

# Spotlight<sup>L</sup> on FORMER Apprentices

Shane Lawrence



Thatcham  
Research  
AUTOMOTIVE ACADEMY

Job Title:  
**General Manager**

Current Employer:  
**Prestige QRC (part of Page Automotive Group)**

Apprenticeship:  
**Level 3 Paint**

Start date:  
**2005 aged 16**

Starting apprentice salary:  
**£1.50 per hour**

Finish date:  
**2008**

Finishing apprentice salary:  
**£9 per hour**

School attended:  
**Portchester Community School, Fareham**



## How did you get on at School?

I achieved good results at school and finished with B and C GCSE grades.



**Q** What career advice did you receive at school?



The school offered limited career advice. During a meeting with my career advisor, I decided that I wanted to do an apprenticeship in car refinishing.



Q

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

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A & J Lawrence was set up by my father and uncle, so I grew up in a vehicle repair environment. That exposure gave me a basic awareness of the business and the repair sector.

**Why did you decide to do an apprenticeship?**

I left school thinking that I did not want to go to college. Whilst at school, I completed work experience at A & J Lawrence where I was able to really experience the paint, panel and body disciplines. I particularly enjoyed the paint department and decided to apply for an apprenticeship.



Q

**Who do you work for now and what does your current role involve?**

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I still work for A & J Lawrence which is part of Page Automotive. I am the General Manager of Prestige QRC and manage 15 employees. My role focuses on the day to day running of the site, ensuring that we have enough work to keep the site busy, the staff enthusiastic and maximise the revenue from each repair that we complete to maintain site profitability.







## What do you love about your job?

I have always loved a challenge and running a bodyshop in today's environment is never dull. I meet a wide variety of people through my job including customers after they have suffered damage to their car. People skills are vital in this job and I love that I can make a difference to customers. Likewise, being able to support and help my employees is an aspect of my job that I really enjoy.

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

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Yes definitely. The satisfaction that you get when you finally complete a job on your own is a feeling that will stay with me forever. We currently have two apprentices working for us. Anyone considering the apprenticeship route should see it as a partnership. The business gains fresh talent (e.g. IT and technical proficiency) and the apprentice receives support and training to be the best that they can be in their chosen career.



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

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Follow your heart and pursue a career that interests you and will make you happy. You will start at the bottom, but with the right mindset, your apprenticeship will be the stepping stone to a fabulous career in a sector that is experiencing significant technical innovation.

## Would you recommend Thatcham Research Automotive Academy for apprenticeship training?

I would definitely recommend Thatcham Research for their apprentice training. I really valued the time that I spent with them as a paint apprentice. Later, I returned to Thatcham Research to complete technical training to become an estimator. If I have to undertake technical training, Thatcham Research is my preferred choice.

## 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 a 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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