

Double success for JIB Apprentice Exchange

Two electrical apprentices have been named as the lucky winners of the Joint Industry Board (JIB) Apprentice Exchange Programme and will travel to Australia later this year to spend six weeks working 'down under'. The IET would like to extend their congratulations to Joshua Horton of RB Emerson Group Ltd and George Stickings of T Clarke plc, who were chosen as the stand-out candidates following a challenging selection and interview process.



Joshua Horton, left, and George Stickings, right.

Wiring Matters caught up with Josh and George to find out a bit more.

Congratulations on winning the apprentice exchange! What are you most looking forward to?

George Stickings: I am most looking forward to meeting with other like-minded electricians and not only gaining an understanding of their working cultures but also their lifestyles as a whole. I feel a lot could be learnt by recognising the differences between Australia and the UK and ultimately making use of ideas and working practices they have to offer, while also having my own input into how they operate. I feel the most exciting part of the experience would be joining in with the electricians to bring our two countries closer regardless of our differences and with the prospect of working on a professional level together, as well as joining in with activities outside of work to understand what goes on in their spare time.

Josh Horton: I am extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to represent my company and the JIB whilst working in a place so different from home. I am most excited to

be able to gain experience in a different environment while also being able to discover a new part of the world.

How do you think that this will shape your career?

George: I feel the JIB apprentice exchange and benefit of working as an ambassador on their behalf has already given me a lot of recognition across the industry as a whole, as it certainly has already within T Clarke. I would hope that my accomplishments would be further recognised in years to come and ultimately give me the confidence to work towards a reputable role within the industry and fulfilling my potential. While I am still looking forward to the prospects of my own future, knowing the benefits of the help given to me by the industry, I know I will always be able to and willing to offer advice and help to younger individuals wanting to take the same path I took by starting an electrical apprenticeship.

Josh: I believe this will help shape my career by providing me new skills in communication and also experience working in different parts of the electrical industry.

We also caught up with Mick Tuff, Chairman of the JIB Skills Development Fund, to find out more about this Exchange Programme.

Why was this opportunity created?

The JIB Apprentice Exchange Programme was established to promote and enhance apprentices' learning through cultural exchanges. This is not only a great reward for a particularly hard working and successful apprentice, but helps to identify the leaders of the future in our industry. The selection process is rigorous for this reason. The Exchange can also help in an apprentice's development by providing work in new situations in unfamiliar systems and improve general confidence by meeting new people and working in these different surroundings.

How does it benefit the industry?

The Exchange allows the apprentice to focus on lessons to be learnt for the industry as a whole, which is why the apprentice produces a report on their experiences upon their return. It is hoped this report can highlight areas for change in our own industry, identify what strategies or techniques work well abroad and increase productivity of companies in the UK. For instance, several years ago an apprentice described working methods on environmental technologies used in Brisbane which were of interest and benefit to the apprentice's employer in the UK. These reports are published by the JIB and are publicly available.

How do people get involved next year?

The best way to keep informed about the JIB Apprentice Exchange is to follow the JIB and the JIB Skills Development Fund on Twitter at @JIBElectrical and @JIB_Skills_Fund, or to download the JIB's Apprentice App. This App contains the Essential Guide to an Apprenticeship detailing the work of the JIB Skills Fund, the industry rates of pay, where help

is available and discounts for apprentices. The JIB Skills Development Fund is continually seeking to improve the Exchange and this may involve other organisations becoming involved in the future; both home and abroad.

Past winner, Thomas Hyland travelled to Australia in 2013 and is currently a Project Engineer for Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick:

“The Apprentice Exchange trip benefitted my career enormously. I truly believe the knowledge and understanding gained on that trip has helped me to secure the position I am in today. In my current role I am heavily involved with the apprentices. During my Australian visit I was able to see the state-of-the-art training facilities the apprentices had access to, combined with extra support and guidance. I have since worked with Balfour Beatty in support of offering similar support here in the UK. As part of this work, I have met with government to try and secure funding and have used my experience in Australia to drive this.”



Congratulations to all winners, past and present!



Background

Usually the Apprentice Exchange can only select one winner per trip but, thanks to a new partnership arrangement, the Electrical Industries Charity is funding a second placement to allow two students to benefit from this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Josh and George, both JTL apprentices, begin their programme in October when they will travel to Brisbane and begin a comprehensive schedule of work. During the trip they will learn



how the electrical contracting industry operates abroad and act as ambassadors for the industry, communicating with the UK via blogs and videos to describe their experiences.

The 2017 Exchange is a tripartite programme that will also see two American apprentices visit England later this year and two apprentices from Australia travel to New York. The scheme is being run by the JIB in conjunction with training provider JTL, the Electrical Contractors' Association, Unite the Union and the Electrical Industries Charity.

The Charity is not only sponsoring the second apprentice slot for Joshua and George's exchange this year, but will also support the second apprentice arriving in the UK from the USA later in 2017.

For more information on the JIB Apprentice Exchange visit www.jib.org.uk/apprentice-exchange.aspx