

**Item 3 - 32nd International Youth Skill Olympics,  
Taipei, Taiwan 26-29 July 1993**

1. The official report attached covers all major aspects of the event in Taiwan and highlights very necessary lessons for the future. The international competition was superbly organised, the UK team of competitors and experts on the whole very professional and the excellent support given by the Official and Technical Delegates, the team leaders and Official Observer much appreciated.
2. The lead up to the Skill Olympics covers a period of about 18 months in which a very large number of individuals and organisations contribute to a complex and demanding process with the main aim of raising the profile of training and the importance of a highly skilled workforce.
3. Recent results show that UK participation in this event yields only average results.

Year	Place	Country	Trades	UK Competitors	Average overall score	Position
1989	Birmingham	21	34	34	495	13
1991	Amsterdam	24	36	28	497	12
1993	Taipei	24	38	31	496	13

(Note: 500 points denote minimum international standard. In 1993 Taiwan achieved an average score of 535)

4. If the UK is to continue to enter teams with the aim of moving significantly up the league table, and maintaining such a position, there are a number of issues which need to be spelt out, fully understood by those concerned, and acted upon in the very near future. These are:

(a) **Currency/relevance of IVTO trade descriptions**

Approximately 30% of the existing trade descriptions need updating and renegotiation at international level. If the industry sector in this country does not prepare trainees for techniques and skills for the trade promulgated by IVTO it may be

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(b) **Selection of national team**

The majority of existing competitions in the UK are fragile and unpublicised with little financial or administrative support. They do not enjoy the full backing of either professional or trade bodies and are in some cases held together by a few dedicated volunteers. True national selection is therefore virtually impossible. Unless major companies, industry training organisations and lead bodies act to support existing competitions and/or to establish new ones selection for the UK team will remain both poor and severely limited. UK Skills recognised this situation in 1991 and announced its intentions to promote and help build a national framework of skills competitions based on certain recommended conditions and criteria to ensure quality and breadth of selection. Roughly 60% of existing competitions appear to date to have largely ignored the plans and recommendations. Thus the most challenging task of UK Skills continues to be the business of encouraging a strong partnership so as to work together rather than in isolation.

(c) **Sectoral/regional/national support**

There is much to be done to gain the interest and positive commitment from bodies which already concern themselves with skills training, vocational qualifications and national targets. Industry Training Organisations, professional bodies, trade associations, unions and chambers of commerce all need to be involved in the national selection process, not merely as a provider of some much needed funds just before the international event. Approaches to such bodies as the National Council for Industry Training Organisations, National Training Partnership, National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets, TUC etc. will need to be followed up.

(d) **Preparation and training**

Once a competitor is selected for the team preparation and training appears to be very varied and difficult to co-ordinate. Employer commitment this year ranged from virtually nil to special training programmes devised and three months off-the-job full-time preparation.

Technical experts appointed by UK Skills with specific terms of reference are requested to devise and monitor a training programme over a minimum period of six months. For Taiwan one expert did not visit his competitor at all, some three times only, others one day a week for 11 months. The problem must be the same in other countries - how do they tackle it?

(e) **Attitude**

The majority of UK technical experts in Taiwan reported that competitors from other countries showed a marked ability to listen well, apply themselves to the task quickly, efficiently and with stamina. In about 70% of cases marks were lost because of nerves, pressure, lack of concentration. Training in skills other than technical ones must be seen as a priority.

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(f) **Finish/quality of workpiece**

Again, 90% of the UK team expressed genuine amazement at the finish and quality achieved particularly by the Far Eastern competitors. Some indication of this may be seen in the comparison of marks of the medal winners:

**Plumbing** - UK Silver 532 marks (Gold 555, Bronze 529)

**Cookery** - UK Silver 524 marks (Gold 527, second Silver 522)

**Information Technology** - UK Silver 514 marks (Gold 537)

**Arc Welding** - UK Bronze 523 (Gold 541, Silver 540)

**Brickwork** - UK Bronze 521 (Gold 530, Gold 529)

**Stonemasonry** - UK Bronze 517 (Gold 540, Silver 532)

**Plastering** - UK Bronze 517 (Gold 549, Silver 522)

**Joinery** - UK Bronze 538 (Gold 554, Silver 541)

**Men's Hairdressing** - UK Bronze 516 (Gold 530, Silver 526).

(g) **National publicity**

Regional and local publicity for both skills competitions and the Skill Olympics has doubled since Amsterdam. But nationally little is still heard about the international event. Sponsors rightly complain and see little benefit without a higher profile. (The Automobile Association has withdrawn its support for this reason.)

