

The Skills Show – the way forward

'The show was excellent....the standard was set'

'Cannot go back to the old format of a low-key competition in a training centre....having seen the NEC, the sponsors won't settle for anything less'

The 5 – 9 July 2000 saw the UK's top companies, organisations, politicians and celebrities lined up, along with our most talented skills competition entrants, to participate in The Skills Show at the NEC, Birmingham – the country's first-ever showcase of practical and vocational skills.

The highlight of the Manpower National Skills Festival 2000 - a joint initiative developed in partnership with UK SKILLS and The Prince's Trust, supported by the Department for Education and Employment and part of the Millennium Experience National Programme – the show provided the centrepiece for a year of nation-wide events. It comprised five days of skills-related activities, demonstrations, 'have-a-go' opportunities, exhibitions and nail-biting skills competitions - with the winners of many going on to compete in the World Skills Competition in Seoul 2001.

The show was the realisation of a long-term goal by UK SKILLS to put skills excellence firmly in the public spotlight; a goal which brought about the partnership between UK SKILLS and The Prince's Trust three years ago when the festival idea became a reality with the establishment of the National Skills Festival Company.

HRH The Prince of Wales focused The Prince's Trust's commitment to highlighting the importance of learning and using skills when he visited the show on Thursday, 6 July. Greeted with enormous enthusiasm, The Prince spent some time touring

the halls and 'having-a-go' at a number of the skills on show. This commitment was enhanced by the numerous Prince's Trust Ambassadors and other celebrities who came along to lend their support to the aims of the festival and the show – many of them also taking the opportunity to sample the activities on offer.

The importance of keeping the issue of skills shortages high on the political agenda was also made clear in a keynote speech given by David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, who highlighted the government's intention to make the national curriculum more relevant to those whose talents lie with vocational and practical skills. This vision of developing skills for the 21st Century was further supported by the keynote speeches of Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Professor Tim Brighouse, Birmingham's Chief Education Officer.

Heralded as 'a great success', the show received approximately 28,000 visitors,

including over 15,000 school-children - many of whom took away with them not only some inspiration for their possible future careers but also a fascinating insight in to the challenges of the modern workplace.

For more details, please see The Skills Show supplement enclosed

HRH The Prince of Wales visiting The Skills Show



Pic: Jacky Chapman

A Decade in retrospect

Picking up the threads of our normal work has not been easy after the excitements of the Manpower National Skills Festival 2000 and, in particular, The Skills Show, a full report on which is attached as a special supplement. Most of the staff, myself included, have taken a well-earned holiday but we are now back 'on net'.

UK SKILLS is now entering its eleventh year and it is tempting to look back to 1990 when we were first established. At that time there were very few national skills competitions in existence relating to the 'Skill Olympics'. Nevertheless, our very first promotional pamphlet illustrated our aim to establish a national framework of local, regional and national competitions across all industry sectors in order to spread the benefits gained from skills competitions to a wider population. That framework now exists, with skills competitions at various levels covering more than 60 skill areas and a seal of approval to show conformity with the national standards set out in the code of practice, recognised officially by the DfEE in 1993.

At international level we have, over the past ten years, made great strides towards raising the overall standard of the UK team. Better selection, training and support for the technical experts has been a major factor in this, as too has been the increased number of competitors coming through to national finals from local and regional competitions. It is, perhaps, disappointing that the progress made has not been fully reflected in the overall results of the biennial international competitions, mainly because of comparable advances in the performances of other countries, but we should not let this overshadow the undoubted improvement that has been achieved. To all concerned, and especially to the technical experts, past and present, I offer our gratitude.

None of this progress would have been possible without the support and

enthusiasm of countless individuals and organisations. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) for providing annual grants that have allowed us to carry out our work and for their unfailing encouragement over the past ten years. The Clothworkers' Foundation, who believed in the mission we had set ourselves and had faith in our ability to carry it out, for providing a capital sum that allowed us to plan ahead. The National Training Organisations for the various industry sectors, the Training and Enterprise Councils, the trade associations, professional bodies and individual companies for helping to establish and maintain the skills competition organising committees that manage the skills competitions. The skills competition organisers and all the individuals who serve (and have served) on those committees and whose contribution to vocational skills training is frequently overlooked. Lastly, our thanks must be expressed to the employers and the colleges who help in the training the thousands of young people who have had the opportunity to take part in skills competitions and thereby seek excellence in their chosen skills. My thanks also to UK SKILLS Board members and to our small full-time staff whose tireless efforts can be seen in our achievements.

