

Thomas James Kinley
Age – 22
Start Date Sept 2002 – Welder



I applied to BAE and a few other companies as soon as I received my GCSE's with no idea of what I wanted to train as, and when BAE offered me a position as an apprentice fabrication welder I jumped at the opportunity.

I was to serve my first year full time at Furness College and then one day a week day release for the following two. Here I would learn the vital skills I would need for when I was placed into the shipyard. I was training for a Level 3 NVQ in Engineering Production which was made a lot easier thanks to the guidance and support of the college tutors and our training coordinator from BAE who came into college to help answer any questions we might have about the business and our different trades.

Once the first year was successfully completed I was placed into a working environment where I was assigned to a qualified tradesman who I would work along side, help and learn from for a couple of months until I had picked up the basic skills I would need. Being a welder I was then placed into the welding school where I would eventually complete the welding test which would give me the qualifications I would need to work alone in future, these consisted of:-

- Overhead – Full penetration Butt weld (MIG)
- Vertical Incline – Full penetration Butt weld (MIG)
- Horizontal – Full penetration Butt weld (MIG)
- Flat – Full penetration Butt weld (MIG)

After a few vigorous months of training I was let loose onto the shop floor a little more independent and confident this time but still with a tradesman watching over me showing me techniques I could use for different types of jobs.

Through my apprenticeship I was placed on a wide variety of different jobs all helping increase my confidence and skill level, these jobs included – Bridge Fin, fwd end, Flank array structures, rafts and many more taking me right round the shipyard helping me see how different boss's and tradesman work.

After a year or so I was contacted by a manager I had previously worked for who told me there was a position open with his cladding squad and he would like me to take it, I happily agreed and took the position back in the NAS training along side a couple of guys who showed me how to operate the mechanised TIG machines and also trained me up on the manual TIG machines which I had only previously tried at college.

These processes used a whole different group of consumable types such as Monel 60, Inconel 625 and Cuni and were used on a wider range of jobs like Taper pieces, Sea water bends and the LET's.

I spent the rest of my apprenticeship here and subsequent years after that where I became qualified along with my other welding qualifications to do:-

- Orbital butt welds.
- Monel and Inconel sleeves (manual TIG).
- All grades of cladding materials including Stainless Steel.
- Programme operator for the cladding machines.

A few months out of my time I was invited to an award ceremony for the 2002 class apprentices where I was awarded Welder of the Year which was a huge honour and confidence boost. I received a certificate, a trophy and a unique Quick Glass Welding Shade.

I am now currently nearing the end of the High Potential scheme which I have been taking part in for the last year, where I have had placements in HR, Quality Control, Manufacturing, Planning and Welding Engineering getting an insight on how the rest of the company works. Oblivious till now, this course has helped me progress my skills in the areas I was weak in.

I have just completed the Sandhurst Leadership Course where we trained along side the TA and regular army in Edinburgh. Some skills learnt here were taking on leadership roles, being marked on motivation of the team, map reading and general leadership skills.

At the end of the High Potential Scheme I am hoping to return to QC as an NDE Inspector in a permanent role.

If you are looking to progress your learning and career in any aspect BAE are behind you all the way driving you to achieve your goals, any hard work you put in will not go unnoticed.