

# Terry Coles

Skill: Bricklaying

**From:** Barnsley  
**Competed in:** WorldSkills 2005, Helsinki  
**Employer:** Strata Homes Ltd  
**Result:** Medallion of Excellence

## Qualifications

- 9 GCSE's
- NVQ levels 2 & 3 Bricklaying
- City & Guilds Licentiate



Terry had a clear idea of what he wanted to do in life when he was still at school. His father was a teacher at Barnsley College and Terry became interested in building when he went into the college with his dad during the holidays. Leaving school at 16 with 9 GCSEs, Terry began an Apprenticeship in Bricklaying during which he worked for 3 days a week and spent the other two at college.

## How did he get involved in competitions?

"During my first year at college, I was doing quite well and so I was invited to take part in a Guild of Bricklayers competition to test my skills against other people of my age. I won this competition and it was then that I discovered there was a whole world of skills competitions out there. I went on to compete and win in regional and national competitions for SkillBuild, who run competitions in all areas of construction across the UK."

## How did you get selected to take part in WorldSkills?

***"The competition to get selected for WorldSkills was tough as there was stiff competition. I had to go head to head with another national SkillBuild winner at a variety of competition events which culminated at the UK Skills selection event held in Derby College. To get selected was fantastic as it felt like such an achievement after 4 years of taking part in competitions."***

## So what was the training and preparation like for WorldSkills?

"It was tough because of trying to squeeze all the extra hours from a day needed for training. I was working full time so most of my free time was taken up preparing in some way or other for WorldSkills. It was all worth it though and we were warned early on in the process that earning a place on the UK team would demand a large amount of hard work and stamina. "

## What kind of things did the training involve?

"I did a lot of previous WorldSkills competition models which was great practice for the event. I also got the chance to do a dummy run in Finland before WorldSkills which was really helpful in preparing me for what lay ahead. I found competing abroad to be a very different experience from competing in the UK so it really helped to get a taste of this prior to the main event."

## So what was WorldSkills like?

***"It was absolutely massive and extremely nerve wracking! Although in some ways it was everything I expected, no matter what you are told you can't imagine how big and impressive it is in reality. I would love to do it again – I don't think a day goes by when I don't think about it."***

**Did you use any techniques to cope with the pressure of the competition itself?**

"I found that the most important thing to do was not to get distracted. When there are so many people around you all doing the same thing but in different ways, it is easy to get put off and doubt yourself. Being prepared for this situation made it easier to cope with and I concentrated on sticking to my own plan. I also think it really helped that I had taken part in lots of competitions previously as it gave me a lot of time to reflect on how to improve my performance."

**What benefits does Terry think taking part in WorldSkills has given him?**

"Well I'm still working and a lot of people I know right now aren't because of the economic situation. I think it has put me a cut above the rest in that respect. It's given me a lot of confidence that I didn't have before which has benefited me in all ways, not just at work. Because of WorldSkills people expect me to be brilliant all the time which is a tough challenge but it makes me proud of what I have achieved."

**So what will you remember most?**

"I remember the whole four days of competing vividly like it was yesterday. I don't think there is one single thing that stands out to me, it was all brilliant. The time after the competition when we were celebrating was also very special and I'm just so glad that I took part in WorldSkills. I've kept in touch with some of team mates which is great as it's those guys who realise what an exceptional experience we all had."

**So what's he been up to since WorldSkills?**

Since returning from Finland in 2005, Terry's changed jobs and become self-employed: "I still work for other people but I like the fact that it gives me more control and I have more flexibility over when and who I work for."

As for the future, Terry is keeping his options open: "For now I'm happy just keeping busy with a steady amount of work but maybe one day I will run my own business. I also want to go into teaching at some point, maybe 10 or 15 years down the line. I keep in touch with my old college and I sometimes get involved with running expert classes for certain elements of construction which I enjoy a great deal."

**Do you have any words of advice for future competitors?**

*"If you're doing well at what you do, aim to excel in it and reach for the top. Believe that you can be the best and put everything you have into proving that you are. WorldSkills is a fantastic experience which you can only benefit from so don't waste the chance you've been given."*

**With WorldSkills London 2011 just a few years away, what do you think will be the benefits to young people?**

*"Seeing all the different skills at WorldSkills will give young people an insight into what's out there and they will also be able to see that it's about so much more than work. Competitions are all about bettering yourself and having your eyes opened to new things."*



For more information, please contact the PR Team, UK Skills: 020 7612 9260