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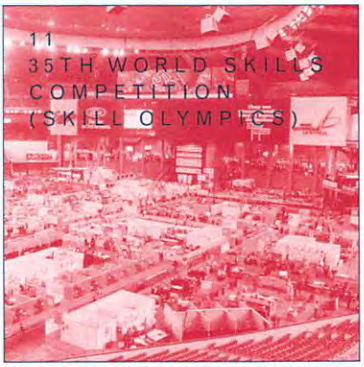

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CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

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UK SKILLS is now ten years old. The last 12 months have been the busiest and most productive of our existence.

Everyone has a skill. UK SKILLS' task is to inspire everyone, especially young people, to make the most of their skills. We promote skills competitions which generate excitement for all who take part, and at the highest level show what wonderful things can be done when talent is developed to the full. No country can afford to neglect talent; a country rich in talent and where that talent is well developed is sure to prosper.

Two main events have dominated our work during the past year: the 35th World Skills Competition held in Montreal last November; and this year the Manpower National Skills Festival and especially its centrepiece, The Skills Show, staged in Birmingham in July (which I refer to below, even though it took place later than the period strictly covered by this report).

UK SKILLS entered a team of 31 young people, competing in 27 official and three demonstration trades, for the Montreal competition, which was excellently staged in the Olympic Stadium there. Despite some very good performances, we took only three medals and came in about 10th place out of the 33 nations taking part. Our team was probably better prepared than any we have entered in the past, but standards world-wide are rising too. The challenge for the future if we are to move up in the rankings is obvious.

Also at Montreal the members of the International Vocational Training Organisation (IVTO) agreed a comprehensive marketing plan aimed at promoting skills across the world in a far more effective way. With a new name – WorldSkills – a new logo and many fresh ideas for its future, there is promise that the organisation's work will become much better known and better supported, to the benefit especially of developing countries.

The second half of the year was devoted to the Manpower National Skills Festival. This has proved a landmark for us, and one likely to have lasting effect.

The festival was brought about by six partners: UK SKILLS and The Prince's Trust, who jointly set up a Skills Festival Company for the purpose; the New Millennium Experience Company; Manpower plc, who provided sponsorship; Birmingham City, who gave The Skills Show special priority in its calendar of events; and the Department for Education and Employment, whose enthusiastic support was key.

We can claim that The Skills Show has set a new standard for the holding of major skills events. As a first essential, it brought together the national finals of most of the country's skills competitions, but it went further than that. It provided a stylish event that attracted thousands of young people and held their attention by giving them a wide range of opportunities to try out their own aptitudes. It also involved many younger visitors who took part in the first-ever SCHOOLskills Challenge piloted mainly by schools in the West Midlands and whose activities brought a special freshness and colour; their participation was made possible by a large grant from the Clothworkers' Foundation. Further visitors came from among the participants in a number of conferences and seminars held in conjunction with the event. Altogether, and judging by the comments we received from visitors of every description, The Skills Show demonstrated clearly a very important direction in which we might develop our efforts to promote excellence in practical skills for the future.

During the year we accepted with much regret the resignation from the Board of Prue Leith OBE but appointed the Rt Hon Lord Trefgarne PC, Chairman of the Engineering and Marine Training Authority, and Mrs Jacqui Henderson, Chief Executive of the TEC National Council. I wish as ever to pay tribute to the outstanding work of our Chief Executive, Patricia Snell OBE, and her small team. In this year of all years they have performed with especially notable skill, dedication and success.

Sir John Cassels

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REVIEW

This has been a busy and challenging year for UK SKILLS during which we have secured increasing recognition of our role as an agent for promoting and improving the levels of vocational skills across industry.

Although preparations for two major events – the 35th World Skills Competition in Montreal in November and the Manpower National Skills Festival 2000 – dominated much of our activity during the year, we continued to develop the national framework of skills competitions and have encouraged new competitions in additional skill areas.

National activities

The national framework remains the central feature of work. The increasing number of skills competitions being developed in accordance with our code of practice and seeking accreditation bears witness to the added value that these can give to training in vocational skills. Our policy of encouraging industry sectors to establish an 'umbrella' committee to oversee and, when necessary, initiate or update relevant competitions is proving successful in securing industry support and, as will be seen from the list on pages 30–31, competitions covering more than 50 skills are now being organised or developed within the national framework. The development of a competition in key skills is particularly interesting. This will be a team contest covering communication, IT and team-working skills, all of which contribute greatly to adaptability, and the new event should prove attractive to all industry sectors in future.

