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@JBT\_Training



Joe Brennan Training



Joe Brennan Training



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## Company News

*It has been just over a year since our last newsletter and there is plenty to report! First off, we moved offices back to Harrow in June last year. Though we were sad to leave Ealing behind, our new office space is now just adjacent to Harrow-on-the-Hill station, which has proved far more convenient for our visitors.*

*We have been making efforts to improve our online presence. We have a brand new website up and running that we are very proud of, which now includes all news, upcoming events, apprentice case studies and interviews. We now have a very active Twitter account, as well as a Facebook page and LinkedIn company account. If we are not already connected with you, do please give us a 'like' or follow!*

*JBT has continued to attend employment fairs across London held by local councils, which are a fantastic source of new apprentices, along with college visits. Seeing the huge variety of people at these events is always encouraging; while the industry is currently suffering from a skills crisis, there is still plenty of untapped potential out there. The main issue continues to be about improving the image of careers in construction in the eyes of young people. The [Young Builder of the Year Awards](#) – run by [Youthbuild UK](#), of which I am trustee - address this by shining a light on the achievements of disadvantaged 14-24 year olds in their trades. We look forward to supporting this year's ceremony at the House of Commons on 18<sup>th</sup> October.*

*Perhaps our proudest moment of the last year has been Supanja winning the [Apprentice of the Year](#) award at the Ealing Apprenticeship Network Awards Ceremony in November. Supanja was a Trainee Site Manager on [Countryside Properties' Acton Gardens Phase 4 Development](#). She has one of the best work ethics we have seen on our Programme; she juggles work in Acton Gardens with her family life, while also making the 8 hour round trip to college in Wales every Wednesday, without fail.*

*Being the only woman on both her college course and her site's management team, Supanja has been a shining example that construction is not just a man's game – diversity and inclusion in this industry is so important and improves all of us.*



Joe Brennan

## New Places and New Faces

**Willmott Dixon Interiors** are a specialist arm of the **Willmott Dixon Group**, the second largest privately owned construction, housing & property development company in the UK. Most of WDI's work involves fit-out & refurbishment projects in the health, education and leisure sectors.

Some of the projects that **Willmott Dixon Interior's** apprentices so far have included *London Metropolitan University* and *Dagenham Civic Centre*.

**Durkan and Bugler Developments** are two more clients who JBT are proud to be associated with on account of their fantastic reputations of social responsibility. *Bugler's Hanger Lane site* was recently commended in the 'Ealing in Bloom' competition, while *Durkan* have delivered improvements to over 1,000 homes in Harrow. Both have also sponsored *Harrow's Heroes* – an awards night for heroes of the community who have tirelessly raised money for local charities.

This year JBT have continued to have fantastic working relationships with our existing clients, but we have also been fortunate enough to build some great new ones as well. The good people at [Willmott Dixon Interiors](#), [Bugler Developments](#) and [Barnes Construction](#) have been an absolute pleasure to work with. Abidemi (right, with site manager Mark Bowron) started on Bugler's Hanger Lane project this July as Trainee Site Manager and the team there loves having him on board.



Carpentry and joinery apprentice Szymon (left, with site manager Devon Johnson) has started on [United Living's](#) Copley Close site, along with trainee site manager Richmond and electrician Gabriel.

Faisal (right) started his plumbing apprenticeship on [Higgins Construction's](#) Kings Crescent site. Special thanks to Project Skills Co-ordinator Polly Moona from Higgins who persisted in making sure his supervisors were taking the time to train him properly when he raised some concerns. He is now fully qualified and employed with [Mace](#).

As well as new places, we have been interviewing apprentices both old and new about their experiences working on site! We caught up with Desmond Towner, a former [Countryside Properties](#) bricklaying apprentice about his time on their Dollis Valley Estate site. Desmond was one of the first people placed on the JBT Programme back in 2014, so we were really glad to see him getting on so well with [Flahive Brickwork](#) now.



More recently, we spoke with three bright young chaps doing their apprenticeships with Durkan and Peabody: painter & decorator Matthew and plumbers Leo & George, all on their very first site. They had some very encouraging advice for those considering apprenticeships in construction, and said they loved "learning while earning". Keep an eye out for these boys!

## Case Study: Nathan Gonzalez-Brown (Acton, 19)

Nathan first contacted JBT through the [College of North West London](#) to see if he would be suitable for our apprenticeship programme. We interviewed him at the start of January 2017 and were able to get him fully equipped and on site within a couple of weeks. He quickly settled in with [Higgins Construction](#) on their St Bernard's Gate project for [Catalyst Housing Group](#).

Nathan expressed some concerns early on that he was doing mostly general labouring rather than plumbing-related tasks. JBT spoke with the sub-contractor [I-MEX](#) to ensure he was assigned enough tasks to complete his portfolio. Nathan quickly became one of our highest-performing apprentices to date. His supervisor always spoke very highly of him, saying *"His interest and attitude are very good for his age. If all apprentices were like him, my job would be so much easier."* Within a couple of months, he was consistently scoring full marks in every aspect of his site reviews.

At his initial interview with Joe, Nathan told us that he *"always really wanted to do a trade"*. Initially, he supported the family business working with his dad, Michael, doing commercial and household electrical wiring. However, he hadn't really enjoyed electrical work. It wasn't until his multi-trade year at college that he was really taken by plumbing – he says the work just *"made more sense"* to him, and that he preferred the neater layout of pipework compared to other trades.