UK Skills will be devoting a significant amount of time, money and effort in the coming months to publicise the event, lessons learnt and the benefits of competing.

(h) **National infrastructure**

The whole training infrastructure needs to hear the message and 'get behind' that part to which each sector is best suited. Other member countries such as Australia, Austria, France and Holland are showing a significant increase of effort and it shows in their results.

(i) **UK representation**

UK Skills is beginning to make an impact. By 1997 we need to be winning many gold medals. Action on all of the issues mentioned is essential; if not, we shall be judged as a nation with not only average results but with only average support.

5. Members of the Board are requested to advise and comment on ways forward following presentation of the official report attached.

**Item 3 - 32nd International Youth Skills Olympics, Taipei, Taiwan 26-29 July 1993 - UK Skills Official Report (for the Board only)**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The 32nd International Youth Skill Olympics were held in the Taipei World Trade Centre and the Shung-Shan Vocational School, Taiwan from 26 - 29 July 1993. A total of 422 competitors from 24 countries took part. The competition was organised by the National Committee of the Republic of China for IVTC. The President of this committee is Dr Shou-Po Chao, Chairman of the Council of Labour Affairs. The detailed organisation of the event was the responsibility of the Technical Delegate of Taiwan, Mr Yang-Kuang Tan of the Skill Test Division of the Employment and Vocational Training Administration.
- 1.2 UK Skills entered a team of 31 competitors for 30 of the 37 official trades and for one demonstration trade (Appendix 1). The UK team was the fifth largest to take part. The competitors were supported by 31 technical experts and two team leaders. Mr D Bartley, a director of UK Skills, attended as the UK Official Delegate, Mr J D G Hammer CB, Technical Director of UK Skills, attended as the UK Technical Delegate and there were two UK Official Observers - Mr J Wiltshire, from the Employment Department, and Miss P M Snell, Chief Executive of UK Skills.
- 1.3 The UK team won three silver medals (including the demonstration trade), six bronze medals and 5 Diplomas of Excellence (awarded to non-medal winning competitors whose overall mark reaches the agreed international standard of 500 points) (Appendix 2). Overall, the UK team was placed equal fifth in terms of medals gained. (See Appendix 3 for overall results).
- 1.4 The following report based on observations, comments and suggestions from the Technical Delegate, the Official Observers, the technical experts, the team leaders and the competitors themselves, has been prepared for the confidential information of the Board.
- 1.5 In the interests of brevity the trades are sometimes referred to by the international skill number, the key to which is at Appendix 2.

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## SELECTION, PREPARATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

### 2. Competitor Selection

- 2.1 The basis of competitor selections remains very uneven, whilst some, particularly the building, hospitality and electrical sectors, emerge from truly national competitions following regional heats and possibly some local pre-selection, others are selected from possibly long established competitions, which nevertheless do not attract a truly national entry. In a few cases, UK Skills has deliberately encouraged the selection of a competitor, perhaps rather late in the day, from a limited competition, either in order to take advantage of a generous offer of sponsorship with the expectation of a truly national competition next time (trades 13 and 16), or in order to participate in a demonstration trade (IT).
- 2.2 Very disappointing has been the shortsighted attitude of some employers in apparently discouraging participation by their employees (e.g. CNC Machining or Mechatronics) because they are not prepared to forego the competitors' time needed to train and compete. The UK was therefore unable to participate in the crucial new multi-skill of Mechatronics in Taiwan and has therefore already foregone experience in this trade of the future.
- 2.3 Whilst there was no seriously sub-standard UK competitor, we are by no means selecting the best in the UK for every trade, and this reinforces the importance of UK Skills' policy of actively promoting multi-step truly national competitions in every trade.
- 2.4 The other significant innovation was that a UK Skills representative participated in the final selection procedure for every trade. Their role was to assess the competitor's broader suitability as a team member and if possible their ability to stand up to competitive pressure as well as to receive assurance of employer and family support. Although in fact the UK Skills representatives did not have occasion formally to raise objection to any selected finalist, it was nevertheless thought to be a valuable and necessary procedure.
- 2.5 The lessons for the future are:
  - 2.5.1 encourage a more supportive attitude among employers, particularly in the engineering industry, - a possible task for Board Members?
  - 2.5.2 continue to encourage the establishment of a succession of Local, Regional and National competitions.
  - 2.5.3 continue UK participation in the Final Selection Procedure.