I especially welcome the agreement we reached with the Further Education Skills Competitions Council (FESCC) to provide their member colleges with membership of UK SKILLS. A growing number of colleges are becoming increasingly involved with skills competitions at a variety of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) levels and FESCC has taken the initiative in developing several national competitions in co-operation with the different industry sectors. FESCC also collaborated with us on devising a special competition for media studies to produce a video on the Montreal event. The handbook of advice and guidance on how to organise and run these events, being produced jointly by UK SKILLS/FESCC, will be published on CD-ROM during the coming summer. We hope that this will encourage many more colleges and training providers to take advantage of the benefits that participation in competitions can offer to their students and trainees.

Our board has agreed a revised and updated policy statement on equal opportunities. This will be implemented during the coming months to encourage and secure a wider and more equitable basis for all aspects of our work.

The project to develop skills competitions for schools, generously funded by a grant from the Clothworkers' Foundation, will feature strongly in The Skills Show at the NEC in July under the banner of the SCHOOLskills Challenge. Work has continued on all of our other various projects and progress is reported in more detail later in this report.

International

UK SKILLS continues to take an active role in the various committees and working groups of WorldSkills, (formerly IVTO). The name change is one of a number of recommendations accepted by the General Assembly meeting in Montreal during the World Skills Competition last November. These recommendations stem from the marketing group set up on the initiative of Sir John Cassels, the UK Official Delegate. The group established a seven-point action plan, aimed at raising the organisation's public image to help achieve the objective of promoting skills across the world, which is now being implemented.
A key element in this strategy will be the adoption of a new logo and all member countries have been invited to take part in a competition to design a new WorldSkills identity. UK SKILLS has asked several further and higher education institutions to submit

entries and the final decision will be taken by WorldSkills members at their meeting in Lisbon in June.

At the event in Montreal UK SKILLS entered competitors in 27 of the 40 official skill trades and for three demonstration trades, some of which may become fully recognised in future. The team gained one silver and two bronze medals and nine diplomas of excellence were awarded to those meeting the international standard. Our overall ranking in the approved trades was 10=, one place better than in 1997, but it was disappointing that the average of the marks gained by our competitors fell below the accepted international standard.

A surprisingly large number of visitors from the UK made the journey to Montreal during the event and we were especially pleased to welcome Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State in the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). A full report on the competition and the performance of the UK SKILLS team is on pages 11–23. I must here express my thanks to the technical experts, the competitors, their employers and families and to all those other organisations and individuals who contributed to the team effort. An especial word of thanks is due to Jim Hammer, the UK Technical Delegate. His contribution to WorldSkills is most highly regarded by all his colleagues on the Technical Committee and, as always, he was tireless in his support for the team.

The Manpower National Skills Festival 2000

Throughout the year we have worked very closely with the National Skills Festival Company, established jointly with The Prince's Trust to manage the project. We have been fully engaged in preparations for this major event, which was formally launched by HRH The Prince of Wales at a well-attended function in St James's Palace in May 1999.

The aim of the project is to promote the value of excellence in vocational skills and, in addition to a full programme of regional UK-wide activities, a major five-day event, The Skills Show, will take place from 5–9 July at the NEC in Birmingham. This will include skills competitions and demonstrations and 'have-a-go' events in more than 70 different skill areas, plus the SCHOOLskills Challenge and a programme of related conferences and seminars. The project planning has been and remains a major task for all concerned. Most of the skills competitions within the national framework will be taking part and the majority have arranged to hold their national finals at this event. Some of the winners taking part at The Skills Show will be eligible for selection for the UK team for the 2001 World Skills Competition in Seoul. We are especially grateful to all the competition organisers for their support and to FESCC who are themselves organising a major series of demonstrations at The Skills Show and have encouraged colleges to be involved in many of the festival's regional activities during Skills Week in May 2000.

Sir David Thorne, the project director for the National Skills Festival Company, resigned due to ill health in September and we were all deeply saddened to learn of his death the following April. Giles Tilley was appointed to succeed him as project director and it has been a great pleasure working with her and her dedicated team.

A full report on UK SKILLS' contribution to the festival is on page 8.

Finance

The financial results for the year show a welcome improvement, thanks to DfEE, who generously provided additional funding over and above our annual grant. This enabled us to fund extra activities at the competition in Montreal and allowed us to make a significant contribution towards the costs we are incurring in support of the skills festival. We are most grateful for the additional grants which represent tangible evidence for the value placed on our work by DfEE.

