

NTDA member Autoparts Garage Equipment gives award winning Kimberley the tools for success

Since being crowned the 2017 NTDA Tyre Technician Apprentice of the Year, which is sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights, Kimberley Locker of STS Tyre Pros has been reaping the benefits of her industry win. Recently, the major prize sponsor Autoparts Garage Equipment, a leading automotive equipment supplier, caught up with her as she reflected on her achievement to date and offered some inspiring advice for young apprentices.



Kimberley and Craig McCracken, Autoparts UK Group Factor Manager with the famous Wheelwrights Apprentice Tyre Technician Trophy

Kimberley explained: *"I also urged the girls not to be afraid to enter a male dominated industry, as you can still thrive and be the best if you're female! In the future I hope to be involved with looking after and assessing apprentices because I want to help young people become the best version of themselves and help inspire a positive attitude towards women in the motor industry. I truly believe that a decent apprenticeship is the most powerful way to teach young people coming into this trade from school and I want to be involved with that as much as possible!"*

Kimberley also attended the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights Working Wheelwrights weekend at Colyton in Devon on the 10th March, where she not only learnt how traditional wooden wheels are made and 'tyred' but also went on actually make a wheel and be part of the winning ladies team in the wheel making competition!

Autoparts Garage Equipment is one of the UK's largest garage equipment companies and was established in 1996. It is involved with the sales, installation and servicing of a vast range of garage equipment and workshop tools including vehicle lifts, MOT equipment, tyre changers, emission testers and wheel balancers. It is an active and fantastic supporter of the NTDA and its work to raise industry standards.

Since winning the award, Kimberley has been promoted to Assistant Manager and is now based in the STS Tyre Pros depot in Aylesbury. She was delighted with her Matco tool box, the prize donated by Autoparts Garage Equipment and is already putting it to good use.

Describing her win as *"an amazing feeling"*, she said that she *"felt honoured and proud"*, proving to herself that all the hard work she had put in over the previous two years had paid off and been acknowledged.

Kimberley said: *"When I first started my apprenticeship I wasn't 100% sure it was the field of work that I wanted to be in, but it didn't take me long to realise that I was in the right place and in the right hands. I completed my apprenticeship early, after receiving some fantastic training, and went on to become the assistant manager of the (Aylesbury) centre where I am now based."*



Kimberley with her Matco Tool Box



Kimberley in Colyton with current Master Wheelwright Bert Wiegman

John McArdle, Autoparts Garage Equipment Division General Manager, said: *"We were delighted to present Kimberley with her very own Matco tool box and she deserves every success. It's fantastic that she has excelled since winning the award, and we've no doubt that she'll be a positive role model, not just to young people*

considering an apprenticeship in the field, but also to young women wanting to carve out a career in a male-dominated profession."

NTDA Chief Executive Stefan Hay concluded by saying: *"Kimberley is a fantastic ambassador and role model for both women and apprentices in general. She has really set the bar for award entries and we are now looking forward to seeing what the 2018 batch of nominees has to offer!"*

Certified Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Training Courses Available in Northern Ireland

NTDA member Donnelly Group, Northern Ireland's largest family-owned new and used vehicle retailer, is to deliver an Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) certified course promoting safety amongst roadside recovery operators and tyre technicians when working on hybrid and electric vehicles. The course, entitled IMI Level 2 Award in Electric Hybrid Vehicle Hazard Management for Emergency and Recovery Personnel, is fully recognised by the NTDA and awards an IMI Vocationally-Related Qualification (VRQ). The first training sessions are taking place on Wednesday 23rd May at Donnelly Group Headquarters in Dungannon and on Thursday 24th May at Donnelly and Taggart in Eglinton.

Dasos Michaelides, Donnelly Group Tyre Division General Manager and NTDA Regional Chairman for Northern Ireland, said: *"We are delighted to be an NTDA approved training provider and to offer this IMI Award qualification in Northern Ireland which will further enhance the Tyre Technician Professional Development Scheme that the NTDA is promoting. The course will be taking place in Dungannon and Eglinton, negating the need for technicians who maintain or repair electric and hybrid vehicles to travel across the water for training. The hybrid and electric vehicle sector is highly specialised and this course is designed to complement the*

existing skills of attendees whilst equipping them with the knowledge and skills to continue working safely within their role."

Dasos continued: *"Working around a specialist vehicle that has high energy electrical systems can be complex. It is therefore vital that technicians have the knowledge and skills to carry out their work safely. Tyre specific issues will be addressed during the course to help to safe guard all technicians."*

Robert Fitzpatrick, Head of Learning and Development at Donnelly Group added: *"The one-day course will include what types of electric and hybrid vehicles are available; the hazards that are associated with the high energy electrical systems; how to reduce the risk of injury when encountering these vehicles; and how to safely transport and store electric and hybrid vehicles."*

The course has been specifically designed for those who will encounter electric or hybrid vehicles. The cost of the course is £199 + VAT per delegate which is inclusive of registration,



L-R Dasos Michaelides, Robert Fitzpatrick and Darren Campbell

course materials, lunch and certification. With no formal entry requirements for this qualification, delegates are not required to have any prior knowledge or experience making it suitable for those in all related roles. Delegates will receive course materials and a certificate upon completion of the one-day course. Further course dates will be made available in the coming months.

Robert concluded: *"At Donnelly Group we are champions of lifelong learning and professional development at all levels of our business amongst our 720 employees and we are really pleased to be working with both the NTDA and IMI to ensure this can be facilitated locally here in Northern Ireland. Technology is developing faster than ever before, and to ensure a safe environment for those working within the industry it is imperative they keep their knowledge and skills up to date."*

For further information or to register an interest in the course, please email robert.fitzpatrick@donnellygroup.co.uk