The increasing level of support for skills competitions as a means of raising skill standards reflects the impact that we have been able to make over the years in the field of vocational training. We have now established the National Skills Festival and The Skills Show which we plan to stage every two years with our partner in this project, The Prince's Trust. As requested by the Secretary of State, David Blunkett, we intend that selection for the UK team to go to the biennial World Skills Competitions will be made from those competing at The Skills Show.

The development of a framework for skills competitions in schools, successfully piloted by the SCHOOLSskills Challenge at The Skills

Show, is planned to continue and I must again express thanks to the Clothworkers' Foundation for the grant which enabled us to fund the first stage of this project.

We shall seek to enlarge opportunities for the disadvantaged to take part in skills competitions and shall continue to develop and implement policy on equal opportunities for all.

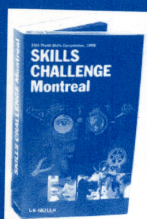
Finally, we are delighted to report that we are likely to become involved with the organisation for National Training Awards. More about this new aspect of our work will appear in the next newsletter.

In conclusion, I should like to express particular thanks to two people who have played key parts in our work over the 10 year period. They are Jim Hammer, whose work as both a Board member and the UK's Technical Delegate to the international organisation has been quite outstanding, and Jonathan Freeman, our Head of Communications, who has masterminded most superbly all our information and publications and, in the early days, was involved in nearly all the functions necessary to keep us on the right track. Regretfully, both have now left us. Jim has decided that, after 10 years, it is time to hand over to a younger person and I am pleased to report that Dr Graeme Hall has been appointed to succeed Jim as Technical Delegate. Jonathan has been with us on secondment from City and Guilds for nearly as long a period and he has now returned to City and Guilds. Both will be greatly missed by all their friends.

Helping to secure acceptance of the importance of skills, both to the country as a whole, to the general public, and to young people in particular, is exciting and rewarding work. It is also never ending!



Patricia Snell
Chief Executive



Montreal '99 - see the video

A video covering the UK entry to the 1999 World Skills Competition in Montreal is available from UK SKILLS for the price of £15 (inc VAT). *Skills Challenge Montreal* follows the event from beginning to end and features views and comments from UK competitors, officials and visitors to the Olympic Stadium. To order a copy please contact Joanne Stevenson at UK SKILLS on 020 7543 7495 or at joannest@princes-trust.org.uk

Contacts for skills competitions

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● SkillELECTRONICS David Nicoll	T 020 7836 3357 F 020 7497 9006	E toptechician@usa.net
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● UK Fine Jewellery Competition Chris Walton	T 020 7606 7010 F 020 7606 1511	
● SkillTHERAPY Gill Morris	T 01455 632742 F 01455 619909	E Gilmrr@aol.com
● ECITB Apprentice Competition John Lawrence	T 01923 260000 F 01923 270969	
● Drywite Young Fish Frier of the Year Paul Allen	T 01384 569556 F 01384 410583	E paulallen@drywite.demon.co.uk
● Automotive Glazing Peter Bain	T 020 7207 5865 F 020 7357 7458	E Autoglazing@Psb-services.demon.co.uk
● UK Bus Driver of the Year Bryan Constable	T 01689 861432	

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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 World Skills 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.

For more information, please contact

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New competitions

In the last 18 months FESCC has successfully launched new competitions for colleges, in beauty therapy, child care, media (three competitions: video, audio and print graphics). The council is now planning other new competitions for further education colleges, in travel and tourism, horticulture, hairdressing, public service, and sports studies. FESCC is working with UK SKILLS on plans for developing more new competitions over the next few years.

FESCC and The Skills Show

FESCC was closely involved with The Skills Show at the NEC in July as the organisers of SkillCONSTRUCT - a demonstration of building skills, SkillMEDIA competition, a demonstration of Horticultural skills, participation in the Key Skills Competitions, and in SkillTHERAPY. The first FESCC National Media Studies Competition, for full-time and part-time students in FE studying any aspect of media and communications at NVQ level 3, was held at The Skills Show. Entry categories were Graphics/Print, Video and Audio.

New executive group

A new executive group has been elected in accordance with the Council's constitution.

