



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 3rd June 2010

Lydney company named South West's Apprenticeship Small Employer of the Year

MK Wildin and Sons Ltd is celebrating today after being named Apprenticeship Small Employer of the Year at the South West Skills Awards, which took place last night (2 June).

The prestigious ceremony, which took place at Sandy Park conference centre in Exeter, was presented by BBC's former chief news correspondent, Kate Adie, OBE. Kate, who is the current presenter of Radio 4's *From Our Own Correspondent*, delivered a keynote speech about her own experience learning essential skills on the job.

This journalistic theme was reinforced by compere Clinton Rogers, the BBC's Chief Somerset Correspondent.

The South West Skills Awards recognise and celebrate the achievements of apprentices, learners and employers who have excelled in the region.

Run by the Skills Funding Agency and the National Apprenticeship Service, the evening combined the Skills Awards with the South West regional heat of the National Apprenticeship Awards.

MK Wildin and Sons Ltd will go on to the national Apprenticeship Awards ceremony at Westminster Plaza in Central London on 15 July 2010 where they will be amongst the best from England.

Dr John Chudley, Regional Director for the South West National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) agreed: "These awards recognise individuals at every stage of life and career, and the contributions of employers, both large and small, spanning all sectors.

“By acknowledging and rewarding the diverse learners and training opportunities in the region, we hope to encourage more individuals and organisations to take part in initiatives in the future.”

Further information about the South West Skills Awards can be found at:
<http://www.skillsawards.org.uk/>

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Notes to editors:

For media inquiries including comment, case studies or images, contact:
Rakhee Shah at Munro and Forster.
T: 0207 815 3960
T: rakhee.shah@munroforster.com

MK Wildin and Sons Ltd

There is a clear commitment to training and developing staff at MK Wildin. Led by the Managing Director, Brett Wildin, who recently completed an NVQ Level 5 in Construction Management, that commitment is apparent throughout the company. With a vision to have the most highly skilled workforce possible, MK Wildin joined the Apprenticeship programme in 1991. Brett was the first trainee achieving a carpentry/joinery Apprenticeship. The programme has grown and developed in size, level and breadth over the last sixteen years and is embedded into the organisation’s culture - forming an integral part of the business plan for the next five years at least.

The company’s current apprentices range in age from 16 to 60, undertaking NVQ Levels 2 to 5 in carpentry, brick, plant leadership and management administration. Staff retention is 100% and, alongside formal training, the company has a strong ethos of peer mentoring, experience sharing and the achievement of best practice. MK Wildin has earned Investors in People status because of its commitment to its employees. As Managing Director, Brett Wildin is dedicated to self improvement personally and to ensuring that the workforce benefits of training are fully realised and their potential maximised.

The South West Skills Awards

These awards recognise the achievements of individuals at every stage of life and career. By acknowledging the diverse learners and training opportunities in the region, the Skills Funding Agency hopes to encourage more learners and organisations to take part in learning initiatives that not only support individual development but contribute to stronger economic and workforce prosperity.

Sponsors for the South West Awards

Train to Gain Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Business Link and Train to Gain

Skills Pledge Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Skills Pledge
Third Sector Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by European Social Fund
Success in Leadership and Management Award – sponsored by Train to Gain

Apprenticeship Awards – sponsored as a whole by City & Guilds

Apprentice of the Year Award – sponsored by EDI
Young Apprentice of the Year Award – sponsored by Unilever
Advanced Apprentice of the Year Award – sponsored by EAL / EMTA Awards Ltd
Micro Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Skills for Care
Small Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by BT
Medium Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by Sellafield Ltd
Large Employer of the Year Award – sponsored by BAE Systems

Skills Funding Agency:

The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for channelling funding swiftly, efficiently and securely to further education colleges and other providers, primarily in response to customer (employer and learner) choice on programmes such as Train to Gain. It operates through customer focused services: *National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)*, *Employer Skills Services*, *Adult Advancement and Careers Service*, *Learner Skills Services*. The Skills Funding Agency is an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS):

The NAS was announced in January 2008 and officially launched in April 2009. Reporting to the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Education (DfE), the service will drive forward the Government's ambition for Apprenticeships. The service aims to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.