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### 3. Competitor Training

- 3.1 All experts were required to prepare, discuss with their competitor and submit a training plan. These varied greatly depending on the trade, the co-operation of the employers and relevant College Authorities, the distance between the expert and the competitor and the time each was able to spare. Whilst some experts and competitors were able to meet weekly, most experts visited their competitors 3-6 times during the preparatory period, supplementing this by regular fax or telephone contacts. Intensive training varied from three weeks (or even only weekends and one evening a week) to ten, twelve or even sixteen weeks full time.
- 3.2 Very valuable was the opportunity to participate in the Netherlands National Finals (trades 22 and 23) as well as in other UK competitions (e.g. trades 20 and 34).
- 3.3 It is vital that in most trades competitors do past test pieces since they may test skills not used in day to day UK practice, although in fact only five competitors felt inadequately prepared as a result of their participation in the National Competition.
- 3.4 Although some intensive training over a period of weeks may be vital, some competitors felt that they got stale and would have preferred less intensive training over a longer period. In the end this would depend upon the availability of facilities, time, the geography and personal preferences.
- 3.5 Generally, the experts took their training duties seriously, and as far as could be judged took great trouble to see that their competitor was adequately prepared. Nevertheless many felt that the move away from the formal apprenticeship system in the UK had reduced the amount and level of skill training.
- 3.6 Only six competitors felt that they had not had enough time away from normal work in order to do specialist training, and 77% were very happy with the assistance given by Technical Experts prior to the competition. (The reasons for the dissatisfaction of others will be further investigated).
- 3.7 One of the greatest problems for experts is to get over to competitors just how high the standards are and how even a good UK performance may only appear mediocre in the context of the IVTC.
- 3.8 The lessons for the future are:
  - 3.8.1 experts need to be more closely supervised by sector representatives
  - 3.8.2 maintain emphasis on the most intensive possible training plan with particular attention to the skills to be tested in the competition itself.
  - 3.8.3 participation in European countries' skill competition finals and offer reciprocal arrangements e.g. to Netherlands and Ireland (see also comments under paragraph 'UK Competitors' Performance').

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#### 4. Briefing Weekend

- 4.1 Thanks again to the generosity of the CITB it was possible to bring together the competitors and all the technical experts for an intensive training programme at the CITB Training Centre, Bircham Newton during April. On the first day, the competitors were introduced to each other and to the team leaders. A programme of activities, designed and supervised by CITB staff to develop team spirit and to assess fitness was undertaken and was highly successful. The former five-times world karate champion, Mr Jeoff Thompson, attended much of the morning programme and offered some valuable advice in the afternoon. Two former medal winners from previous competitions also attended the weekend and helped to motivate the team by informally outlining their experiences.
- 4.2 The technical experts arrived on the second day and had several specialist briefings, increased and improved as a result of previous experience. Experts worked regularly with their competitors and joined them for a series of sessions with two psychologists whose task was to provide advice and assistance on working in a competitive environment. About 100 people attended the formal dinner, including competitors, experts, some Board members, UK Skills staff and a number of guests. The third and final morning particularly concerned administrative and more practical aspects of the Taiwan competition.
- 4.3 The majority of participants judge the programme to have achieved the right balance between team building activities, psychological sessions and technical matters. A minority of competitors would have liked more sporting activities. In future a greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of stamina, not just fitness.
- 4.4 As far as experts are concerned, there is a need to amplify the briefing to cover appeals for extra time allowances for defective workplaces, materials or equipment. The briefing on the IVTO marking system also needs improvement with clearer presentation and more time for discussion.
- 4.5 A separate briefing session for nominated Chief Experts should be retained but supplemented with a day by day aide-memoire of more minor, but nevertheless important tasks. (This might also be useful as a handout for all experts, both as an indicator of what to expect and as a possible prompt to less than competent Chief Experts of other nationalities). There should also be a short briefing session for competitors on the most important IVTC rules and procedures, e.g. the timetable, familiarisation time, allocation of work days, appeals against defective workplaces, plant and materials, the examination of toolboxes and possible exclusion of equipment "not in normal commercial use", non-communication with the compatriot expert except in the presence of another expert, the role of the Chief Expert and Jury President, marking criteria and a brief reference to the marking procedure.