Officers

Chair	David Croll Principal, Derby Tertiary College Wilmorton
Vice Chair	Nick Adair Deputy Principal, Henley College Coventry
Treasurer	Sally Coveney Director of Curriculum and Client Services, New Basildon College
Secretary	Shyam Patiar Head of School of Hospitality, Leisure and Health, Llandrillo College
Past Chair	David Roberts Principal, Leeds College of Building

Members

Archie Sharkie, North Glasgow College.
Dr Jim MacWilliams, Principal, Leeds College of Technology
Chrissie Farley, Principal, Hackney Community College
Dawn Ward, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Design, Warwickshire College
Ian Wynd, Media Manager, North Warwickshire & Hinckley College

Co-options

UK SKILLS Graeme Hall, Deputy Chief Executive UK SKILLS

For further information visit the FESCC website at www.fescc.org.uk

Steven's winning skills

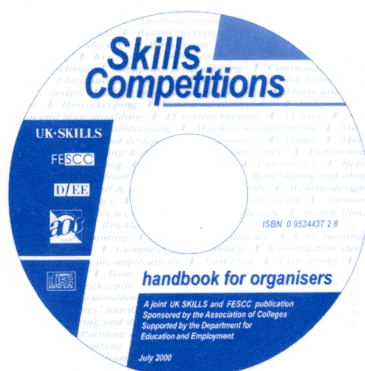
Top-class joiner, Steven Garrett, has added to his success in the 1999 Montreal World Skills Competition, by winning a £10,800 Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Award. The award allows Steven to study the rare skill of ecclesiastical joinery on a course especially designed for him at Hackney Community College. Steven has also received a host of other awards including the Exceptional Craftsman Award and Best Overall Student for 1998 at South Kent College. As well as studying, Steven is currently working for SES Contracts Ltd in Deal. Well done Steven!

Steven (r) inspecting one of his ecclesiastical windows



Pic: TheGuardian

Skills competitions handbook for organisers



FESCC and UK SKILLS have published, as a CD-ROM, a 208-page handbook for organisers of skills competitions. Both organisations are very grateful for the sponsorship provided by the Association of Colleges (AoC), and the additional assistance given by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The handbook is available at a special price of £29.50 to members of FESCC, and to organisers of accredited competitions and others working with UK SKILLS. The price to others is £39.50.

For more information on FESCC, or the Handbook, visit the Council's website www.fescc.org.uk, or contact Ian Credland (Business Manager) FESCC on 01926 612483.

Farewell Jonathan



UK SKILLS is sad to report that Jonathan Freeman, Head of Communications, has now left our small team. Jonathan, who was on secondment to UK SKILLS for many years, has now returned to City and Guilds to take up the new position of Time to Learn Manager. He will be sadly missed by all of us. Joanne Stevenson, Communications Officer, will be dealing with all communications issues until a new Head of Communications is appointed.



Pic: Philip Gray

Call Excellence

A new competition aimed to locate the UK's top call handler was piloted in April 2000, culminating at The Skills Show 2000. The judges looked for a high level of skills and the ability to perform in a highly testing environment. The competition was won by Lynn Threipland who works for the Inland Revenue, Glasgow, Scotland. Lynn is pictured receiving her award from Kate Adie during The Skills Show.

Key Skills Competition 2000

The first-ever Key Skills Competition (supported by City & Guilds, UK SKILLS and The Prince's Trust) was held at The Skills Show 2000. Teams of three, drawn from FE colleges, The Prince's Trust Volunteers Programme and the Armed Forces, competed in a 2-hour role-playing scenario devised to reflect a variety of typical and unusual office situations. In order to succeed, each team drew upon a range of Key Skills, namely communication, numeracy, use of IT, problem solving and teamwork. The Royal Navy (HMS Collingwood) and The Prince's Trust Volunteers Programme (St Helen's) were joint overall winners.

SkillPRINT

The first UK-wide SkillPRINT competition (supported by Heidelberg) was showcased at The Skills Show 2000. Five teams, from Leeds, Leicester, Glasgow, Belfast and London competed to complete a live project – to design and print a newsletter for Barnados in five hours. Competitors were tested on the following three areas: pre-press (design and typography), printing (using a 5 colour Heidelberg S52 press), print finish (cut and fold). The winning team, were Tony Smith, Brian Watson, David Robertson and accompanying tutor Jim Currie, representing Glasgow College of Building and Printing.

SCHOOLskills Challenge

Thanks to a generous grant from The Clothworkers' Foundation UK SKILLS, with the assistance of Birmingham City Council Education Department, were able to set up a pilot competition for school children in the West Midlands area. The competition, which took place during The Skills Show, included a whole range of skills including fashion design, sport, hospitality, IT, music performance, dance and drama.

