

Thatcher visit boosts awards

Mrs Thatcher made a surprise visit to Birmingham yesterday to attend a skills award ceremony.

She presented the gold medals for the 30th International Youth Skill Olympics at the Birmingham Hippodrome.

Strict security was in force for the visit, which was not announced until Saturday to foil any attempted terrorist attacks.

Mrs Thatcher addressed 382 young people, representing 35 trades from 21 countries who had competed for gold, silver and bronze medals during the week-long '89 Skill Olympics at the National Exhibition Centre.

"Just as we are remembering the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, so we are hopefully preparing for a peaceful future in which young people can work towards fulfilling their ambitions," she said.

"So this piquant occasion, involving as it has the cream of the world's young skilled trainees, has represented a manifestation of the dream from the dark days of 1939."

She said it was a great occasion to have the olympics staged in the UK and a great event for Birmingham, traditionally the centre of many industrial and technological skills.

Mrs Thatcher told the young people that the pursuit of achieving excellence was fulfilling.

"Aim high and go on improving your standards as in the future your countries will be judged on your abilities in the market-places of the world, she said.

"Today, we are perhaps going half-way towards meeting the

great challenges of the future. We are busy training for the world's future."

Korea won most medals with a haul of 16, including 11 golds. Second was Taiwan with 14, half of them golds.

Britain finished joint fifth, with nine of the 34 Britons taking part winning medals.

The UK's only gold was won by Mr Nicholas Williams-Cammack, aged 19, of Franklin Road, Witnash, Leamington, for men's hairdressing.

A bronze award went to Mr Alan Murphy, aged 21, of Brandwood Road, Kings Heath, for house-wiring.

"It was great to be involved in such a splendid occasion which definitely helps international understanding in many ways," he said.

"Getting a bronze was like a dream come true."

Mr Shaun Greaves, aged 21, of Darklands Road, Swadlincote, Burton-on-Trent, won a bronze for industrial wiring.

Nicola Heaven, aged 19, of Croftside Coombe, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, gained a silver medal for ladies hairdressing.

Forty-one gold medals were presented by Mrs Thatcher, while the silver awards were made by Mr Albert Vidal, president of the International Youth Skill Olympics organisation.

Sir John Egan, chairman and chief executive of Jaguar and president of the '89 Skill Olympics, presented the bronzes.

Young and old pay tribute
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