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4.6 The lessons for the future are:

- 4.6.1 retain general structure of briefing weekend but give greater emphasis to the importance of stamina.
- 4.6.2 include briefing sessions on IVTC rules and procedures for competitors.
- 4.6.3 improve briefing of experts on the marking procedure and provide Chief Experts with a more detailed aide-memoire of their responsibilities.
- 4.6.4 shorten the amount of time set aside for experts to speak individually to their competitors and allow more work in sectors involving both experts and competitors. This could be achieved on the final morning by shortening the closing session. A specimen action plan for experts and competitors was required, to include target dates and a declaration of requirements.

5. Travel arrangements

- 5.1 A special group booking was negotiated with EVA Air for the two parties - the experts, who left on 17 July, and the competitors, who left on 22 July. Both parties, apart from a few officials and experts, returned to UK on 5 August, after a 36 hour stopover in Bangkok. Originally it had been intended to fly KLM but this was cancelled in favour of EVA Air on the grounds of cost and comfort. The decision was considered wise and, in general arrangements worked very satisfactorily. It emphasised the requirement to carry out extensive and timely research.
- 5.2 Travel within UK was an individual responsibility, apart from the coach which took the team from London to Gatwick. Individuals were able to claim for expenses involved. In future, there require to be clearer guidelines on what is acceptable, such as overnight expenses and double return car journeys to deliver to and collect from the airport.
- 5.3 Travel insurance by means of a block policy was satisfactorily arranged.

6. Toolkits

- 6.1 The competition organisers had appointed freight forwarding agents who supplied all necessary details, including their UK depot and clear instructions on packing, labelling and paperwork to enable toolboxes to be cleared through Customs and delivered to the workplace. These worked well, as did the return arrangements, thanks to a large degree to Mr Ray Prosser, Sector Representative of Sector 1, who assumed responsibility for toolkits during the period in Taipei.

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- 6.2 Toolkits generally arrived in good order with only superficial damage to some boxes. Nearly half the competitors felt that they had 'more than enough tools and equipment' and only three considered that they did not have enough. It is vital that all experts check the adequacy of the tools taken to and available at the competition, carefully consider the need for additional equipment and make firm arrangements in good time to ensure that all this equipment is available to the competitor.
- 6.3 The cost of transporting toolkits such a long way was a very great deal, £26 691 in total, the heaviest individual one, for Milling, incurring charges of £2 525. Likely costs were not fully appreciated by some sponsors and some estimates of weights were considerably short of the final figure. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the requirement for sponsors to make accurate allowance for these costs in their budget forecasts.

## **7. Accommodation**

- 7.1 All competitors were accommodated in the Miramar hotel, some way away from both competition sites, and all delegates, experts and observers in the Grand Hyatt which was next door to the World Trade Centre but about half a mile from the Vocational School. As a result, communications were difficult on occasions.
- 7.2 Team accommodation arrangements were satisfactory and no major problems were encountered. The hotel for the experts and officials was of an extremely high standard. Some problems were encountered in relating payment of the deposit to the complete bill for Hyatt accommodation. These were the result of more than one Taiwanese agency being involved and were eventually resolved face to face.
- 7.3 The very high cost of living in Taipei and the requirement for experts to pay for one and sometimes two meals a day led to the consideration that they be given a substantial allowance to cover out of pocket expenses. As a result of the Technical Delegate's visit to Taipei earlier in the year, it was decided that this should be £30 a day, which proved to be a fair figure.

