

CPA STARS OF THE FUTURE AWARDS 2025

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CPA STARS OF THE FUTURE AWARDS 2025

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CPA Stars of the Future is organised by the
Construction Plant-hire Association
 27/28 Newbury Street, Barbican, London EC1A 7HU
www.cpa.uk.net

CPA STARS OF THE FUTURE AWARDS 2025



Earlier this year, the Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA) was delighted to welcome over 350 attendees to the Heart of England Conference and Events Centre near Coventry for our biggest ever Stars of the Future Apprentice and Trainee Awards event to date.

We received a record-breaking total of 103 nominations – the highest number of entries since the awards programme was first introduced by the CPA back in 2013.

The awards identify some of the industry's most promising up-and-coming talent and its future leaders across various occupations including Plant Mechanics, Plant Technicians, Hire Controllers, Plant Installers, Plant Operatives and Young Plant Operatives, as well as those who mentor the apprentices. A new awards category for 2025 was Technical Support Person of the Year.

This year's nominations were judged across 21 regional and national categories by a total of 14 judges from the CPA and across the industry. The judges described the awards as the 'most highly contested year yet' and collectively they spent a phenomenal 1,500 hours judging the awards.

On behalf of the CPA, I would like to congratulate all nominees, winners, judges and CPA staff involved in pulling it together once more and for everyone's contribution to our sector. Simply outstanding. For nominees and winners, it's a tremendous achievement

in itself for apprentices to be nominated by their employer or training provider for a Star of the Future Award.

We would like to thank all our sponsors, without whom we simply could not stage such an event or reward our winners so considerably. Award winners received some fabulous prizes, including tool kits, machine training courses, iPads, an overseas trip to visit a Liebherr crane manufacturing plant in Germany, another overseas trip to one of Wolffkran's manufacturing facilities in Luckau, Germany, and VIP days courtesy of JCB. Special thanks also go to each and every one of our judges for the tremendous amount of time they took in going through all the nominations so thoroughly.

If you have apprentices in your business that you believe will be the leaders of tomorrow, please don't hesitate to nominate them for a Stars of the Future Award. There are various categories and nomination forms for the 2026 Awards will be on www.cpa.uk.net from January 2026.

For the first time, entries can be made online so it will be easier than ever before to make a nomination. Please do take the time to make your nominations as it means the world to apprentices to be nominated for such an award.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Mulholland'.

Steve Mulholland
CPA Chief Executive Officer

JUDGING PANEL

Stars of the Future has a two-tier judging process – the CPA selection panel and a panel of external judges who decide the eventual winners of each category.

Nominations for a number of categories were initially filtered by the CPA selection panel comprising:



ROB SQUIRES

Rob is the CPA's Training and Safety Manager and one of the co-ordinators of the Stars programme. Prior to joining the CPA, following a long career in the armed forces, he spent a number of years managing training, card and certification schemes with experience at CITB managing a range of CSCS-based schemes.



PETER BROWN

Peter is the CPA's Technical and Development Director. He has a long background in plant technical operation and maintenance, followed by experience in plant-based education, training and development, including 18 years at CITB as a standard-setter for plant occupational standards, qualifications, training standards and CPCS.



LISA COLLINS

Lisa is a Communications Consultant to the CPA and the other co-ordinator of Stars, having been involved in the organisation of the event for several years. Prior to setting up independently, Lisa headed up the Marketing Communications Department at A-Plant, now known as Sunbelt Rentals, for almost 10 years.



KATIE KELLEHER

Katie is the CPA's Technical Publications and Careers Manager. Prior to joining the CPA, she worked for Select Plant Hire for eight years as a Crane Operator and Appointed Person. She has been involved in the judging of Stars of the Future for a number of years and is a champion for women and young people working in construction.



ARRAN WILLIS
Liebherr-GB

A former apprentice, Arran is now employed as the After Sales Operations Manager for Liebherr's crane division. Liebherr has been a major employer at all levels of apprenticeships over many years and sponsored the Plant Installer of the Year Award for 2025.



SIÔN MORGAN JONES
ACOP Group

Siôn is the current Chair of the CPA. He developed a passion for plant machinery from a young age owing to his family links to the plant-hire sector. Over the last two decades Siôn has invested heavily to create a bespoke training facility from a disused quarry in South West Wales. He now heads up a leading CPCS and NPORS training facility and award-winning assessment centre. ACOP Group are a dynamic and progressive business that offer a one-stop solution for training and plant-hire within the construction industry and allied sectors.



KIRSTY ARCHBOLD-LAMING

Southern Hoist Services

Kirsty has been in the industry for over 30 years working for specialist rental company Southern Hoist Services. Keen to improve the industry through training and guidance, she was Chair of the Hire Controller Trailblazer Apprenticeship, successfully getting it approved and delivered to industry. In conjunction with her 'day job', she is also Chair of the Construction Hoist Interest Group (CHIG), CPA Council Vice Chair, and she sits on various British Standards and IPAF Committees.



LEIGH SPARROW
Vertikal Press

Leigh is the owner of Vertikal Press which produces the industry-leading Cranes and Access magazine and hosts the successful Vertikal Days crane and access trade show. A long supporter of training, Leigh comes from a family which has a long association with the crane and lifting world.



GRAHAM BLACK
Earthmovers Magazine

As Editor of the very popular Earthmovers magazine, Graham has a long interest in training and seeing new talent come into the industry, evidenced by the many articles written in Earthmovers featuring new and young plant operators. He has great insight and knowledge into the plant world.



ROB ALLEN
Independent

Rob started a long career in the plant sector back in 1979 as an Apprentice Mechanic from which he finished his career in industry as H, S & E Manager at Clee Hill Plant. Rob was a member of many plant and H&S training and technical working groups and was Co-Chair of the Construction Equipment Maintenance Mechanic Trailblazer Working Group.



GEORGINA WILLIAMS
JCB

Georgina started working for JCB as an Event Coordinator which was her first taste into the world of construction. She strived to learn more about JCB's products, the industry and customers which led her to a role as a Product Demonstrator at JCB, before testing new products for JCB Research as a Test Driver. This led Georgina to her current role as Demonstration and Training Manager for Backhoe Loaders where she is responsible for development and deployment of Backhoe Loader Plant Operator Training options through partner training schools, as well as leading the roll out of JCB Backhoe Loader Demonstrations in the UK.



TIM BROWNBRIDGE
BAM Nuttall Ltd

Having a long background in plant and civil engineering, Tim is employed as BAM UK & Ireland Learning Academy Manager. He also represents the civil engineering sector via the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) in a number of development groups including Chair of the Groundworker and member of the Plant Operator and Lifting Technician Trailblazer Groups, as well as holding the position as Trustee of NOCN Job Cards.





