

## HERITAGE SKILLS ACADEMY

**“How hard can it be?” If you’re talking about creating a high-quality program to teach young men and women the art and science of automobile craftsmanship—after that skillset has almost disappeared and while the profession has suffered considerably from a less than desirable reputation—then the answer is, “Pretty darn difficult.”**

**L**uckily for car enthusiasts in the United Kingdom, men like John Pitchforth, managing director of Heritage Skills Academy, and Owain Johns, development director at HSA, have been determined to succeed against all odds. They’ve created a successful program that offers automotive restoration career opportunities to young people in the form of apprenticeships.



On this side of the pond, car collectors are going to be just as lucky as Piston Foundation begins a new partnership with HSA. Robert P. Minnick, founder and CEO of the Foundation, admitted, “Everyone at HSA has been up front about the challenges inherent in creating a program that will make a real difference and give us the pool of

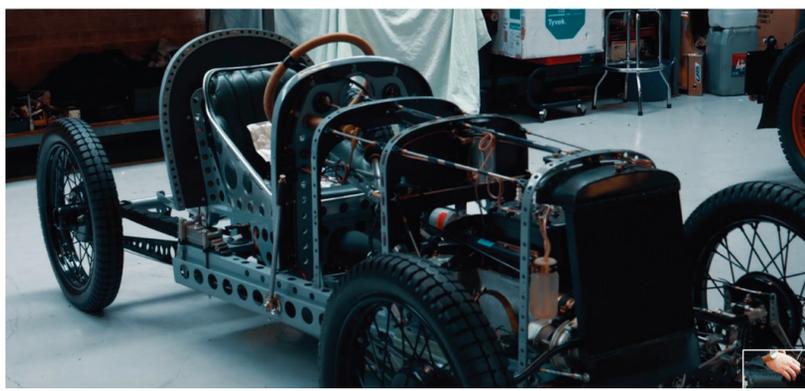
restoration specialists America needs. I’m grateful that HSA will allow us to look at what’s worked—and what hasn’t—as we move forward with support for projects like the Automotive Restoration Academy.”

HSA has spent the past five years funding and refining a program in which participants learn highly specialized skills guided by a curriculum that was specifically designed to demonstrate credibility. When these men and women finish the course, employers who have sponsored them through their studies and provided them with hands on training are assured that the apprentices’ skill sets meet a high standard.



Owain explained, “Our goal is to create bespoke training opportunities to match the skills of students. There is a good amount of time spent on developing and upholding standards. The End Point Assessment (EPA) evaluates apprentices to ensure people can recognize apprentices as having viable skills.”

John said the mission is to ensure that the world’s automotive engineering heritage is maintained and the skills to maintain it are preserved for future generations of engineers and enthusiasts.



“The industry has responded with joy at the quality of men and women in our mechanical, coachbuilding, and trim apprenticeships.”

He added, “For apprentices lucky enough to become part of Heritage Skills Academy, our location within Bicester Heritage provides an exciting and vibrant environment which

embeds them within the world of specialist engineers, historic engineering and cutting-edge technology.”

Kent S. Bain, the man behind ARA, said, “I’m excited by what we can learn from HSA and how we’re going to use that information to benefit young men and women.”

The Foundation’s grassroots effort is gearing up to create solutions for problems like the lack of restoration specialists as we create a national fundraising platform to preserve car culture.



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**W**ant to learn more about how the Piston Foundation will impact our car culture by funding and empowering groups like the Automotive Restoration Academy? Contact [info@pistonfoundation.org](mailto:info@pistonfoundation.org) today!