Conclusion

The past 12 months have been the busiest since UK SKILLS was founded nearly ten years ago. It is largely thanks to the outstanding and tireless efforts of our small staff that we have been able to make good progress on all aspects of our work and, as always, I am indebted to them for their wholehearted commitment during the past year. Our team was augmented in March when Dr Graeme Hall, formerly Assistant Principal of Lambeth College, was appointed to the new post of Deputy Chief Executive. Graeme is well acquainted with our work, having been treasurer of FESCC since its formation, and I look forward to working closely with him during the coming year. Last, but not least, our special thanks to The Prince's Trust for all their support in connection with the festival and for making life most pleasant in the environs of Regent's Park.

Patricia Snell

35TH WORLD SKILLS
COMPETITION
(SKILL OLYMPICS)
Montreal, Canada, 11–15 November 1999
Montréal 99
Ford
Des idées
qui font du chemin.
CSST
Chez vos
concessionnaires
Ford et Mercury
du Québec
FORD

UK SKILLS STAFF/BOARD

Staff

1 **Patricia Snell OBE**
Chief Executive

2 **Heidi Agbenyo**
Project Officer

3 **Jonathan Freeman**
Head of Communications

4 **Dr Graeme Hall**
Deputy Chief Executive

5 **Basil Henson**
Adviser
(Policy and Strategy)

6 **David Innes-Wilson**
Administration Manager

7 **Hilary Jennings**
Head of Operations and Development

8 **Katy Pettit**
PA to Chairman and Chief Executive

9 **Charles Turner**
Operations Manager

Board

1 **Sir John Cassels CB**
(Chairman)
Formerly Director, National Commission on Education

2 **Brendan Barber**
Deputy General Secretary, Trades Union Congress

3 **David Bartley**
Chairman,
C J Bartley & Co Ltd

4 **Dr Nick Carey**
Director-General, City and Guilds of London Institute

5 **Barney Gibbens OBE FCA**
(Company Secretary)
Formerly Chairman,
Sema Group plc
Founding Master, Worshipful Company of Information Technologists

6 **John Graham**
Director of Resourcing and Development, Marconi plc

7 **Derek Grover CB**
Director, Adult Learning Department for Education and Employment

8 **Jim Hammer CB**
(UK Technical Delegate)
Formerly Deputy Director-General, Health and Safety Executive

9 **Mrs Jacqui Henderson**
Chief Executive,
TEC National Council

10 **Peter Rainbird CBE DL**
Chairman & Chief Executive,
The Rainbird Group plc
Chairman, Essex TEC
Deputy Chairman,
Construction Industry Training Board

11 **Tom Shebbeare CVO**
Chief Executive,
The Prince's Trust

12 **Rt Hon Lord Trefgarne PC**
Chairman, Engineering and Marine Training Authority

13 **Ian Walters**
Chief Executive, Training and Employment Agency, Northern Ireland

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS

Support for the UK team for 35th World Skills Competition (Skill Olympics), Montreal

Team Patron: Tracy Edwards MBE / Jeff Banks / InCorporateWear / Brathay Hall Trust / Claridge's / Clarks Shoes International / Construction Industry Training Board / The Link Group (Gloucester) / North London TEC / Inner Excellence / Sherman Cooper.

Support for national competitions, competitors and technical experts by industry sector

Automotive

SkillAUTO organised by SkillAUTO (Automobile Association (AA), British Agricultural & Garden Machinery Association (BAGMA), Soundwell College, The Freight Transport Association, The Institute of Automotive Engineer Assessors, The Institute of Road Transport Engineers, Motor Industry Training Council, Royal Automobile Club, Retail Motor Industry Federation, Retail Motor Industry Training (ReMIT), The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, Transport & General Workers Union, TRANSFED, Transport Training Services Limited, Vehicle Builders and Repairers Association (VBRA)) sponsored by Automobile Association (AA), British Agricultural & Garden Machinery Association (BAGMA), Hartwells, Haynes Publishing, Inchcape Motors Retail, IAEA, Peugeot, Prosper Group, RAC Motoring Services, Rolls Royce Motor Cars, Rover Group, Snap-on Tools, The Institute of Road Transport Engineers, RTITB Ltd, Retail Motor Industry Training (ReMIT), Toyota GB, TRANSFED, Transport & General Workers Union and supported by 3M, Bodyshop Magazine, Boulters of Banwell, Doncaster Motor Trades GTA, FARECLA, Ford Motor Company Ltd, Indasa Abrasives, ITW/deVilbiss, John Deere, Kimberley Clark, Leeds College of Technology, Leyland Daf, MITEC, Motor Trader, North Trafford College, PPG, Porsche Cars GB, Reg Vardy, Robert Bosch, Toyota GB , Rover Cars, Karl Vella Auto Body Repairs, Tamworth College, Evesham College, St Austell College, South Devon College, Stanners, Stevenson College Edinburgh, JFE Nissan, Exeter, Hartwell, Mansfield, Knaresborough Body Repairs, Ripon Paint & Body, Tamworth College.

