

Welcome to the February edition of SkillAuto News

Our new **SkillAuto** e-bulletin is designed to keep you informed about our skills competition activities. In this, our first issue, we feature our platinum sponsor Würth UK, a profile of lead judge Stuart Alexander, details of the WorldSkills International competition in Leipzig later in 2013, and the latest update on the 2013 **SkillAuto** competitions.

In future editions, we'll have more news about the **SkillAuto** heats, next steps for competitors and more news about our sponsors.

SkillAuto 2013 – the search begins...

SkillAuto is a competition run by the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), designed to promote high technical standards and expertise in the automotive sector and identify individuals that reach beyond competence to achieve excellence.

The search has begun this year for the next champions in Automotive Technology, Automotive Body Repair and Automotive Painting. Registrations for the **SkillAuto** 2013 competitions opened on Monday 11th February.

If you train or employ anyone who has three years or less experience, (including training, and is a level 3 or an exceptional level 2), then you can nominate them now.

There have been some changes introduced to this year's competition cycle:

- There is a six week entry phase - registrations close on Friday 22nd March 2013
- Candidates must have a nomination from a college and employer (if employed)
- Each organisation can nominate only one candidate per campus/site
- Heats will take place between April and June at three central venues

After registering, candidates will complete an online test which will be used to select those who attend the live heats. Success in the heats doesn't guarantee a place in the final – it's the top six scorers across all the heats who will go forward to the national finals at The Skills Show to be held at the NEC in Birmingham from 14th - 16th November 2013.

If you want to take part, or know of someone who could be our next automotive champion, then visit www.autocity.org.uk/skillauto to start the registration process.

SkillAuto Lead Judge (Autobody) Stuart Alexander

We interviewed Stuart to gain some insight into how he became involved in SkillAuto and his highlights as lead judge.



Q: Tell us about your career to date

A: I am currently National Sales Manager at Car-O-Liner UK, but I started my working life as an apprentice Painter (Vehicle Refinishing) in 1984. In 1987, I changed over to Panel Beating and finished my apprenticeship in 1989. I remained at Minster Coachworks in York as a Panel Beater until 1992.

In 1992 I started working for Car-O-Liner as the North East Technical Sales Representative and I have been with the company ever since, working my way up through the ranks to my current position.

Q: How did you get started in competitions?

A: In 2005 Car-O-Liner were asked to loan equipment for use at the WorldSkills Team Selection for the would-be competitors. Consequently I was asked if I could stay on and help judge the team selection competition. This is where my involvement in competitions started. In 2011, David Massie from the IMI invited me to become more involved with the national SkillAuto competitions and I've since been involved in helping create the tasks, supplying equipment, judging at the regional heats and took on the role of senior judge at the UK finals in Birmingham.

Q: What attracts you to be involved with SkillAuto?

A: It's so rewarding to see the young people involved in the regional heats and the finals achieve so much in such a short period of time.

Q: How does your employer feel about your involvement?

A: They support me a 100% and are happy to be putting something back into the industry that has been supportive of them for the past 40 years.

Q: What do SkillAuto and WorldSkills competitions do for the body repair sector?

A: Not only does they raise the profile of the body repair sector but they also raise the standards of the young people taking part, as they receive training to the highest standard.

Q: What would be a highlight for you in the competitions you've been involved with?

A: To see the WorldSkills Final take place in London at the ExCel Centre in 2011 was such a spectacle, it was fantastic.

Q: Would you encourage other people to get involved?

A: Simply, the answer is yes. We at Car-O-Liner started out wanting to inspire the young panel technicians of tomorrow but it ended up that we were the ones being inspired by them.

If, as an employer, lecturer or trainer, you'd like to be involved with judging or supporting our competitions, then please call Sarah Cunningham or David Massie at the IMI on **01992 511521** or email sarahc@theimi.org.uk or davidm@theimi.org.uk



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Würth UK – platinum sponsor SkillAuto and global partner WorldSkills International



We're delighted to have Würth UK as a valued sponsor of the SkillAuto competitions and supporter of the IMI. The Würth Group is a worldwide market leader in its core business – the supply of assembly and fastening materials.

Würth currently consists of over 400 companies in 84 countries and has more than 66,000 employees on its payroll. Over 32,000 of these are permanently employed sales representatives. Würth is a family business that was founded by Adolf Würth in 1945. Prof. Reinhold Würth, today's Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Würth Group's Family Trusts, took over the business at the age of 19 after his father passed away and developed it further in the following years. Starting from the early years of the company in post-war Germany, he turned the former two-man business into a trading group operating worldwide.

The Automotive Division of Würth sells to dealerships, independent auto repair workshops, motorcycle repair shops, accident repair shops, auto electricians and any specialised workshop dealing in the automotive aftermarket. With a product range of over 16,000 articles, the Automotive Division develops its product range to be innovative and cover all aspects of modern repair development.



Over the last 12 years Würth has invested heavily in WOW! (Würth Online World) to ensure it can offer the best solution for a modern workshop. WOW! is now available in over 20 countries around the world, providing tailored software and hardware diagnostic solutions for the automotive workshop.

A key sponsor both at a local, national and worldwide level, Würth has supported the SkillAuto competitions both financially and with the supply of materials and equipment to the regional heats and the national finals. They have also been generous in providing prizes to our winners at both levels and we are very grateful for their continued support.



Neil Jenner, Key Accounts Manager at Würth UK commented 'Würth UK is proud to sponsor the SkillAuto competition for a third year. As a company, promoting excellence in training and the trades is an investment in the future. Early exposure to the quality of Würth products will leave a positive, lasting impression on these young people; we must remember that today's apprentice will be the master technician or even Managing Director of our customers in the future.'

For more information about Würth UK, visit www.wurth.co.uk

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Countdown to the WorldSkills International competition

The countdown has started and the best young talent from the automotive sector, plus many others, are preparing themselves to do battle against the best in the world at the next WorldSkills International competition to be held in Leipzig Germany from 2nd - 7th July 2103. Read more ...

With an anticipated 1,000 competitors, the event will be the biggest international competition of its kind ever held. Competitors will compete in 45 vocational areas with Team UK having representatives in Automobile Technology, Autobody Repair and Car Painting. A squad of selected candidates, many of whom came through SkillAuto competitions, are currently undergoing intense training with industry specialists before final selection is made. Previous WorldSkills competitions have seen the automotive sector bring home medals of every colour and their recipients have seen the benefits in their careers. Ben Eaton won a bronze medal in London in 2011 and now, as a valued member of the Petronas Mercedes F1 team, paints Formula One cars - a job he'd always dreamed of. Ross Varnam who won silver in the Autobody Repair competition, had the opportunity to experience life working in bodyshops across Australia for a year. Could you be the next one to take your career to a new level?

Whether taking part in a college competition, or at the highest level in a WorldSkills event, being involved in competitions shows you are serious about your career and strive to be the best you can in your chosen profession. The self confidence gained in knowing you can perform under pressure, in front of an audience, and to strict timescales and standards, will enhance your self esteem and provide a real plus point on your CV.

If, as an employer, lecturer or trainer, you'd like to be involved with judging or supporting our competitions, then please call **Sarah Cunningham** or **David Massie** at the IMI on **01992 511521** or email sarahc@theimi.org.uk or davidm@theimi.org.uk

For more information and for details on how to enter SkillAuto 2013, visit www.autocity.org.uk/skillauto

The **SkillAuto** competitions are kindly sponsored by IMI Awards, Morelli and Würth UK.



Contact us with your news and stories...

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