SEAN SCARAH

Balfour Beatty

Sean started his career in plant-hire over 35 years ago. He has carried out almost every role in plant-hire – including Driver, Fitter, Hire Controller, Depot Manager, Sales and Account Manager. He spent 10 years with Sunbelt Rentals before going over to the Tier 1 contractors side. For 15 years Sean was the Plant and Logistics Director for Balfour Beatty in the Asset and Technology Solutions part of the business, which supplies every part of the Balfour Beatty Group with plant requirements – be it owned or hired in.

Sean has recently been appointed Chief Operating Officer of Safety Shield Global, an award-winning technology solutions manufacturer.



DEAN WATKIN

G F Tomlinson

Following a temporary start with Hewden on the hire desk for Birse Civil Engineering, Dean then transferred to A-Plant's hire desk before he was subsequently taken on by Birse Civils as a Hire Controller in the company's busy plant office.

After a number of years, Dean went to CRH Plant, initially as Area Sales Manager and subsequently as HSEQ Manager for 12 years before taking up the same position with the G F Tomlinson Group, a construction company which also owns Total Hire & Sales Ltd.

Dean is the current Chair of the Construction Equipment Maintenance Engineering Group, overseeing the development and introduction of both the Level 2 Plant Mechanic and Level 3 Plant Technician apprenticeships.



AWARDS HOST PETER HADDOCK

Stars of the Future 2025 was hosted by Peter Haddock, an award-winning industry journalist, influencer and vlogger with over 20 years' experience in the construction plant sector. Peter has a close connection with the industry, creating engaging interview-style video content from construction and infrastructure sites in the UK and beyond.

He also covers events and press launches, sharing insights into the industry from people at all levels, and is a correspondent for industry magazines such as Earthmovers Magazine. As the owner of media business Content With Media, Peter shares his content on LinkedIn and other social media platforms. In addition, his content can be found at www.contentforindustry.com, which covers the key themes of the environment, productivity, safety, people, and skills.

Peter has hosted a number of events for the CPA in recent years. As well as Stars of the Future, he has hosted the CPA Conference and was Master of Ceremonies at the inaugural CPA Gala Dinner. At the Stars of the Future Awards 2025, Peter was joined on stage by his 18 year old son, Lucas Haddock, who is a Content Creator Apprentice and is following in his Dad's footsteps.



PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR AWARDS

AWARD SPONSOR



Due to the high number of entries, the Level 2 Plant Mechanic of the Year Awards were split by region. On receipt, nominations from either the colleges or the employers were entered into one of five regional categories. The regional winners won Snap-on tool kits.

Photographs: All the regional winners are pictured with CPA CEO Steve Mulholland



NOMINEES

PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR – NORTH

Jake Thomas	Geocore Site Investigations	Askham Bryan College	WINNER
Simone Loonam	GGR Group	Trafford College	Highly Commended
Ben Howes	Moortown Group	Askham Bryan College	Highly Commended
Jacob Hill	Vp Torrent Trackside	Myerscough College	Finalist
Oliver Spink	Plasmor	Askham Bryan College	Finalist
Sam Hill	Ainscough Crane Hire	Myerscough College	Finalist

PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR – MIDLANDS

Kristan Moody	Flannery Plant Hire	Reaseheath College	WINNER
Elina Smith	Clee Hill Plant	NSCG Stafford College	Highly Commended
Kaiden Crowe	UK Tool Hire Group	National Construction College East	Highly Commended
Charlie Spencer	M Lambe Construction	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Harry Williams	Flannery Plant Hire	Reaseheath College	Finalist
Harvey Caton	NRS	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
John Urquhart	Edg-Tec	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Katie Crutchley	Wacker Neuson	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Kyle Morgan	HW Martin Fleet Maintenance	Myerscough College	Finalist
Mathew Black	Quattro Plant	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Nathan Sturgess	L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage	CST Training	Finalist

PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR – SOUTH

Jack Lovesey	Liebherr-GB	NSCG Stafford College	WINNER
Josh White	Sunbelt Rentals	Myerscough College	Highly Commended
Amber Young	GAP Group	Reaseheath College	Highly Commended
Alfie Ashworth-Pickering	GAP Group	Reaseheath College	Finalist
Ben Burton	Southern Plant & Tool Hire	National Construction College East	Finalist
Marlee Clarke	Cotswold Natural Stone Masonry	National Construction College East	Finalist
Mason Pooley	Sunbelt Rentals	Myerscough College	Finalist
Oliver Noble	Quattro Plant	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Saxon Blackman	Readypower Rail Services	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist

PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR – SCOTLAND

Callan Brown	GAP Group	National Construction College Scotland	WINNER
Adam McMahon	Vp Torrent Trackside	Myerscough College	Finalist
Ryan McGill	GAP Group	National Construction College Scotland	Finalist

PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR – WALES

Aaron Hawkins	Rapidgrid	Bridgend College	WINNER
Ryan Lloyd	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	Bridgend College	Highly Commended
Tyler Ball	GTAccess	Bridgend College	Highly Commended

NATIONAL PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR AWARD

AWARD SPONSOR



All of the regional Plant Mechanic of the Year winners were put forward for the National Plant Mechanic of the Year accolade.

NATIONAL PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR – NOMINEES

Jack Lovesey	Liebherr-GB	NSCG Stafford College	WINNER
Kristan Moody	Flannery Plant Hire	Reaseheath College	Highly Commended
Jake Thomas	Geocore Site Investigations	Askham Bryan College	Finalist
Callan Brown	GAP Group	National Construction College Scotland	Finalist
Aaron Hawkins	Rapidgrid	Bridgend College	Finalist

Photographs: Kristan and Jack are pictured with Roy Knappett of HTS Spares (left) and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland (right)



HIGHLY COMMENDED

A Highly Commended accolade was awarded to:

KRISTAN MOODY

Flannery Plant Hire, Reaseheath College



WINNER

Huge congratulations to the winner of the National Plant Mechanic of the Year Award for 2025:

JACK LOVESEY

Liebherr-GB, NSCG Stafford College

WHAT IS A PLANT MECHANIC?

Mechanics carry out servicing and repair activities on a wide range of construction plant, equipment and accessories, either in a workshop or on site. Activities include routine servicing, breakdowns, fitting additional equipment or carrying out repairs to damaged equipment.



SPOTLIGHT ON

JACK LOVESEY

NATIONAL PLANT MECHANIC OF THE YEAR 2025

Growing up, Jack developed a passion for mechanical engineering. As a child he always had a spanner in his hand and anything that involved working with his hands or fixing things fascinated him. He loved taking old machines apart or building things from scratch and instinctively knew he wanted to pursue a career where he could work with machinery and technology.

Before he started his apprenticeship, Jack spent three years in the British Army as an Infantry Soldier. During his time in the Army he spent 18 months in Cyprus, where he developed key skills such as discipline and resilience. He was also on the Battalion Boxing Team, which helped sharpen his focus even further. These are all qualities that Jack carries through to his apprenticeship today.

Jack made the difficult decision to leave the Army in order to pursue his dream of becoming a Mechanical Engineer and he joined Liebherr as a Mobile Crane Engineering Apprentice. He hasn't looked back since and describes his apprenticeship as an "incredible experience so far."

