

# Case Study: Dafydd Hughes



Sept 2019

**Dafydd Hughes** recently completed his Level 3 Panel apprenticeship with Thatcham Research and was one of four individuals to be crowned its 'Apprentice of the Year' for 2019.

**Vehicle Repair Apprenticeships** offer people the opportunity to learn practical skills in a workplace with a career at the end. Bodyshops get the chance to nurture and develop their workforce via the apprenticeship route. With the rapid rate of technological innovation in the automotive sector, apprenticeships are an ideal way for Bodyshops to develop talent and for people to start their career in a fast paced, exciting sector.

## The employers perspective

**Dafydd** joined Paterson's Auto in 2016 as a Panel apprentice. Patersons is a small business with only 8 staff undertaking approximately 1,500 repairs each year.

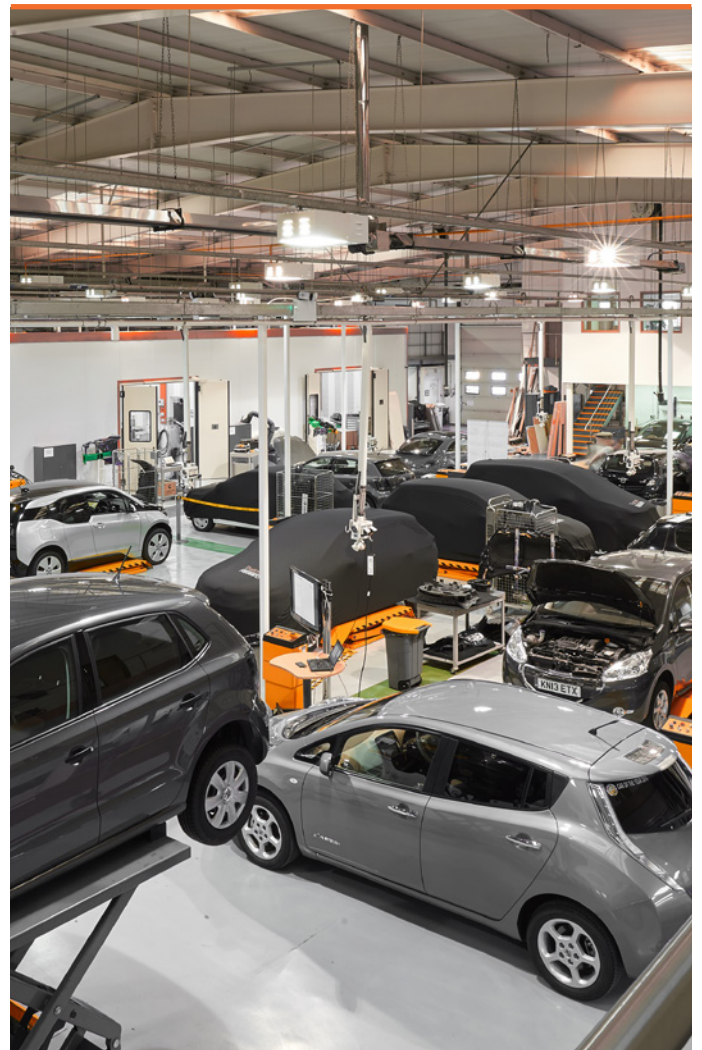
**Daren Goodchild** Bodyshop Manager said:

When Dafydd first joined Patersons he was a quiet, shy lad. Beneath the shy exterior was a young lad motivated to learn and conscientious. He listened to colleagues, took on board their feedback and always put 100% into his learning. The relationship with his mentor, Adam Brown was very important during his apprenticeship. Dafydd quickly demonstrated real talent and Adam harnessed this and always encouraged him to take pride in his work and to strive to achieve a high standard of repair.

By the time Dafydd progressed to his Level 3 apprenticeship, he was undertaking complex repairs with minimal supervision. In 2018, just after starting his Level 3 apprenticeship, Dafydd entered and won the Bodyshop Live 2018 Panel Apprentice of the Year award. For a young man, still completing his apprenticeship, this was a tremendous achievement."

To top off an excellent start to his career, in July 2019 Dafydd graduated from Thatcham Research winning their 2019 Panel Apprentice of the Year award.

