

Spotlight^L on FORMER Apprentices Ben Eaton



Thatcham
Research
AUTOMOTIVE ACADEMY

Job Title:
Composite Paint Technician

Current Employer:
Mercedes - AMG Petronas Formula One Team

Apprenticeship:
Level 3 Body and Paint

Start date:
2005 aged 16

Starting apprentice salary:
£6k

Finish date:
2009

Finishing apprentice salary:
£14k

School attended:
Westfield Secondary School, Sheffield



How did you get on at School?

I got good grades in subjects that I was interested in, so in Technology, PE, Art and Maths I achieved A and B grades. In subjects that I wasn't interested in, I got C and D grades. From school age, I was happy to invest time and effort in things that I liked or enjoyed doing.



Q What career advice did you receive at school?

a

I don't remember any specific career advice from school regarding future careers or opportunities available to me. I was lucky that both my Dad and older brother had completed apprenticeships. I knew more about this potential career route and what it involved.

Q What perceptions did you have about the automotive sector before you started your apprenticeship?

a I didn't really know that much about the industry. However, like most 16 year olds I loved cars and liked the idea of being part of the automotive industry.

Q Why did you decide to do an apprenticeship?

I really liked the idea of earning money while learning a technical skill. Initially I considered a mechanic technician apprenticeship but with a strong preference for Art at school, I decided to apply for an apprenticeship on the paint shop.



Q Who did you work for whilst completing your apprenticeship?

I did my apprenticeship whilst working for Synter BMW Sheffield. They were incredibly supportive and encouraging while I was completing my apprenticeship with Thatcham Research.

Q Who do you work for now?

a I work for Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One team as a Composite Paint Technician. My job includes preparing, painting and finishing all composite bodywork on the F1 cars. I also work on all the pit and garage equipment that needs painting such as the helmets, ear defenders, garage wall panelling, light rigs and pit stop equipment. You name it, we paint it.



What do you love about your job?

Working in a Motorsport team, there is a tremendous team spirit. We all support the team goal to win. I love working in the department that is responsible for the outward appearance of the car. It's the first thing everyone sees. A lot of the work that my colleagues do is hidden away but the paint work is the first thing that everyone sees. I love seeing my work on TV and knowing that it's my work. I'm so proud of what I achieve.

Q Would you recommend the apprenticeship route to students considering a career?

a I would definitely recommend the apprentice route. I came out at the end with a trade and with real skills and a qualification. I didn't have any of the debts that you can gain whilst at university.



Q What advice would you give to a student considering their career options?

a Every job I have undertaken I have tried to complete to a high standard and not to cut any corners. Quality work gets noticed and will boost your career prospects, so always take pride in your work. Look out for any trade competitions that you can enter to prove your skills and learn more. I made it into the World Skills Competitions and represented my country at car painting which was an amazing experience, and really helped my career.

Would you recommend Thatcham Research Automotive Academy for apprenticeship training?

Yes, I would. I really enjoyed my time at Thatcham Research and learnt a lot. With the support of Synter BMW and the Thatcham Research trainers, I had the best possible start to my career.

Vehicle Repair Sector

The car as we know it is changing, rapidly. The Automotive Industry is experiencing a tidal wave of technological innovation both on vehicles and in the repair process. New materials in vehicle design such as carbon fibre, ultra-high strength steel and aluminium, vehicle to vehicle connectivity, electrification, advanced driving assistance systems and the development of autonomous vehicles are just some of the opportunities. The repair sector is experiencing a shortage of technicians and this combined with the technological innovation, presents you with a real opportunity for rapid career advancement.

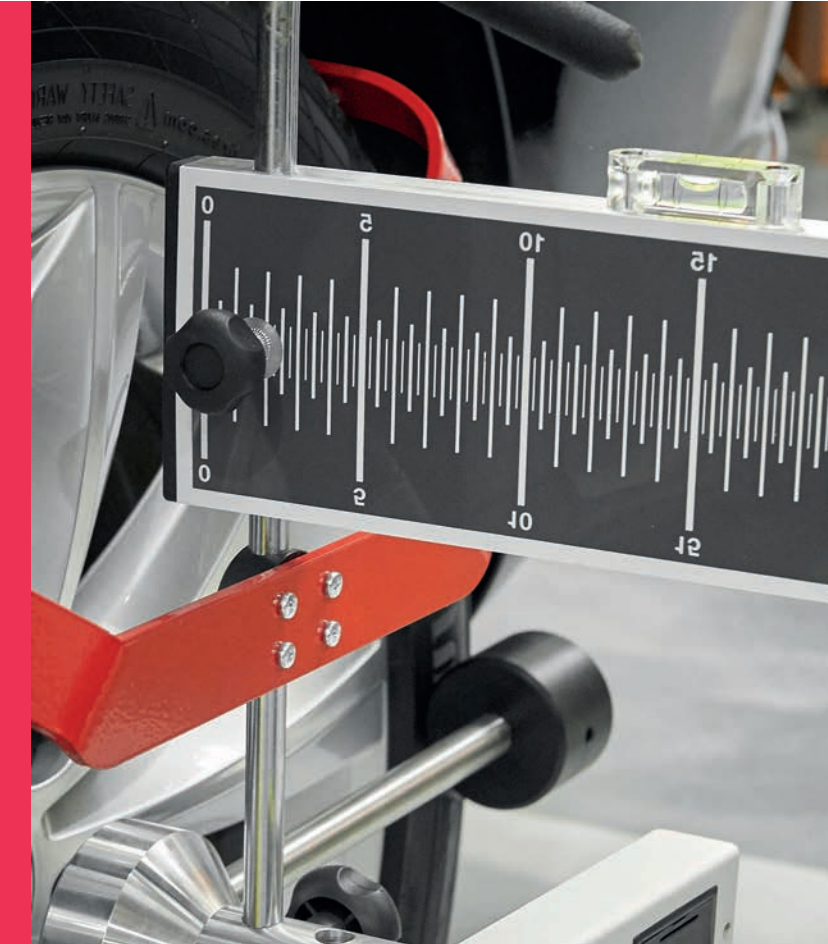
Why Thatcham Research for Apprenticeship Training?

We offer industry leading training in world class facilities and our dedicated apprentice academy offers the latest equipment, a safe and secure environment, and access to a variety of vehicles. Apprentices receive blended programme of practical, theoretical and online learning. Our online learning platform, ecademy supports apprentices during their programme of learning. Our training expertise is supported by our repair technologies centre and Bodyshop of the Future.

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.



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For further information and guidance please contact:



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thatcham.org/apprenticeships