He told us: ***"I've been dedicated to not only developing the technical skills needed, but also growing both professionally and personally. Every day I'm faced with new challenges that allow me to think critically and I can apply what I've learnt in the classroom on the job. The work is demanding but it's exactly what I was looking for in terms of developing my engineering knowledge."***

"Ultimately my goal is to shape myself into the best possible Engineer I can be. I'm constantly seeking feedback on ways to improve. Looking into the future I'm really excited about where my apprenticeship will take me. The experiences I'm gaining now are setting the foundations for a long and successful career in mechanical engineering. I'm looking forward to the next chapter."

Jack has made incredible progress in his apprenticeship, completing second year tasks early and achieving a perfect 100% in his end of block exams – a huge leap from 77%.



"MY MOBILE CRANE ENGINEERING APPRENTICESHIP HAS BEEN AN INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE SO FAR."

His mentor praises his attitude, skill, and work ethic, describing him as a "brilliant Engineer" with a bright future at Liebherr. His attitude and attention to detail have seen him grow into a great ambassador for Liebherr. He has developed a confidence built on hard work and an eagerness to learn.

He said: ***"I was really proud when I won National Plant Mechanic of the Year at Stars of the Future. I didn't expect to win the award. For anyone interested in doing an apprenticeship in our sector, my advice would be to take the leap and not let anything hold you back."***

PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Like the Plant Mechanic of the Year Awards, the Level 3 Plant Technician of the Year Awards were split by region. Nominees were entered into one of five regional categories. The regional winners won Snap-on tool kits.

AWARD SPONSOR



Photographs: All the regional winners are pictured with CPA CEO Steve Mulholland



NOMINEES

PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR – NORTH

Maisie Holloway	Finning UK and Ireland	Finning Academy	WINNER
Paul Hampson	CRJ Services	Reaseheath College	Highly Commended
Paisley Cooke	Flannery Plant Hire	Reaseheath College	Highly Commended
Aaron Hussain	Premier Platforms	Askham Bryan College	Finalist
Conor Glew	Ainscough Crane Hire	Myerscough College	Finalist
Kealan Gillespie	Flannery Plant Hire	Reaseheath College	Finalist
Matt Nelson	Allan J Hargreaves Plant Engineers	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Matt Smith	Finning UK and Ireland	Finning Academy	Finalist
Sam O'Malley	Bachy Soletanche	Reaseheath College	Finalist
Terrence Rochester	Ashbrook	Reaseheath College	Finalist

PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR – MIDLANDS

Richard Nnadi	Flannery Plant Hire	Reaseheath College	WINNER
Oliver Flowers	Watling JCB	National Construction College East	Highly Commended
Shaydn George	Clee Hill Plant	NSCG Stafford College	Highly Commended
Charlie Keyworth	Clee Hill Plant	Askham Bryan College	Finalist
Harry Eaton	Clee Hill Plant	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Nathan Hutchinson	Watling JCB	National Construction College East	Finalist
Tyler Hartles	Marubeni-Komatsu	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist

PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR – SOUTH

Peter Child	Watling JCB	National Construction College East	WINNER
Bradley Hawkes	MDS Civil Engineering	National Construction College East	Highly Commended
Ciaran Sequeira	Liebherr-GB	NSCG Stafford College	Highly Commended
Alex Jones	JMC Hire	Reaseheath College	Finalist
Cody Floyd	SMT GB	Wiltshire College & University Centre	Finalist
Daniel Plumb	SMT GB	Wiltshire College & University Centre	Finalist
Jack Statham	Liebherr-GB	NSCG Stafford College	Finalist
Kane Vincent	Falcon Tower Crane Services	City College Norwich	Finalist
Luke Piggott	Vp Brandon Hire Station	Myerscough College	Finalist
Mike Kinnane	Sunbelt Rentals	Myerscough College	Finalist
Tom Helps	Kelston Sparkes Group	National Construction College East	Finalist

PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR – SCOTLAND

Scott Kelly	Finning UK and Ireland	Finning Academy	WINNER
Chris Scott	Marubeni-Komatsu	NSCG Stafford College	Highly Commended
Logan Rae	Liebherr-GB	NSCG Stafford College	Highly Commended
Callum Bissett	Vp MEP Hire	Myerscough College	Finalist
Craig Williams	Vp Torrent Trackside	Myerscough College	Finalist
Finlay Allan	Sunbelt Rentals	Myerscough College	Finalist

PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR – WALES

Alfie Davies	Mason Bros	Bridgend College	WINNER
Joel Palmizi	Flannery Plant Hire	Bridgend College	Highly Commended
Sam Davies	Flannery Plant Hire	Bridgend College	Highly Commended
Oliver Lewis	Runtech	Bridgend College	Finalist
Owen Evans	Finning UK and Ireland	Finning Academy	Finalist
Thomas Hill	Vp Brandon Hire Station	Myerscough College	Finalist
Tristan Rowlands	Vp Brandon Hire Station	Myerscough College	Finalist

NATIONAL PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

All of the regional Plant Technician of the Year winners were put forward for the National Plant Technician of the Year accolade.

AWARD SPONSOR



NATIONAL PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR – NOMINEES

Richard Nnadiri	Flannery Plant Hire	Reaseheath College	WINNER
Maisie Holloway	Finning UK and Ireland	Finning Academy	Finalist
Peter Child	Watling JCB	National Construction College East	Finalist
Scott Kelly	Finning UK and Ireland	Finning Academy	Finalist
Alfie Davies	Mason Bros	Bridgend College	Finalist



Photograph:
Richard is pictured with
Emily Tilling of CITB (left) and
CPA CEO Steve Mulholland (right)

WINNER

Huge congratulations to
the winner of the National
Plant Technician of the Year
Award for 2025:

RICHARD NNADIRI

Flannery Plant Hire,
Reaseheath College

WHAT IS A PLANT TECHNICIAN?

Technicians carry out more complex technical repairs than Plant Mechanics and require a higher level of understanding on the principles and workings of key components and functional equipment. They deal with complex breakdowns, upgrades or conversions.



SPOTLIGHT ON

RICHARD NNADIRI

NATIONAL PLANT TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR 2025

All of the judges were highly impressed with Richard Nnadiri's Stars of the Future nomination. His path into plant maintenance engineering hasn't necessarily been a straightforward one, but the progress he has made has been truly phenomenal and he is already showing signs of being an entrepreneur in the making.

During COVID Richard started studying Business, but he soon realised it wasn't the right route for him. He had always been interested in engineering and loved tinkering with cars and engines, so started a Plant Maintenance Apprenticeship. In his first company he was working on machines no larger than 9 tonnes, but he was keen to take on new challenges and work on much bigger machines.

