



# On Top of the World

### Celebrating success

**Front row (left to right):**

David Blanchflower, Beth Renhard, Thomas Moffatt, Alvaro Carrillo Valverde, Richard Taylor

**Back row:** Stephen Royle, Oliver Skuse,

Ian Winstanley, Steve Heathcote, Mark Cooper

## The Institute is delighted to announce the winning line-up for the IMS Student of the Year awards for 2023.

In many countries of the world people in a wide variety of business sectors want to study for and gain the internationally recognised professional qualification, the IMS Productivity Analyst (formerly the IMS Certificate). This requires the successful completion of a four-week long course of study and represents a significant commitment from both the student and their employer. At the end of each year the Institute, along with the principal training provider Scott-Grant Limited, bases their review on the individual marks and lecturer assessment of all those who completed their course during the year.

This review resulted in the Institute announcing that Beth Renhard, an Industrial Engineer (IE) from Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK) in the North East of England, has been declared the IMS Student of the Year for 2023.

Very close behind the winner, impossible to separate, were three people who were declared as runners-up to the Student of the Year Award: Oliver Skuse, Warehouse Team Manager with DHL Supply Chain in Bristol, Thomas Moffat, an Industrial

Engineer with Spirit AeroSystems (Europe) Limited in Prestwick, Scotland and Alvaro Carrillo Valverde, a Stock Analyst with GXO near Madrid in central Spain.

All four students had completed their training with Manchester-based Scott-Grant Limited and so in early February were invited back to Manchester with their managers to celebrate their success and receive their certificates and gifts from both the Institute and the training provider.

### Beth Renhard

Mark Cooper, Deputy Chairman of the IMS and Chair of Education, presented the award to Beth, which included a certificate, an engraved trophy and a cheque. "The Award Board shows what a selection of company names are represented there and that you are now added to the list of international winners, Beth. In our profession we do become really well trained observers, never afraid to challenge what may seem to be 'the norm'. This leads us to productivity improvement and



the search for excellence.” Mark added, “Last year I celebrated my 40th year working within the productivity profession and my connection with the IMS goes back to the beginning. I sincerely hope that you enjoy many years of career success either within a productivity-related field or using this training and experience as a springboard to something equally challenging, but always taking that knowledge and skill with you.”

Beth, a recent graduate in aerospace engineering, had joined Nissan as part of the graduate programme last September. She had been identified during the interview process by Senior IE Dr Rachel Pallan. “That’s when I met her and was suitably impressed,” she said. “I knew that her technical background and skill set were ideal for the role of IE... and I was proved right – big style!” Rachel was exactly the right person to make that judgement, having herself been awarded the Student of the Year for 2017! How history repeats itself. Rachel was obviously delighted to be with Beth back in Manchester to celebrate her success. Beth was also presented with a gift from Scott-Grant and a certificate by Managing Director, Richard Taylor.

Mark Cooper also stated that “the need for productivity professionals working alongside Lean and Continuous Improvement colleagues will continue – we’re all striving for operational excellence. We’re all aware of the words of Lord Kelvin about the need for measurement, but a lesser-known quotation from him is also worth remembering: “When you are face-to-face with a difficulty, you are up against a discovery.”

The three Scott-Grant Senior Instructors were at the event to meet with the students again. They each presented one of the three runners-up with their certificate and gift from the company.

### Thomas Moffatt

Steve Heathcote presented to Thomas Moffatt, saying, “Your significant efforts were well rewarded with these excellent results. You were a fine representative of your business during the course, so well done, Tom” to which Tom replied with a huge smile, “Thank you – and it’s all thanks to my excellent tutors!” He went on to say that “Despite sounding high tech, aerospace as an industry moves quite slowly. We’re currently finding our companies in the Spirit group are faced with increased production rates and are looking at ways to identify wastes and improve productivity.”

Tom’s manager at Spirit Aerospace, Brian McGilvary, Business Improvement Manager explained further. “Tom has already made a difference, from my perspective. A few years ago, we had Lean, Six Sigma, Business Improvement and now we have Industrial Engineering all sitting under the one umbrella. The IE function gives us the real facts and data, which is perfect because as W Edwards Deming said, “Without facts, you’re just another person with an opinion.” Straight away, Tom has applied what he has learnt on the course and been measuring various activities, with help from another of our senior IEs. They have together made the case for influencing some serious business decisions which we’re working on.”