## **8. Funding**

- 8.1 The national skills competition organisers accepted responsibility for meeting the travel, accommodation and toolkit freight costs of competitors and associated experts. Some competitors and experts were fully supported by their employers, industry bodies or commercial sponsors throughout. In a few cases, sponsorship was difficult to achieve and some skill competition organisers have had to work hard to raise the necessary funding. In some cases there was a failure to appreciate the high costs involved in sending a competitor and an expert together with a toolkit to Taiwan.

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- 8.2 These costs for the UK team came to about £175 000, which has been recovered from skill competition organisers or directly from competitors' employers. UK Skills' costs amounted to a further £76 000. Total expenditure directly attributable to the Taiwan Skill Olympics was therefore over a quarter of a million pounds.
- 8.3 This sum takes no account of the costs incurred by industry in the organisation of national skills competitions from which competitors were selected, carrying out the preparatory training programmes and the competitors'/experts' wages during their absence. It is impossible to calculate these accurately, but they cannot have been less than £2.5 million. It is this figure which properly demonstrates industry's commitment to IYSO.
- 8.4 The lessons are that:
- 8.4.1 UK Skills still needs to impress on skill competition organisers the importance of making early provision for funding to cover travel, accommodation and conveyance of toolkits costs, in addition to the requirement for funding for the preparatory and training phase.
  - 8.4.2 Sector representatives should take a more responsible interest in the provision of financial support for all trades within their Sectors.

## The Competition

### 9. Election of Chief Experts

- 9.1 With three exceptions, the election of Chief Experts in advance was judged to have been beneficial. Where there were problems (e.g. trades 25, 29 and 30) this was largely due to the incompetence or unsuitability of the Chief Expert and the inability or unwillingness of the Jury President to intervene constructively.
- 9.2 In the event seven Chief Experts from the UK found the role challenging but generally rewarding. Their main reservation was that because they had to be impartial they might not have felt able to argue the UK view as forcefully as otherwise. Those Jury Presidents questioned commented in a complimentary way on their performance.
- 9.3 The other innovation of allowing 100% of expert representation was also generally welcomed, although as the number of participant countries increases, this could well pose a problem. In a few trades (e.g 34 and 35) some experts were considered by their colleagues, and indeed by some competitors, as themselves lacking the appropriate skills or knowledge.

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9.4 The lessons for the future are:

9.4.1 continue 100% expert representation in UK team.

9.4.2 seek to ensure the appointment in advance of only Chief Experts who are competent.

10. Workshop Conditions, Materials and Equipment

10.1 These were generally judged to be outstanding and every effort was made by the Chinese Authorities to meet reasonable and possible requests. 'Nothing was too much trouble'.

10.2 The only real problems arose from the unstable and uneven work bays provided for trades 12 and 23 (which for various reasons disadvantaged the UK competitors) and the extreme heat (around 32°C) in the two welding shops in spite of the temporarily installed air conditioning.

11. Safety

In spite of using protection, the UK electric welder suffered a minor burn to his lower eyelid which healed after treatment. Otherwise there were only a few minor grazes, cuts and sore hands. The UK Technical Director supported the various European experts in refusing to allow competitors to do curved joinery work on a vertical spindle moulding machine not capable of being guarded to European standards. The work was therefore done by the ROC Workshop Master under each competitors' "instructions".

12. Security

The security of joins and work in progress was generally regarded as satisfactory. A few suspected breaches were taken up immediately via the Jury President to the International Secretariat. Security problems in relation to the two hairdressing trades will be addressed as part of a special investigation into trade 29 and an official complaint in respect of trade 30.

13. Marking Schemes and Procedures

13.1 The majority of experts expressed total satisfaction with the conscientiousness and fairness with which the marking was undertaken. They particularly commended the progressive move from subjective to objective marking by breaking down the subjective elements into quasi-objective judgements or even measurements.