Midway through his apprenticeship he made the brave decision to move to Flannery Plant Hire, as he was excited about the prospect on working with heavy plant machinery and he now confidently handles machines up to 75 tonnes and has made a remarkable transition over to Flannery. He completes his apprenticeship on a block release basis, working in Flannery's Birmingham depot and then studying at Reaseheath College in Cheshire for three weeks at a time.

Richard constantly seeks out opportunities to develop his learning and skills and shows strong commitment to his apprenticeship journey and professional development. His enthusiasm is infectious, empowering those around him and making them more enthusiastic about their working tasks. He is always eager to try new things and is super tenacious; even though he is still on his own apprenticeship journey, he has already taken two new Flannery apprentices under his wing.

He told us: ***"Moving to Flannery and working on bigger machines opened up a whole new world for me. Every day is a learning day - one minute I could be working on a roller, then I could be working on a 75 tonne machine and next it could be a tunnelling machine. All my hard work over the years is now coming to fruition and I can finally see the end goal. I can see myself getting better every day."***

"I feel very grateful that I was given the opportunity to take on my apprenticeship. It has truly changed my life and changed it for the better. Throwing myself into



"I FEEL VERY GRATEFUL THAT I WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ON MY APPRENTICESHIP. IT HAS TRULY CHANGED MY LIFE."

this line of work has given me organisational skills and a path to follow."

And Richard doesn't just want to rest on his laurels. He has acquired a unit where he works on a project car in his spare time and he's even purchased his own digger with a view to hiring it out himself. In the future he sees himself travelling nationally and even internationally with his job. May we wish you every success Richard.

HIRE CONTROLLER OF THE YEAR AWARD

AWARD SPONSOR



We would like to congratulate the candidates who were nominated for the Hire Controller of the Year Award. The winner – Kiera Beaumont of Sunbelt Rental – won an iPad to assist her in her job role.

HIRE CONTROLLER OF THE YEAR – NOMINEES

Kiera Beaumont	Sunbelt Rentals	WINNER
Caithlin Ellis	Speedy Hire	Highly Commended

Photographs: Caithlin and Kiera are pictured with Sam Ryan Proudfoot of L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage (left) and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland (right)



HIGHLY COMMENDED

A Highly Commended accolade was awarded to:

CAITHLIN ELLIS

Speedy Hire



WINNER

Huge congratulations to the winner of the Hire Controller of the Year Award for 2025:

KIERA BEAUMONT

Sunbelt Rentals

WHAT IS A HIRE CONTROLLER?

Hire Controllers act as the interface between their organisation and the customer and offer advice to customers, deal with hire and technical queries and complete contractual documentation for the hire, both when commencing and on completion. They work with the wider team and have a wide range of product knowledge for the equipment they hire out.



SPOTLIGHT ON

KIERA BEAUMONT

HIRE CONTROLLER OF THE YEAR 2025

When Kiera first started working at Sunbelt Rentals in April 2024, the industry was completely new to her. Before that she had spent 12 years working in hospitality managing a pub, but decided that she needed a change of role with a better work-life balance.

Sunbelt Rentals was familiar to Kiera as her husband works for the company as an Industrial Contracts Manager based on Phillips 66 Refinery. Sunbelt's Immingham depot were hiring for a Trainee Customer Service Advisor and she thought she would give it a shot.

She told us: *"I knew nothing about the industrial market so I thought it was the perfect opportunity to jump straight into something new as I'd have the time to learn during the apprenticeship carried out in conjunction with Vision West Nottinghamshire College."*

"Coming from a customer service-based role previously, I already understood how important it is and I have a huge passion for giving everyone the best possible service. I really embraced all the sessions throughout the apprenticeship to work alongside other apprentices and share my passion for this with them."

"I absolutely love to learn. So starting a job that was completely out of my comfort zone came with a lot of rewards. I have a massive need to provide customer satisfaction. In order to do this, it was a given that I needed to have good product knowledge. So I try and spend as much time possible with our Foreman and Workshop to learn everything I need to and ask any questions that need to be asked."

"It was completely unexpected when I won the CPA Hire Controller of the Year Award. I was thrilled just to have received the nomination. To actually win it was an even bigger bonus! I always like to be the best I can be in any role I take on because that's what customers want. To have been rewarded with this accolade just meant so much!" she added.

Since winning the award, Kiera and her husband received some lovely news that they were expecting



**“TO HAVE BEEN REWARDED
WITH THIS ACCOLADE JUST
MEANT SO MUCH!”**

their first child and she is currently on maternity leave. When she returns to work she's aspiring to work her way up the ladder.

It's safe to say that Kiera has thrived during her apprenticeship and is clearly dedicated to being the absolute best that she can be. May we wish you all the very best Kiera with your career and your new arrival.

YOUNG PLANT OPERATIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD

We would like to congratulate the candidates who were nominated for the Young Plant Operative of the Year Award.

The winner – Molly Gill of Flannery Plant Hire – won a CPCS training course at ACOP Group's training facility in Wales, with overnight accommodation provided.

The prize also included a VIP experience at JCB's World HQ in Staffordshire, including lunch served in the VIP Hospitality Suite, a Backhoe Loader Dig Experience at the JCB Demonstration Centre and an overnight stay at the JCB Golf and Country Club.

AWARD SPONSORS



PROVIDER OF ADDITIONAL
YOUNG PLANT OPERATIVE PRIZES



YOUNG PLANT OPERATIVE OF THE YEAR – NOMINEES

Molly Gill	Flannery Plant Hire	WINNER
Abigail Cleverley	Flannery Plant Hire	Finalist
Ben Walsh	Plantforce	Finalist
James Bartey	Breheny Civil Engineering	Finalist
Kate MacLeod	CalMax Construction	Finalist
Max Staddon	Plantforce	Finalist
Noah Leo	L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage	Finalist



*Photograph
(Pictured from left to right):
Sam Ryan Proudfoot of
L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage,
Molly Gill,
CPA Chair Siôn Morgan Jones
of ACOP Group and
CPA CEO Steve Mulholland*

WINNER

Huge congratulations to
the winner of the
Young Plant Operative of the
Year Award for 2025:

MOLLY GILL
Flannery Plant Hire

SPOTLIGHT ON

MOLLY GILL

YOUNG PLANT OPERATIVE OF THE YEAR 2025

It's safe to say that Molly Gill never imagined herself as a Plant Operator. She originally studied Media, Hair and Make-up at college but felt there was a career out there which would suit her much more.

Proceeding to hop from job to job. Molly gave many different opportunities a go – care work, office work, joining a sales team, and even becoming a nursery assistant. But none of these roles felt right for her. She felt lost in her career path and felt that none of the jobs she'd tried sparked a passion within her.

Molly then took a leap of faith and decided to join the plant sector. She said: ***"I never thought it would be a career choice for me but I had grown up being surrounded by male family members who had been working in construction for my entire life. And they always had stories to tell about working on jobs, so I thought if they can do it, so can I."***

After speaking with her father, he encouraged Molly to join the industry and give it a try. He recommended calling Flannery Plant Hire and following a conversation with a member of staff they put her in touch with the training team.

