

VIC REEVES' BIG DAY OUT TO MARK APPRENTICESHIP FESTIVAL

Date of issue 26th February 2008
Publication number LSC0708 – 186k
Embargo until For immediate release

North East comedian and TV personality Vic Reeves has enjoyed a 'Big Day Out' in the region experiencing how investing in training is paying dividends for employers as part of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Apprenticeship Week.

To celebrate this first ever national week dedicated to apprentices, the LSC in the North East brought Vic back to his roots to visit employers across the region who are benefiting from the Apprenticeship Programme and to see first hand the wide range of skills on offer.

Vic's regional tour took in:

Locomotion, the National Railway Museum at Shildon, where he met up with David Allison, who was one of Vic's trainers when he did a mechanical engineering Apprenticeship with South West Durham Training (SWDT), based in Newton Aycliffe, in 1975/76. He also met apprentices Callum Howe, 18, of West Cornforth, and Chris Watson, 17, and Craig Alderson, 21, both of Shildon, honing their skills at Locomotion four days a week.

The Travelling Man pub at West Boldon, where he helped hospitality and catering apprentice Dan Sullivan cook lunch.

Aston Workshop, Beamish, which lovingly restores Aston Martins and where Vic helped 19-year-old apprentice Nic Clark, of Cramlington, Northumberland, file down the wing of one of the stripped down cars.

Rude Grooming of Middlesbrough, where Vic was given a cut throat shave by Andrew Gray, who runs the men's grooming salon with business partner David Thompson. Both of them are former hairdressing apprentices.

Chris Roberts, Regional Director, LSC North East, said: "Apprenticeship Week is designed to celebrate the success of Apprenticeships and demonstrate their benefit to businesses of all shapes and sizes.

"Our ambition is to encourage more employers to take on apprentices and more young people to consider this career route as an option as it makes good economic sense."

Vic Reeves, a former engineering apprentice who grew up in Darlington, said: "I have had a great time seeing the wide variety of careers which young people can forge ahead with under modern day Apprenticeships. No longer is this sort of training restricted to more traditional industries such as engineering but, as I have seen, now also takes in jobs such as hairdressing, beauty therapy and the hospitality and catering trades – today there is top-class training available under the apprenticeships banner to cover a huge spectrum of young people's employment ambitions."

In the North East in 2006/07 7,940 people completed an apprenticeship - a rate of more than 60%. This compares to just over 30% in 2003/04.

Throughout Apprenticeship Week, the LSC is urging apprentices and employers to enter the Apprenticeship Awards 2008 ahead of the deadline for entries on 29 February. The prestigious national awards showcase the achievements of apprentices and their employers. They reward and recognise the work of employers who are using Apprenticeships to build their future workforce and tackle skills shortages within their organisation and industry. They also celebrate the success of apprentices who have made a real difference to their own future and to the organisation they work for. To enter the Awards, or for more information, visit apprenticeships.org.uk/awards or call 0800 954 8896.

NOTE TO EDITOR

The **LSC** exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

National Apprenticeship Week is designed to celebrate the success of Apprenticeships. The week will officially launched by the first national Apprenticeship Summit, being held at the Congress Centre in London. The Summit aims to stimulate debate around the benefits of Apprenticeships.

Vic Reeves was born in Leeds in 1959 but was raised in Darlington. He was a mechanical engineering apprentice with South West Durham Training, based in Newton Aycliffe, in the mid 70s.

He moved to London where he worked in a factory and was a shop assistant for a spell before beginning a part-time college art course and is today also well-known as an accomplished artist. He became part of the stand-up comedy circuit and launched Vic Reeves Big Night Out, later teaming up with solicitor Bob Mortimer.

The show was a huge success when it transferred to television and the duo, who have won BAFTA Awards for Originality and Best Live Performance plus British Comedy Awards, have also starred in

programmes including Shooting Stars, The Smell of Reeves and Mortimer, and Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased). He is the main presenter of Sky One's Brainiac and is to host a BBC Radio 2 panel game called Does the Team Think

Media contact:

Ann Barnes, Regional Press Officer, 0191 492 6355, email ann.barnes@lsc.gov.uk

ENDS