As a company we are very proud of Dafydd and what he has achieved, and we are also grateful to Adam for his input into Dafydd's learning curve. Dafydd is a highly skilled panel technician and an invaluable member of our small team.



# ONE<sup>2</sup>ONE



**Dafydd talked to Dean Lander, Head of Repair Sector Services at Thatcham Research about his apprenticeship journey and what it meant to him to win the Thatcham Research 'Panel Apprentice of the Year' 2019 award.**

---

➤ **What was it about an apprenticeship that appealed to you?**

I didn't particularly like academic studies at school and disliked revising. I achieved B's and C's in my exams but the structure of lessons and the emphasis on further studies really highlighted that university was not a route I wanted to pursue. I have always been practical and decided that my future career should be more creative. I received lots of career advice at school and was interested in either an apprenticeship or a role in the Armed Forces. Both of my parents went to university but were supportive of my decision to do an apprenticeship. They were very pleased that an apprenticeship would provide me with a solid set of skills both practical and social that would set up my career.

➤ **Why did you want to work in the vehicle repair industry?**

None of my family or friends have ever worked in the motor repair industry but I have always loved cars and am interested in how things work. I had to organise some work experience and through friends and family, I was able to do my work experience

placement at a bodyshop. My work experience placement in a bodyshop really was a tremendous opportunity. At the end of my placement I had gained an idea of the work that technicians carry out, the roles within the bodyshop and knew that the vehicle repair industry was where I wanted to work.

➤ **What did you learn during your apprenticeship?**

I learned all sorts of specific skills such as filler, panel replacement, bolt on or permanently fixed and a basic mechanical understanding. The most valuable things that I learnt were the transferable skills like welding, having a more practical mindset and approach to tasks inside and outside of work.

➤ **What have been the highlights for you?**

The highlight SO FAR for me was being chosen to compete in the Bodyshop Magazine Apprentice awards in 2018. To then be announced as the Panel Apprentice winner was truly amazing. Being given the opportunity to go to Awards ceremonies and winning awards shows that there is more to the trade than the workshop floor!

➤ **How did you feel when you won Thatcham Research 'Panel Apprentice of the Year' 2019?**

It was a great feeling. To know that the trainers at Thatcham Research nominated me for the award was amazing. I am so grateful to my family and friends, my colleagues at Paterson's, especially Adam Brown and to the team at Thatcham Research for all their support and encouragement during my apprenticeship journey.

➤ **Briefly describe your experience at Thatcham Research.**

When I went to Thatcham Research in the beginning it was a bit daunting. Once I got to know the tutors and fellow apprentices, I felt at home with the whole situation. The trainers who taught me and the assessor who visited me at work were superb. All the Thatcham Research trainers and staff that I engaged with were helpful and professional. The facilities and equipment were very good and well maintained. The canteen was especially good!

➤ **Would you recommend the apprenticeship route to others?**

I would recommend the apprenticeship route to anyone who feels their strengths lie outside the classroom. Apprenticeships are a great way to learn real skills, show creativity and meet like-minded people. The earn and learn approach is ideal.

➤ **How did you work with your Mentor?**

It's not an exaggeration when I say that my mentor, Adam Brown, was the corner stone to my success. Adam encouraged me when I felt that I couldn't do something and has been fun to work alongside. He has given me the time and attention that I needed. He has become a great friend and we work well together, bouncing ideas off each other and being able to be on the same wavelength! The role of a mentor is important in supporting apprentices through the journey.

➤ **Is there anything else you'd like to share?**

I am very grateful to Paterson's Auto and Manchetts for taking me on as an apprentice and to the team for their support.

For further information and guidance please contact:



[customerservices@thatcham.org](mailto:customerservices@thatcham.org)



+44 (0)1635 293 174

**Since 2004, Thatcham Research Automotive Academy have trained over 1,550 apprentices.**

**We offer exciting new career opportunities, exposing apprentices to the latest vehicles and technology whilst learning the latest technical repair methods to keep vehicles and road users safe.**

**In March 2019, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) confirmed that Thatcham Research Automotive Academy had recorded 92% for our apprenticeship training Qualification Achievement Rates.**