Construction

SkillBUILD organised by SkillBUILD Competitions Ltd sponsored by Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), British Gypsum, Akzo Nobel, DeWalt Power Tools, Hanson Brick, Rollins Tools, Bradford & Ilkley Community College, Buckinghamshire University College, Hackney Community College, Hastings College of Arts & Technology, Leeds College of Building, Peterborough Regional College, St Helens College, Guild of Bricklayers, National Federation of Roofing Contractors, Institute of Machine Woodworking Technology, The Painting Craft Teachers Association, Stone Federation Great Britain, The Institute of Carpenters, The Joint Industry Board for Plumbing and Mechanical Engineering Services in England and Wales, The Plasterers Craft Guild, P C I Cookson Ltd, H & R Johnson Ltd, Brian Hyde Ltd, Tilcon Mortars Ltd, The Interbuild Fund, CITB Northern Ireland, Construction Confederation, the Training and Enterprise Councils. Supported by P Plunkett Tiling, Leeds College of Building, Armitage Building Services, Wells Cathedral Stonemasons, Hastings College of Arts and Technology, Lyndon Puckett, Peter Hall & Son, Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education, SES Contracts, Hackney Community College, Newry & Kilkeel College of Further Education, Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education, Barnsley College, Donald Costello Projects, Avery Knight & Bowlers, Kilkenny Limestones, RH & G Travis & Sons Ltd, J G Faulds.

SkillBUILD Northern Ireland organised by SkillBUILD Northern Ireland and sponsored by CITB Northern Ireland, Training & Employment Agency, Construction Employers Federation NI, Farrans Construction Ltd, Gilbert Ash NI Ltd, H & J Martin Ltd, Northern Ireland Master Painters Association, Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation.

Electrical/Electronics

SkillELECTRIC organised by Electrical Contractors' Association/National Electrotechnical Training (NET) sponsored by Legrand UK Ltd, J T Ltd, Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT), Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU), Electrical Training Trust (ETT), Electrical Contractors Magazine, Meteor, TN Robertson Limited, Manchester College of Arts and Technology, Manchester TEC, National Training Partnership (NTP), Careers Partnership, supported by N G Bailey & Co Ltd.

Top Technician in Industrial Electronics organised by the Institution of Incorporated Engineers (IIE), the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE), the Federation of the Electronics Industry (FEI),and the Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA) supported by Ascom Telecommunications Ltd, Barry College, British Aerospace plc (Military Aircraft Division), Bolton College, Celab Ltd, Chemitronics, Defence Evaluation & Research Agency (DERA), EEV Ltd, Farnell Electronic Components Ltd, Matra BAe Dynamics (UK) Ltd, British Aerospace Defence Ltd, North Glasgow College, Oxford Instruments Ltd, Racal Group Services Ltd, St George Exhibitions Ltd (Electronic Components Industry Fair), Tektronix, University of Glamorgan, Vision Engineering Ltd, Wigan College, Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union (AEEU) with generous assistance from the Department of Trade and Industry Sector Challenge.

Skill IT – IT User of the Year, IT Support Technician of the Year, BCS Programming Competition organised by Skill IT Steering Group whose members and supporters include Information Technology National Training Organisation (ITNTO, Telecommunications Vocational Standards Council (TVSC), British Computer Society (BCS), Department for Education and Employment, Department of Trade and Industry, Microsoft Ltd, IBM UK Ltd, ICL, RM plc, Electronic Data Systems UK Ltd, The Post Office, Viglen Ltd, Akhter Computers Ltd, Data Connection Ltd, Manpower plc, Abbey National. Supported by University of Sunderland, University of Northumbria, Northumberland College.