Molly said: ***"I couldn't really believe what happened next as within a short period, I had been into Flannery for an interview and they offered me a place on its Government-funded Skills Bootcamp, which was scheduled to begin in a couple of weeks in Birmingham."***

Molly started her training on an ADT and a tracked dumper at the Operator Skills Hub, in a small class with friendly trainers. Molly said: ***"The size of the class made it feel a lot more personal, considering I was entering an entirely new job and sector. I was very nervous, but the trainers were always there to help and keep me at ease."***

Once Molly had completed her training with Flannery's, she was able to join a project operating a Hydrema tracked dumper on a smaller site, which she said was ***"the perfect introduction into my entirely new job, on site with a small group of people. Being the only woman on site was rather intimidating at first, but all of my colleagues made it much easier for me by always being there to help me out."***

"I'M VERY PROUD – NOT JUST OF MYSELF BUT THE INDUSTRY I'M IN."



After just a short time in the industry, Molly made a significant impact and was nominated for Stars of the Future.

Once the day of the awards came, Molly said: ***"I was very excited to be there just to be recognised for my work within the industry and being nominated is an award in itself."***

With the awards underway, Molly was shocked after her name was called as the winner of the CPA Young Plant Operative of The Year.

After winning, Molly said, ***"I felt ecstatic, to be honest. It was incredible to experience winning such an amazing award. I'm very proud – not just of myself but the industry I'm in."***

PLANT OPERATIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD

We would like to congratulate the candidates who were nominated for the Plant Operative of the Year Award.

The winner – James Grant of Flannery Plant Hire – won a CPCS training course at ACOP Group's training facility in Wales, with overnight accommodation provided.

The prize also included a VIP experience at JCB's World HQ in Staffordshire, including lunch served in the VIP Hospitality Suite, a Backhoe Loader Dig Experience at the JCB Demonstration Centre and an overnight stay at the JCB Golf and Country Club.

AWARD SPONSORS



PROVIDER OF ADDITIONAL
PLANT OPERATIVE PRIZES



PLANT OPERATIVE OF THE YEAR – NOMINEES

James Grant	Flannery Plant Hire	WINNER
Jensen Scoggins	TRU7	Highly Commended
George Smee	Plantforce	Finalist
Rufus Goodman	TRU7	Finalist
Sam Harding	Plantforce	Finalist

Photograph (from left to right):

Paul Taylor of NOCN Group, Jensen Scoggins, CPA Chair Siôn Morgan Jones of ACOP Group and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland



HIGHLY COMMENDED

A Highly Commended accolade was awarded to:

JENSEN SCOGGINS

TRU7

Photograph (from left to right):

Award received on behalf of James Grant. Paul Taylor of NOCN Group, Paul Beard of Flannery Plant Hire, CPA Chair Siôn Morgan Jones of ACOP Group and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland



WINNER

Huge congratulations to the winner of the Plant Operative of the Year Award for 2025:

JAMES GRANT

Flannery Plant Hire

WHAT IS A PLANT OPERATIVE?

Plant Operatives operate one or more items of plant on site safely and efficiently such as earthmoving equipment, material handlers, cranes, etc. Their role is a safety critical one as they usually work within a team who may be in close proximity to the machine and are responsible for others' safety.



SPOTLIGHT ON

JAMES GRANT

PLANT OPERATIVE OF THE YEAR 2025

James Grant transitioned from a 14-year career in the British Army to become a Plant Operator.

After many tours around different parts of the world, including Afghanistan, Kenya, two tours of Belize, the Falkland Islands, Oman, France and South Sudan, as well as becoming an Army Instructor, James made the decision to make the career change to operate plant machinery.

This was a significant career transition for James, given his extensive military experience, which included serving as a Platoon Sergeant with 35 service members under his command before he left the military and began transitioning into plant operation.

James originally heard about Flannery Bootcamps from a friend of a friend. James then reached out to them, and within a couple of weeks, he was on the first Bootcamp at the Flannery Operator Skills Hub in Coleshill near Birmingham.

His first experience of operating machines involved learning how to use a forward tipping dumper and then a roller. This led onto him getting his CPC card and first tickets and within a few months, James was on site joining other Flannery operators.

James' experience in the Bootcamp was rather eye-opening for him, as many of his previously learnt skills helped him in the sector, especially with the use of EDIP (Explain, Demonstrate, Imitate, Practice) training within the Bootcamp, which is the same approach used in the military.

James said: ***"I didn't realise there were so many transferable skills I already possessed from the military that are relevant to plant operating."***

Talking about the training James said, ***"The level of training itself is right up there, all the instructors are very, very good."***

After gaining initial experience on site within the industry, James was then offered the opportunity to obtain his ticket on a 360 excavator, capable of operating above and below 10 tonnes.

When asked about operating the excavator, James said, ***"I absolutely love it, it's a very versatile machine***

"I DIDN'T REALISE THERE WERE SO MANY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS I ALREADY POSSESSED FROM THE MILITARY THAT ARE RELEVANT TO PLANT OPERATING."



that is in high demand onsite for the jobs Flannery is doing, so getting a 360 ticket is great for me."

Within his training, James was very impressed by the fact that the course is fully funded by the Government, so you're paying no money out of your own pocket. ***"So, a true leg up into the industry,"*** James explained.

One of the main reasons James made the career switch to plant and machinery is to help support his family with better pay, while operating machinery, as well as having more time to spend with his family.

James, who made a big leap of faith into the industry through the Operator Skills Hub, would recommend it to anyone looking to change careers from the military over to plant operations, as it offers a completely new work/life balance and financial security.

James added: ***"When you leave the military it's difficult to know where to go next, especially when you have been around a team of great people working so closely together. But I do feel like the plant sector has definitely got a lot to offer people like me and when you are out in the field you feel like you're part of a bigger team all working to the same goal."***

PLANT INSTALLER OF THE YEAR AWARD

AWARD SPONSOR

LIEBHERR

We would like to congratulate the candidates who were nominated for the Plant Installer of the Year Award. The winner – Joel Munt of L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage – won an incredible trip to Germany, courtesy of Liebherr, to visit Liebherr's crane manufacturing plant in Ehingen.

PLANT INSTALLER OF THE YEAR – NOMINEES

Joel Munt	L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage	WINNER
Jack Fitzgerald	Falcon Tower Crane Services	Highly Commended
Jak Brooks	Wolffkran	Highly Commended

Photographs: All are pictured with Arran Willis (left) of Liebherr GB and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland (right)



HIGHLY COMMENDED

A Highly Commended accolade was awarded to:

JACK FITZGERALD

Falcon Tower Crane Services



HIGHLY COMMENDED

A Highly Commended accolade was awarded to:

JAK BROOKS

Wolffkran

WHAT IS A PLANT INSTALLER?