Outside of work, Nathan holds numerous titles under his belt for amateur boxing. Unfortunately, Nathan dislocated his shoulder while sparring. This of course severely affected his ability to work, especially with power tools. He underwent [a pioneering form of keyhole surgery](#) where he could watch the operation on a screen as it happened. Once he returned to work on St Bernard's Gate, JBT attended a meeting with Nathan and I-MEX to ensure that he would be placed on light duties (snagging reports) until he was ready to delve back into more intensive work.

Nathan completed his apprenticeship with JBT in August 2017. At his final on-site review and interview, we asked him how he had found his time with JBT. He said *"They have been 10 out of 10. They helped me so much and I felt supported all the way through. I can always ring for help (...) I don't think I'd have got my NVQ if it wasn't for JBT."* When asked about his future goals, Nathan told us he was hoping to be taken on by I-MEX and to eventually *"get gas qualified and working for myself or a reputable company, but most of all to have a good reputation."*

JBT are delighted to say that, despite I-MEX not usually employing contractors, they have agreed to take on Nathan as a self-employed plumber on account of his exceptional work and attitude. We could not be more proud of him!

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**Higgins Construction** was founded as a family-run business in 1961. Since then, it has grown into one of the most prolific contractors in London, and now makes up just one branch of the **Higgins Group PLC** parent company.

Their site at St Bernard's Gate, where Nathan was placed, has been shortlisted for **Best Residential** (rural/suburban) in the **Inside Housing Awards 2017**. The project has involved 270 new-build homes, a small retail unit, a bowling green pavilion and resiting an electricity substation.

We wish the very best of luck to **Higgins** and **Catalyst Housing Group** in the competition!

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## Ma Grumble says

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*A recent survey published in Construction News revealed [some truly shocking figures](#) regarding mental illness.*

*Around a quarter of the 3,400 workers surveyed said they were considering leaving the industry within the next 12 months due to poor mental health, and two-thirds claiming there was not sufficient support to talk about these matters.*

*Construction News' [Mind Matters](#) survey in May found that one in four workers had contemplated suicide, and in March the ONS reported the industry had the highest suicide rate of all trades from 2011-2015.*

*It's no secret that this often seen as a 'macho' industry and working on site can be physically & mentally challenging. Nonetheless, these statistics have [stirred a strong response from industry heads](#), addressing the disconnect in how mental wellbeing is treated by employers.*

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It has been a long time since June 16 and my last rant. Why? I hear you say. Shell shock, I reply.

Needless to say, the world has been quite a rollercoaster ride since this time last year - more downs than ups, admittedly... Referendums, elections, nuclear war looming. At least the US has a chance – they can get rid of the orange-faced buffoon at some point, but we are now forever carved off from our continental cousins. At least we have saved the NHS by transferring all those *millions* of pounds we were 'wasting' on the Eur- oh, no wait. Another lie!

Don't get me wrong, we will survive and possibly flourish, as we always do. Just what a terrible few months it has been.

Now that I have that off my chest, let's turn to more relevant matters.

Building more housing - many pledges from lots of organisations, even Theresa May turned slight left, by announcing a further 2 billion towards council housing.

*For those of you too young to know, council housing is housing for people who cannot afford to buy or rent in the private sector. Council housing started disappearing when the lovely Margaret Thatcher introduced the "right to buy" policy, which was great for existing council tenants, but not so great for future council tenants. Why? Because they did not replace the bought-up council homes with new ones. We now have the "right to buy" from Housing Association stock, go figure.*

*How stupid are we? Well very stupid really, because all those bought-up council homes, situated in now sought after locations like London, are way out of reach of mere mortals. Even so called affordable housing is hitting the half a million pound price mark.*

Who are building this housing? Good question. We are losing all those European builders, who have already started to leave before being kicked out, once we officially divorce the EU.

Never mind, we will train our own builders. Really? Let's see.

Construction apprenticeships are different from others, but it does not seem to be fully acknowledged when looking at current guidelines. Apparently, this is to be re-addressed in April 2018. Please make sure we all keep on top of this and make construction voices heard, I know we will.

Then there are the beleaguered colleges, still trying to keep their funding - oh yes, what happens when the ESF money is no longer available? - as well as dealing with the apprenticeship levy issues.

I consider myself up to date with apprentice-related matters, but I am defeated by the amount of change, unanswered questions, and keeping track of all those organisations putting forward their disparate initiatives.

Well here at JBT, we are keeping our heads down, not speculating on what may or may not happen, but more importantly, concentrating on getting our clients' apprentices qualified and into work – we're proud to say we still hold an 85% success rate!

Please wish us luck...

## Programme Status

As of December 2016, there were 2.3 million people working in construction. 9.3% of this workforce (around 214,000) are disabled in some way – this includes learning disabilities, visual & hearing impairments, as well as more 'visible' physical illnesses.

In order to tackle the skills crisis, we need to encourage employers to reach out to as many marginalised groups as possible to use all this untapped talent. This includes BAME workers, members of the LGTBQ community or those living with disabilities.

The industry's image has improved so much in the past few decades, so let's keep up this positive momentum



**JBT**  
JOE BRENNAN  
TRAINING

JBT Construction Programme  
Trainee Status  
Sep 13 to Sep 17

Having a Break  
5



**JOBS - 102**

Qualified - 88

Qualification  
ongoing - 14

On Route  
18

Early Falls  
18

Awaiting Start  
7

## And a new JBT website...

Finally, to round off this latest issue of our newsletter, we would like to introduce our brand new website at [www.JBT-training.co.uk](http://www.JBT-training.co.uk) !

Here you can find details of [our Programme](#), the [JBT team](#) and [how we started](#), [upcoming events](#), [apprentice case studies](#) and our clients' [apprentice vacancies](#) sorted by borough.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read, and please do follow us on our social media channels if you haven't already!

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Training to get people qualified and into work.