The RM/Smash Hits Young Web Site Designer of the Year

The RM/Smash Hits Young Web Site Designer of the Year Competition for 13-16 year olds was showcased at The Skills Show 2000. Participants had to design a website featuring their favourite band. The winner was 15 year old Clare Nolan from Southlands School in Lancashire. Clare's website can be viewed at www.skillsit.rm.com/clare.

Young Music Professionals

The Young Music Professionals competition, supported by Bridge House Estates Trust Fund, was piloted in 1999 with an awards presentation in April 2000. Designed to encourage young people's skills in planning creative music projects, each entrant was asked to create a business plan for an original and commercially viable music project involving a music related activity ie club promotion, launch of a record, internet, developing an existing business using a budget of £2000. The winning proposal was an experimental electronic act featuring interactive multimedia.

Natinal SkillRETAIL Competition

The first National SkillRETAIL competition was held at The Skills Show. Competitors were required to plan, set-up, display merchandise and open to the public a special Skills Show Souvenir Shop in the NEC, Birmingham. The overall winner was Sheila Flynn (r), of Boots plc, pictured here with her area manager, Lynne Smith (l), at the first national SkillRETAIL awards ceremony.



Preparing for Seoul

Organisers of the 36th World Skills Competition, taking place in Seoul in September 2001, have indicated that plans for the event are well advanced. The International Technical Committee accepted a number of demonstration trades in Montreal as official trades for 2001, namely Confectionery, Landscape Gardening, IT PC & Network Support and Graphic Design. Sadly there was not enough international support neither for Beauty Therapy nor for the official trade Electronic Applications to permit competitions at the 2001 competition.

The International Vocational Training Organisation has also confirmed WorldSkills as the new name for the organisation. A new logo is expected to be available for general use by member organisations before the end of the year. Delegates accepted the updated technical

descriptions, which have now been published on the WorldSkills web site, www.worldskills.com. The committee agreed that further trades could take place as modular competitions and also that the projects for a number of extra competitions would be circulated in advance. A number of working groups have been established which will consider security, instructions for chief experts and quality assurance, including health and safety. Finland and Japan have been agreed as the venues for the World Skills Competitions in 2005 and 2007 respectively.

Plans for the preparation of the UK SKILLS team for the 36th World Skills Competition, are also progressing well with the assistance of the World Skills National Committee. The team is likely to number about 30 competitors including, for the first time since 1993, one for Welding.

New international role for Graeme Hall

It will be news to many people that Jim Hammer, the UK's Technical Delegate at the World Skills Competition, has recently resigned from this post. Jim was a superb and very well-respected international representative for this country, contributing tirelessly over a number of years to the complex planning and organisation which characterises the World Skills Competition. I, the other staff at UKSKILLS and his many friends in the UK and at WorldSkills, will miss his kindness, humour and expertise both at a professional and at a personal level.

Nonetheless, I am also very pleased to take this chance to let you know of my recent appointment to replace Jim in the role of Technical Delegate. As a former engineer with much experience of management in Further Education both

in this area, and in Construction, Science and Technology, and with a lifelong interest in the technical issues which are of increasing importance in the successful preparation and organisation of our modern skills competitions, I am delighted to have the opportunity to take on these responsibilities.

Developments which we are now undertaking at UKSKILLS in partnership with the many organisations with which we work coupled with the core initiatives

which form the basis of my role here as Deputy Chief Executive, all dovetail naturally with the demands of this new role. So, whilst life at work is now feeling very busy, it's also challenging and exciting and I am looking forward to working with our partners here and abroad in the run-up to Seoul in October 2001.



Graeme Hall

Jim Hammer hands over

After ten years and five competitions I look back on a challenging and absorbing experience as the UK's Technical Delegate. Among many high points was Garry Dixon winning a bronze medal in Electric Welding in Taiwan, after I had failed to win the argument that he should be permitted to use his usual foot controller, and his gas welder mate Jeremy Richards winning The Hill Award for persuading Garry that all was not lost.

But there have also been low points. It was clear from my first experience in Amsterdam in 1991 that we needed to draw competitors from a much bigger national pool, that the training had to be more thorough and systematic, and that UK SKILLS had to do more to help experts better to prepare themselves for their varied roles.

Although we have come a long way in the process of refining briefing and training arrangements, and devising new ways of supporting and preparing competitors and experts, a great deal of work is still to be done.

I am conscious, therefore, that I leave much unfinished business and continuing challenges to my successor Graeme Hall. Having seen him in action I am sure he is equal to the task and will receive the same enthusiastic support that I have enjoyed.



Jim Hammer