Plant Installers traditionally either assemble, commission and disassemble large items of plant, which are stored and transported in component form and built-up and disassembled on site, or nowadays, also fit specialist equipment/hardware that supports efficient and safe machine operations onto a wide range of plant.



WINNER

Huge congratulations to the winner of the Plant Installer of the Year Award for 2025:

JOEL MUNT

L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage

SPOTLIGHT ON

JOEL MUNT

PLANT INSTALLER
OF THE YEAR 2025

“MY GOAL IS TO BECOME THE BEST GPS TECHNICIAN THAT I POSSIBLY CAN BE TO SUPPORT MY FAMILY AND FURTHER MY CAREER AT LYNCH.”



Joel's journey in the plant-hire industry has taken him from the yard to projects as impressive as HS2. When he first left school he joined a small hire company before making the move to L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage three years later.

He started out as a Yardman, but was inspired by one of his colleagues who was a GPS Technical Engineer – a role he always fancied trying his hand at.

He is now a Machine Control Engineer and the portfolio of projects he has worked on includes the likes of HS2, helping making it easier for Plant Operators on site and enhancing efficiency through GPS installations. He is widely admired for his hard-working nature and his training has built a solid foundation, making him a valuable asset to the team.

Joel told us: *“I feel proud when a project has come to an end, knowing that I have helped play a part*

in its success. During the summer months we are absolutely flat out with GPS installations and it's really rewarding to help all the different customers with their projects and seeing them progress.

“I was really shocked when I won the Plant Installer of the Year category at the Stars of the Future Awards. The prize of the trip to Germany is amazing and I can't wait to go. It shows that hard work does pay off in this industry. It can be challenging but if you keep at it, everything will work out in the end.

“My goal is to become the best GPS Technician that I possibly can be, to support my family and further my career at Lynch. I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing with machine control and progress with the trade and the company.”

TECHNICAL SUPPORT PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

AWARD SPONSOR

FLANNERY®

In recognition of the growth of the Stars of the Future Awards, a new awards category was added for 2025 for Technical Support Person of the Year. This award was for apprentices or trainees in a role with a plant technical focus and who are supporting other plant-focused operations of their business.

The winner of this inaugural award was Charlie Jackson of Flannery Plant Hire. Charlie won an iPad to assist him in his job role.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT PERSON OF THE YEAR - NOMINEES

Charlie Jackson	Flannery Plant Hire	WINNER
Roman Turner	Flannery Plant Hire	Highly Commended
Shannon Melvin	Sunbelt Rentals	Finalist
William Hurt	Wolffkran	Finalist

HIGHLY COMMENDED

A Highly Commended accolade was awarded to:

ROMAN TURNER

Flannery Plant Hire



Photograph (from left to right):

*Award received on behalf of
Charlie Jackson.*

*Aaron Davis of Flannery Plant Hire,
Paul Beard of Flannery Plant Hire
and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland*

WINNER

Huge congratulations
to the winner of the
Technical Support Person of the
Year Award for 2025:

CHARLIE JACKSON

Flannery Plant Hire

SPOTLIGHT ON

CHARLIE JACKSON

TECHNICAL SUPPORT PERSON OF THE YEAR 2025

The winner of the inaugural Technical Support Person of the Year Award was Charlie Jackson of Flannery Plant Hire. Before Charlie joined Flannery, he completed an Advanced Apprenticeship in Building Services Engineering and gained qualifications in Project Management in Construction.

In his previous role in Building Services, he secured a number of internal promotions and rapidly advanced from Project Engineer to Project Manager at a young age, but he was keen to progress even further.

At the age of 21 Charlie decided to make a significant career change. He wanted to apply his practical mindset, broaden his skill set, and ultimately move into management roles with the potential to progress up the ladder.

Charlie was selected for Flannery's three-year Trainee GPS Programme which combines employer-led on-the-job training and accredited qualifications through industry leaders such as Trimble, Leica, and Topcon, and he is now a fully qualified Mobile GPS Engineer.

He said: ***"I decided to make a complete switch in my career path by changing roles, as I prefer being hands-on. When I was a Project Manager that was as far as I could go, but I was looking for a position where I could move up the ranks and lead a team in the future."***

Charlie has made remarkable progress since joining Flannery as a Trainee GPS Engineer. Initially unfamiliar with plant machinery and GPS technology, he has rapidly developed a strong technical skill set through structured training.

In his spare time he enjoys motocross and mountain biking and maintaining equipment, so his background in mechanical and electrical maintenance provided a solid foundation. He has built on this base, enabling him to become proficient in GPS system installations, repairs, and calibrations.

One of Charlie's standout achievements was when he was nominated as the lead GPS Engineer for a rail

"I DECIDED TO MAKE A COMPLETE SWITCH IN MY CAREER PATH BY CHANGING ROLES."



blockade project in Ireland. This role showcased not only his technical proficiency but also his emerging leadership capabilities.

Charlie took full ownership of the project, demonstrating exceptional skills in installations, calibrations, fault diagnosis, repairs, and operator training. He also ensured comprehensive handover documentation, empowering the team to maintain success after his departure. His continued remote support further demonstrated his commitment to the project's long-term success.

Charlie has earned the respect of his colleagues, customers, and manufacturers alike. His ambition, determination, and willingness to learn have made him an inspiration to others and a very worthy winner of the CPA Technical Support Person of the Year.

APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

AWARD SPONSOR



Apprentice Mentor of the Year was introduced as a new awards category back in 2023, as many previous nominees acknowledged the important role that their workplace mentors played during their apprenticeship.

The Stars of the Future judges stated this category was the most fiercely contested category in the history of the awards and took days of deliberation. The category was divided into two sub-awards – Individual Apprentice Mentor and Group Apprentice Mentor – to give all of the nominees the recognition they deserve, and even then it was so close that the judges decided there were joint winners for the Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year category. All three winners received a £250 Amazon voucher.

APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR – NOMINEES

Oliver Vickery	GAP Group	WINNER – Individual Apprentice Mentor of the Year
Paul Rawsterne	Watling JCB	WINNER – Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year
Steve Mooney	Lowton Infrastructure Group (LIG)	WINNER – Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year
Paul Beard	Flannery Plant Hire	Highly Commended – Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year
Chris Kent	L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage	Finalist
Danny Tighe	Readypower Rail Services	Finalist
Jamie Crabtree	Moortown Group	Finalist
Sean Goodwin	Quattro Plant	Finalist
Steve Recht	GAP Group	Finalist



Photographs: All are pictured with Sam Ryan Proudfoot of L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage (left) and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland (right)



INDIVIDUAL APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR WINNER

Huge congratulations to the winner of the Individual Apprentice Mentor of the Year Award for 2025:

OLIVER VICKERY
GAP Group



GROUP APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR HIGHLY COMMENDED

A Highly Commended accolade for Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year 2025 was awarded to:

PAUL BEARD
Flannery Plant Hire



Photograph: Sam Ryan Proudfoot of L Lynch Plant Hire & Haulage (left), Paul Rawsterne, Steve Mooney and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland (right)

GROUP APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR WINNERS

Huge congratulations to the winners of the Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year Award for 2025:

PAUL RAWSTERNE
Watling JCB

STEVE MOONEY
Lowton Infrastructure Group (LIG)

SPOTLIGHT ON

OLIVER VICKERY

INDIVIDUAL APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR 2025

It really has been full circle for Oliver Vickery of GAP Group with the Stars of the Future Awards. In 2021 Oliver won a Highly Commended accolade for Plant Technician of the Year - South when he was an apprentice himself studying at Bridgend College.

