions on what to expect in Sydney.

The weekends were also very useful in helping all involved in getting to know each other and build up a winning team spirit.

Team members were clearly told that previous attitudes of settling for a bronze or silver medal were not good enough. This time they must go to Sydney with the intention to win golds.

The UK's 1988 team includes two female competitors in ladies' dressmaking and ladies' hairdressing.

not entered a team.

The aim of holding Skill Olympics is to encourage standards of excellence in industrial and service skills and to provide a forum for the comparison of techniques and training methods.

The Skill Olympics and the qualifying events are run on a charity basis and rely for their financing on the generosity of sponsors such as individual firms, industrial training boards and other organisations. City and Guilds has played a very major role in helping the Skill Olympics to keep going over many years.

Once the Sydney Olympics are over then the UK will become even more involved – it is to be host country for the next Olympics in 1989.

This will be the 30th International Youth Skill Olympics and will be held at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, in late August and early September.

The level of prestige to which this event has now grown is shown by the fact that the Duke of Edinburgh agreed to become patron of the '89 Skill Olympics. And leading industrialist, Sir John Egan, Chairman and Managing Director of Jaguar plc, accepted the position of president.

The giant task of organising the '89 Skill Olympics is already well under way and sponsors to fund the event, which will cost well in excess of £1.5 million, are urgently being sought.

New national award for C&G Carpentry and Joinery students

A new national craft award for City and Guilds Advanced Craft Carpentry and Joinery students is being sponsored this year by John Carr Ltd., a major British manufacturer of joinery products for the building industry.

To be known as the John Carr award, the scheme offers prizes to the top ten students in the Purpose Made Joinery examination of the C&G Carpentry and Joinery (585) Advanced Craft certificate, selected on the basis of national examination results achieved at the end of the 1987/88 year.

The first prize will be £250, with other cash awards of £150 and £100 going to the second and third students respectively. Seven runners up will each receive £25 and all ten will receive a commemorative certificate. In addition, colleges producing the award-winning students will also receive recognition.

A formal presentation of awards and certificates is planned for the end of 1988, or early in 1989.

Explaining its philosophy in establishing the award, the company said: 'Joinery, even on the scale that we manufacture, and its successful application on site, is still greatly dependent on the skills of craftsmen.'

'As we employ both apprentices and highly qualified and experienced joiners and rely on them to help maintain the high level of quality work our products require it is, we feel, very appropriate that we should acknowledge the contribution of craftsmen to the company's success by establishing this award.'

John Carr, now part of the world-wide Rugby Group, was established more than 50 years ago and has seven UK factories making internal, external and patio doors, windows, staircases and roof trusses for the building industry.