13.2 The briefing of Chief Experts and the vigilance of others ensured that generally the marking rules were observed and many of the irregularities encountered in Amsterdam were eliminated. The larger number of experts enabled some trades to split the work between two or even three teams, with the Chief Expert not himself marking but managing the process. This usefully reduced the ability of individual experts adversely to influence the results. Each team does however need to comprise a mix of both old and new experts and if appropriate both practitioners and teachers.

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- 13.3 It is for further investigation to see how far the BIC system can identify and compensate for the adverse influence of consistently low marking which may benefit that expert's competitor because he or she does not mark his or her compatriot. (A number of experts commented with some concern about this).
- 13.4 Marking schemes should be looked at critically and in some trades a decision should be taken to reduce the number of measurements or judgements to a specified number selected at random after the work is completed.
- 13.5 The trades expressing the most dissatisfaction (29 and 30) are already subject to investigation.

#### 14. Invigilation

Supervision of the competition was generally without problems - a task eased by the larger number of experts available. If there were cases where UK experts or competitors suspected 'coaching', it is regrettably the case that one or two UK experts were not themselves above suspicion. All experts need to be diplomatically alert against this possibility and prepared, politely, to intervene.

#### 15. Performance of the UK Competitors

- 15.1 In terms of awards, the UK's performance of three silver medals, six bronze medals and five diplomas was better than Amsterdam in 1991 (three silver, three bronze and ten diplomas) but only marginally so, and this in spite of taking a team which was almost certainly better trained and prepared than any previously and with the support of a dedicated and generally highly competent team of experts. In terms of cohesion and spirit the team was judged to be the best to date; its members proved superb ambassadors and a credit to their families, employers, experts and country.
- 15.2 Every one of the competitors found participation remained immensely worthwhile, the majority feeling well prepared except for the pressure of four days intensive competition. 90% found the standards challenging, but only 10% (i.e. 3 competitors) found the task too difficult. Over 70% felt that they had learnt something useful for their future careers including increased self confidence, the ability to work under pressure, to pace themselves and to overcome problems. Comparing these comments with those following Amsterdam, it is clear that the UK team in Taiwan had only one or two weak links, and a smaller proportion of competitors felt inadequately briefed or prepared. No UK competitors gave up in spite of the mistakes of some leaving them in a hopeless position.
- 15.3 Disappointment at the UK failure to do better must not be allowed to obscure the real achievements of those who did win medals against opposition, the standards of which are rising with each event.

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- 15.4 In two cases the competitors had problems with their working areas and in one of these the expert inexplicably failed to appeal for extra time, which in view of the quality of the competitor's work almost certainly cost him a silver or even gold medal. Whilst there were problems with the two hairdressing juries, the one bronze medal probably reflects a reasonably realistic result. The fact is that the failure to do better in other trades goes deeper and almost certainly has a number of causes, applying variously in different trades, but including:
- 15.4.1 the end in many trades to conventional four or five year apprenticeships which still exist in many of the countries with a more successful performance such as Austria, Germany and possibly France, or the failure to train apprentices any more in certain skills e.g geometric carpentry;
  - 15.4.2 the selection of competitors from too small a national pool;
  - 15.4.3 the lack of sufficient time to train competitors specifically for the competition in relevant competition skills. (In contrast for example the ROC and Korea select and begin to train their competitors two or more years in advance, and whilst this might not be realistically possible in the UK, it is indicative of the intensity of training necessary to achieve success);
  - 15.4.4 the inability of teachers to appreciate or of the experts to convey to competitors the immensely high standards achieved internationally, without however inducing despair;
  - 15.4.5 the seeming inability of many UK competitors to work intensively, at measured speed and with unbroken concentration from the first moment and have the stamina to keep going for four days. If the normal work environment does not impose this discipline and intensity of work, it is difficult to see how it can be learned during the training process except perhaps by actual participation in more competitions;
  - 15.4.6. the fact that several competitors made silly mistakes of measurement or calculation at an early stage which proved irrecoverable. Others started well but then 'went off' or simply failed to perform to their usual standard and ability.
- 15.5 We need therefore to consider how better to prepare competitors against the stress of the occasion, the fear of the unfamiliar and the avoidance of panic. The Austrian team has a weekend together devoted only to relaxation, which may have some significance in view of their consistently excellent performance in recent years.