Just four years later he won the Individual Apprentice Mentor of the Year Award in a Foreman role where he is now mentoring apprentices himself from the GAP depot in Plymouth.

Oliver said: *"Being 28, I have recently gone through the apprenticeship scheme myself, so I feel that's very beneficial to the apprentices we have in our depot. I can take everything I experienced and offer them advice and feedback on what's expected from them. Supporting them is key."*

"We've got two apprentices in our depot and I'm so proud of them. When they first started their apprenticeship they were reasonably shy and now they're confident and willing to get stuck into any job. They've come on leaps and bounds and I'm excited to see what the future holds for them. It's been a pleasure to support them in that journey."

"I'd like to think we can continue to keep the apprentices coming through as I take a lot of pride in helping develop them to a high standard and it can only be good for the industry in the future."

Oliver is held in exceptionally high regard by the apprentices at his depot who have described him as an **"amazing mentor who is very supportive and goes above and beyond every day with a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and commitment. He is always available with a listening ear and offers advice on any job."**

Oliver is able to use his relatively recent experience of being an apprentice and the advice his mentor gave to him as a benchmark to build the skills set, behaviour and attitude to work the apprentices he is now mentoring himself. Oliver has proved to be equally compassionate and supportive of apprentices outside of work.

"I'M SO PROUD OF THE APPRENTICES IN OUR DEPOT. IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE TO SUPPORT THEM IN THEIR LEARNING JOURNEY."



Well done on your award Oliver. It really is tremendous to see the progress Oliver has made since he was first involved in Stars of the Future when he was nominated himself, and the judges felt he was a standout candidate for Individual Apprentice Mentor of the Year.

SPOTLIGHT ON

PAUL RAWSTERNE

GROUP APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR 2025

Paul grew up surrounded by engines, tools, and ingenuity. His Dad ran a scrapyards, a car garage, and a F3 race team, so his childhood was spent in and around fast cars, motorbikes, and scrap machinery.

Never one for the structured school environment, he was accepted onto a Fine Arts Degree at Salford University at just 15. Although he didn't complete his studies, Paul naturally found his way back to engineering, working alongside his Dad in plant-hire.

Paul told us: *"I never did a formal apprenticeship – I simply had a genuine talent and deep interest in mechanics. Over the years I've worn many hats – I've been a Recording Studio Engineer, a Self-Employed Electrician, a Club Night Promoter, and a Graphic Designer – but I've always returned to engineering. I've worked as a Rail Stock Engineer across the UK, a Marine Engineer in the south of France and a HGV Mechanic. With over 30 years in the trade, engineering isn't just my career – it's in my blood. I'm an engineer to my bones."*

"I held a number of roles in the HGV sector. It was steady enough – but I missed the variety and challenge that heavy plant work offers an engineer with a curious mind. Each day on my commute, I'd pass Watling-JCB and see those big yellow machines lined up proudly in the yard. I couldn't help but feel a pull towards the kind of work happening behind those gates. Eventually, I decided to take the leap. That was over a decade ago, and I've never looked back. It's been everything I hoped it would be – and more."

"On any given day I might be carrying out a complex repair of my own, working on a one-off technical project for a customer, or assisting other engineers with tricky diagnostics. Some days I'm delivering training sessions – which is without doubt the best part of the job – or supporting customers who want to take on apprentices. I might even be preparing to give a 'Meet the Employer' talk at a local college. The variety keeps me engaged, and every day brings something new."

"Mentoring is where I find the deepest sense of reward. Being part of a team that supports and guides young people – giving them the kind of



“IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO PLAY EVEN A SMALL PART IN AN APPRENTICE'S JOURNEY.”

direction I never had at their age – is incredibly fulfilling. Seeing apprentices grow in confidence, skill, and independence is something special. It's a privilege to play even a small part in that journey."

Paul told us that he felt completely overwhelmed and truly honoured when he won the accolade of Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year. He said it was especially meaningful to share the moment with his wife, who has supported him wholeheartedly through this change in career.

He said: *"It was a special day that I'll never forget. On a personal level, winning the award gave me a real boost – and that feeling is still with me. It reinforced that I'm on the right track and gave me the impetus to keep pushing forward."*

"For the wider team, the recognition has been just as important. It's shown us that what we're doing is working, and that others can see the value in it too. Recognition by the CPA has effectively given our apprenticeship provision a seal of approval that's been noticed by others in the education and training world. It's opened a few doors and helped to elevate our voice in conversations that matter."

"This sector trains you to be a problem solver, and there will always be problems that need solving. It's a profession that combines stability with constant evolution, making it both secure and exciting."

SPOTLIGHT ON

STEVE MOONEY

GROUP APPRENTICE MENTOR OF THE YEAR 2025

It really has been full circle for Steve Mooney regarding Stars of the Future. Steve nominated one of his trainees last year – Zac Bradshaw – who went on to win the accolade of Lifting Technician of the Year, and this year Steve himself won Group Apprentice Mentor of the Year, highlighting his exceptional mentoring skills.

After school Steve joined the Army and this is where he first became interested in cranes. Even though he wasn't operating cranes at the time, he became familiar with them when loading and unloading ships. This piqued his interest in how mobile cranes worked.

When he left the Army he got a job at GW Sparrows Crane Hire in Southampton, before moving back up North six years later where he joined Great Harwood Crane Hire. Within six months this became Grayston White and Sparrow, and Steve was operating mobile cranes from 25t right up to 200t.

Several years later he was made Regional Training Manager and attended CITB's Training College to gain a qualification to become a CITB Instructor. This allowed Steve to pass on his knowledge to others, just as people within the industry had helped him when he first started out in the industry all those years ago.

Now Steve is heavily involved in the operational running of Lowton Infrastructure Group (LIG) – formerly known as Commhoist – in planning lifting operations, training and the mentoring of existing and new employees. He also carries out presentations to clients and participates in careers events. Such is his knowledge that he has become known throughout the industry as 'Mr Crane'. After working in the lifting industry for over 46 years, we're told that what Steve doesn't know about cranes isn't worth knowing!

Several employees who Steve has taken under his wing have excelled, not least of all Zac Bradshaw, being made the CPA Lifting Technician of the Year for 2024 and becoming a highly competent Crane Operator. Another former trainee – James Hill – now works at Cork Crane Hire, progressing into management planning lifting operations.