### Oliver Skuse

Senior Instructor Ian Winstanley addressed Oliver Skuse who had travelled from DHL in Bristol with his Senior Team Manager Richard Weston. Ian said, “It’s a great pleasure to hand you your



The Award Board

certificate and gift, Ollie. Quite unusually, you got to be taught by all three of the instructors and we were all in agreement about the abilities and qualities that you showed over the four weeks. So, it was our pleasure to support and assist you in your work – really well done.”

Richard Weston was delighted to report “Since the course Ollie has been doing time studies and already with this irrefutable data we are seeing immediate positive results. We’ve updated some timings which have improved our productivity.”

### Alvaro Carrillo Valverde

Senior Instructor Stephen Royle then addressed Alvaro, who had travelled from Spain for the presentation. He helped to make Alvaro’s journey worthwhile by starting in Spanish – a language he had simply researched the day before! Translating, for the benefit of everyone in the room (and maybe even including Alvaro!) Stephen said, “I taught Alvaro productivity and he taught me Spanish. He won an award, but I won nothing! So, he’s the best student, but not the best teacher!”

He attempted a few more phrases in both Spanish and English then resorted just to English. He did this to prove why Alvaro’s achievement was so impressive. “Studying and taking exams in a different country and in a different language is not easy. It also highlights the international aspect of the IMS Productivity Analyst training.”

He added that Alvaro had initially been disappointed not to have won first prize. “But that sums him up,” he said. “He’s driven, motivated, ambitious and determined to succeed and there’s no doubt he’ll continue to succeed. I’m not sure how I would have





A fond farewell: Richard Taylor (left) presents David Blanchflower with a card and gift

felt about travelling 2000km from warm, sunny Madrid for four weeks in October to Manchester where it's cold and dark, but it's appreciated by everyone in this room. So, congratulations and well done."

Alvaro replied – in excellent English – that, "investigating and monitoring efficiencies are hugely important in the logistics business. We now combine the IE data with statistical engineering data and so can create much more objective data than we've had before. We're now starting to implement productivity improvements in one warehouse then we will roll those out through all our other warehouses in Spain."

### Winner of the Russell Currie Memorial Fund Award

After receiving his certificate and gift from Scott-Grant's Stephen Royle, Alvaro was then presented with a second award by David Blanchflower from the Institute of Management Services. As Chairman of the Russell Currie Memorial Fund, David announced that Alvaro was the winner of the RCMF award in 2023 for students on the four week IMS course who live and work outside of the UK. Previous winners of the RCMF award in recent years have been from Indonesia, Thailand, Uganda, Botswana and India.

Encouraging education in work study and productivity improvement overseas is one of the aims of the Russell Currie Memorial Fund (RCMF), which has now been in existence for 56 years. The Trust Fund was established on 1 March 1968, following the death of Russell Mackenzie Currie CBE, to mark and continue the outstanding contribution he had made in the field of work study and productivity improvement. Currie is a former President of the IMS and had for many years worked overseas. See the MSJ Winter 2018 issue.

Alvaro's boss at GXO Spain, Achraf Ichou Hajji, Stock Manager and Key User Manager, had not been able to accompany Alvaro

to the presentation, but confirmed, "We are all so very proud of Alvaro's achievement with not just one but two awards, which put him in the top echelons of the international students. He has only worked here a short time at GXO but we can see the great results for the warehouse and at corporate level from the work he is now doing since the IMS course."

Alvaro received an engraved silver salver and a cheque from the RCMF and the warm congratulations of all present.

Endorsing the international scope of the training, Scott-Grant's Richard Taylor explained, "We've trained people from all over Great Britain as well as many overseas countries this year, from sectors as diverse as banks, government departments, manufacturers, logistics, engineering and retail in many European countries, in African, Far Eastern and Asiatic countries. And there are many more planning the same in 2024, so, the IMS Productivity Analyst is very much a qualification that is in demand across the world.

"Remotely managed training is a popular and cost-effective option. This next week we will be running a course for a major retailer in Australia from Manchester, accommodating their time zones thanks to our flexible instructors."

### And Finally

Before the party went for a special lunch, Richard Taylor announced that he was "taking advantage of having David Blanchflower with us, because he had announced his retirement from the Institute after almost 50 years." (See MSJ Winter 2023)

He has been a Council member for the IMS since 1977 during which time he has held many of the officer roles of the charitable trust. Richard explained, "David is a modest man who doesn't like a fuss but we can't not take the opportunity of having him here today and in the presence of other people, to say thank you from the Institute." Richard presented David with a card and gift from the Institute and the sincere good wishes from all present.