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- 15.6 The fact is that quite apart from the generous resources which the ROC, Korea and Japan clearly devote to skill training (which is clearly directly related to their commercial and industrial performance) other member countries such as Austria, Ireland, Australia, Germany and France are rapidly learning and building on their well established skill training systems to improve their competition performance.
- 15.7 The lessons for the future are:
- 15.7.1 ensure the most varied and longest possible competitor training in every trade.
  - 15.7.2 use previous competitors to try to get over an appreciation of the standard required, the pressures of competition and the need for stamina.
  - 15.7.3 give greater attention to the training of competitors to work confidently, self critically, quickly, cleanly, systematically, intensively and in a disciplined fashion from the first moment until the very end of the competition.
16. The UK Experts
- 16.1 With only two or three exceptions the UK experts, both new and experienced, did a highly professional and disciplined job. The improved briefing has clearly been worthwhile, and the setting of deadlines for training programmes, reports etc. has ensured greater consistency. The performance of all experts will however be reviewed before any reappointments are made.
- 16.2 Most UK experts took an active part in the review and updating of existing trade descriptions, as well as in the development of new trade descriptions or the amalgamation of existing trades. Such matters are not however for this report.
17. Visitors
- 17.1 A Special information sheet giving details of the competition and factual information about Taiwan was sent to all enquirers. It was recommended that all travel and accommodation arrangements should be made through the travel consultants engaged to organise the team's travel and most visitors used this facility which enabled them to be contacted in Taipei and provided with tickets for the main competition ceremonies.
- 17.2 Although distance and cost restricted the number of UK visitors a number of employers and trainers of competitors were able to make the journey in support of the team and their presence was most welcome.

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- 17.3 UK Skills held a reception on the evening of the first day of the competition for the technical experts, officials of IVTO and such visitors as were in Taipei at the time. Also present was the head of Anglo-Taiwanese Trade Committee, who subsequently toured the competition, and a number of the businessmen representing members of that committee. Thanks are due to ICI Taiwan Ltd for their generous contribution towards the cost of this event. A second reception, for the competitors, was held at their hotel on the evening 29 July - the final day of the competition - to thank them for their efforts.
- 17.4 Whilst it is always good for visitors to see for themselves what is involved in these Skill Olympics it is important that they appreciate the need to have no contact of any sort with competitors during the four days of the competition. There were two incidents in Taipei involving the employer or trainer of two competitors which, however innocent, could have resulted in disqualification had they been reported to the jury panel. A special warning of the danger will be given before the 1995 IYSO in Lyon when a very much greater number of visitors are expected.
- 17.5 An unofficial report has been received concerning four out of the total of 21 visitors who felt that not enough support and information had been given to them. An investigation is currently taking place. Any subsequent action will be reported to the Board as appropriate.
- 17.6 The lesson for the future is that all visitors acknowledge receipt of the following information before visiting the country in which the competition takes place:
- competition details
  - UK team information
  - relevant addresses and telephone numbers
  - regulations concerning contact with competitors
  - regulations concerning events, tickets to official ceremonies and meal tickets

18. **Publicity, public relations and video**

The subject of publicity, public relations and video is to be considered as part of Item 6 of the Board agenda. It is to be found as Paper 5.

19. **Conclusions**

- 19.1 The overall position of the UK team in the medal table is a fair reflection of its general performance. Whilst there were disappointments, UK competitors also had their share of good luck.

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- 19.2 Whilst the performance of the ROC and Korean youngsters is quite outstanding, the UK should clearly be doing better in relation to European and Australian rivals. A number of possible strategies have been proposed above, not all however within the ability of UK Skills to deliver. Nevertheless it is clear that UK Skills has been working on the right lines in aiming to increase the pool from which competitors are drawn in aiming to intensify, lengthen and deepen better discipline, the training and competition preparation process, in improving the briefing and preparation of both competitors and experts, and in providing high quality logistical and administrative support. All this must continue, whilst incorporating the new lessons learned in Taiwan.
- 19.3 Lyon in 1995 will be every bit as great a challenge as Taipei. It is not however too soon to start planning and influencing developments now.