Steve told us he was immensely proud to be nominated by his company for Group Apprentice

“I ALWAYS WANT TO GIVE BACK TO THE INDUSTRY BY PASSING ON MY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO OTHERS.”



Mentor of the Year, and then winning the joint award. His certificate and trophy are proudly displayed in the LIG board room. Steve has so much information to share that he has become an inspiration for many.

He told us: ***"I have had a great career. It's something you need to be dedicated to but the rewards are many."***

"We need to get more younger people into the sector – both male and female operatives – and I always want to give back to the industry by passing on my knowledge and skills to others, just as this was passed on to me when I was first starting out."

CPA STARS OF THE FUTURE 2026



**HAVE YOU GOT
STAR APPRENTICES
OR TRAINEES IN YOUR
ORGANISATION?**

**NOMINATE THEM FOR A STAR OF
THE FUTURE AWARD IN 2026.**

Nominations for the Stars of the Future Awards 2026 can be made online on www.cpa.uk.net from January 2026.



**TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT STARS
OF THE FUTURE IS ALL ABOUT...**

Watch our highlights video from the Stars of the Future Awards 2025 at <https://youtu.be/Yh2cGmguod0>

BEST PERSONAL STATEMENT AWARD

AWARD SPONSOR

WOLFFKRAN

In support of nominations for a Star of the Future Award, all nominees had the opportunity to submit a short video clip or a written statement.

This award was given to the nominee who provided the most inspiring, enthusiastic, genuine and well conveyed personal statement about their journey on their apprenticeship, what it means to them and what they hope to achieve. The judges were very impressed to see some exceptional personal statements submitted this year.

Virtually all candidates sent in a video statement for the 2025 awards. As part of his prize, the winner of the Best Personal Statement for 2025 – Scott Kelly of Finning UK and Ireland – won an amazing trip to one of Wolffkran's manufacturing facilities in Luckau, Germany for himself and a guest, including flights to Berlin and accommodation.

*Photograph (left to right):
Dave Holder of Wolffkran, Scott Kelly and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland*



WINNER

Huge congratulations to the winner of the
Best Personal Statement Award for 2025:

SCOTT KELLY

Finning UK and Ireland
Finning Academy

SPOTLIGHT ON

SCOTT KELLY

BEST PERSONAL STATEMENT AWARD WINNER 2025

Not only did Finning's Scott Kelly win the accolade of Plant Technician of the Year for Scotland at Stars of the Future 2025, he also won the Best Personal Statement Award after submitting an authentic video describing his apprenticeship journey so far.

In December Scott will get the opportunity to visit Berlin, sightsee and tour the Wolffkran factory with Managing Director Dave Holder. He told us: ***"A major passion of mine is to travel so it couldn't have been a better prize to win. I'm so looking forward to it!"***

Scott, 20, is currently in the fourth year of his apprenticeship and becoming an Engineer has always been at the forefront of his mind since he was very young.

He was raised by a single Mum and grew up seeing his Dad travel all around the world as an Offshore Engineer. From an early age he was inspired by watching his Dad build a career that allowed him to explore new places, meet new people and explore different cultures.

Scott found the apprenticeship with Finning and his college work has allowed him to explore different types of engineering. He takes great satisfaction in working with smaller, intricate components and it's the precision and detail of the finer parts that really capture his interest.

He told us: ***"It's in those moments of focused repair and delicate handling that I find myself most engaged and passionate about what I do. I love the environment that I work in and the people around me make it truly enjoyable."***

After winning one award at Stars at the Future, Scott was shocked and pleasantly surprised to receive a second one.

He said: ***"To be completely honest, I didn't initially realise I had won the Best Personal Statement Award. It wasn't until my Academy Manager tapped me on the shoulder that it truly sank in. I remember hearing the name and thinking it sounded familiar, but I hadn't expected to win, so it didn't register right***

"THE TRIP TO BERLIN COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A BETTER PRIZE TO WIN."



away. Once it did, I was genuinely pleased and proud of the recognition, it was a rewarding moment that validated the effort I put into my work.

"It's been great to receive recognition within Finning as well and I'm hoping that the award will help open doors for any future endeavours. I'm going to keep working hard to become a well-established Engineer and hope to continue to win more awards for my efforts!"

JUDGES' SPECIAL AWARD

This award is for a nominee who the judges feel deserves special recognition of some form or another. This could be a candidate who has for example, overcome some form of adversity or who has shown particular initiative, achievement, progression, enthusiasm or a life-altering decision to enter the sector.

The judges chose Kate MacLeod of CalMax Construction as winner of this year's Judges' Special Award. She won a £250 Amazon voucher.

AWARD SPONSOR



Photograph:

Kate is pictured with Kirsty Archbold-Laming of Southern Hoist Services and CPA CEO Steve Mulholland



WINNER

Huge congratulations to the winner of the Judges' Special Award for 2025:

KATE MACLEOD
CalMax Construction

SPOTLIGHT ON

KATE MACLEOD

WINNER OF THE JUDGES'
SPECIAL AWARD 2025

The Stars of the Future judges were unanimous that the winner of the Judges' Special Award was Kate MacLeod of CalMax Construction. Kate is an Apprentice Plant Operator who lives on the Isle of Lewis and she was just 16 years of age when she won the prestigious accolade.

Kate comes from a crofting background and she's had her own cows since she was 14, so she's always been familiar with the agricultural industry. She got a foot in the door in the construction plant sector when she had a go on a digger simulator at a Careers Fair held at her school.

CalMax Construction were at the event and Kate asked about the possibility of operating plant as a career and she went on to do work experience at the company for a week. From that moment on she was absolutely hooked and was subsequently offered an apprenticeship.

Kate is currently CalMax Construction's first and only female apprentice and she is carrying out her training at CITB's National Construction College in Bircham Newton.

She has made a huge impression on the Instructors at the College and is said to have an exceptional natural talent on plant and machinery. They told us the bigger the challenge, the bigger the machine, the more she surprises everyone with how high a standard she can produce on the first time of trying. Kate has passed all of her assessments with flying colours, with special praise given for 360 excavator assessment.

Kate told us: ***"I absolutely love my job and I get to do something new every day. When I know I've done a good job, I find it very rewarding and gain confidence."***

"When I won at Stars of the Future I was shocked and delighted. It felt like a dream! Never in a million years did I expect to win it as there were so many talented individuals nominated from well-known companies. I never thought that an island girl like me could win such an impressive award and I'm just so grateful for it."

"I'VE LOVED EVERY SECOND OF MY APPRENTICESHIP – IT'S THE BEST DECISION I'VE EVER MADE!"



Kate would love to gain as much as experience as she can in the industry and possibly work abroad, even as far afield as Australia. Ultimately she'd love to run her own plant-hire company.

She said: ***"I've loved every second of my apprenticeship – it's the best decision I've ever made! I'd highly recommend apprenticeships to everyone. My advice is to work as hard as you possibly can and take every bit of advice you can get."***



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