



the newsletter for AWE's neighbours

Connect

[WE'RE RECRUITING!]

We're proud of what we do at AWE. Not just because we support the UK Government in its nuclear deterrent, in counter-terrorism and threat reduction; not just because we work hard to give back to our communities, to run a responsible business and to inspire future generations; but because of our people.

Almost since we opened our doors we have been developing young people through our award-winning apprenticeships and our graduate programme which started almost 30 years ago. This year, we are looking to recruit around 90 apprentices and 140 graduates, with a further 40 roles available for undergraduate placements.

We are proud of our commitment to development – our apprentice and graduate schemes – and the opportunities we offer every year to young people starting out on their careers. It takes a special person to work at AWE.

What if that special person was you?

Applications for our graduate programme opened on 16 September. Apprenticeship applications are due to open in November.

**READ
MORE
INSIDE**



For nearly 70 years, AWE has been at the forefront of nuclear warhead research and development.

We are home to some extraordinary people. Extraordinary because of their knowledge and skills; because they rank among the best in the world in their fields; because of their commitment and dedication; but, primarily, because they care so passionately about what they do.

Imagine what it would be like to work on something that you can't test – but you cannot afford to let it fail? In the future, AWE could be asked to start the process of designing and commissioning a replacement system. We will need to recruit, train and develop around 6,000 scientists, engineers, technologists, machinists, designers and experts to support very complex facilities and operations.

● For more information about our Future Careers programme go to www.awe.co.uk/careers/future-careers



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WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN 2019 EDITION OF CONNECT, AWE'S COMMUNITY NEWS MAGAZINE

It includes a round-up of the work we've been doing locally, including education outreach and charity partnerships.

We are always looking for amazing people to join us but are also recruiting for new graduates and apprentices – you can find more info at www.awe.co.uk/careers/future-careers/

We were very proud to have been named one of the country's Top 25 large companies to work for, in the Sunday Times Best Companies Awards earlier this year. Read more about this on page five.

We have launched an AWE Instagram account, check us out at AWE_plc. We'd really like to hear what you think.

We hope you find this edition interesting and, as always, we'd welcome your views and comments, together with any ideas about future community-related content.

The Editor

Launching the scientists of the future

Thousands of primary pupils will receive free science sessions thanks to a partnership between AWE and Queen Mary's College (QMC) in Basingstoke.

The primary science centre at QMC celebrated its 20th birthday with a high-profile relaunch. TV personality Johnny Ball, who opened the original centre, returned to carry out the official opening with great panache! He met teachers, former students (including some now working at AWE as scientists) and saw youngsters working on experiments with some AWE graduates.

AWE's Community Engagement Manager, Pip Kent, explained: "From this term, the children will be able to attend free of charge. They'll also receive free transport in the new AWE and QM science minibus. The science centre will enable around 3,000 primary pupils across Basingstoke and Deane to enjoy high-quality science sessions.

"We've worked with QMC for 20 years and, in addition to the science centre, we support the sixth form with a range of activities, including mentoring of Oxbridge candidates. The link

between inspiring younger pupils who go on to advanced science studies is well proven.

"The college's commitment to STEM is unique. Many talented young people will be pursuing their dreams in scientific and engineering careers after benefitting from the high level of teaching and inspiration at the college. In fact, Ofsted recognised

the work in the science centre as outstanding. We are proud to be working with such an innovative and inspiring organisation."



TeenTech-tastic!

AWE engineers and scientists had a great time at TeenTech in Basingstoke, which welcomed 300 students to a day of workshops and interactive challenges.

TeenTech runs initiatives and an award scheme, highlighting the wide range of career possibilities in science, engineering, technology and maths (STEM) for young teenagers.

AWE has been involved with TeenTech since 2011, as Philippa Kent, AWE's Community Engagement Manager, explained: "TeenTech is a great opportunity for us to work with key partners in the community. We always enjoy taking part in this tremendous and inspirational event; in fact we hope some of those here today will become part of our future workforce."

Maggie Philbin, TeenTech CEO and co-founder, added: "AWE has developed imaginative and powerful ways to help young people understand their own potential. They should be very proud of the way they are identifying, nurturing and supporting the talent of tomorrow."

AWE's virtual reality headsets were very popular and many of the students were able to use them in the event's Insight Zone, along with enjoying experiments with marshmallows and balloons in a vacuum chamber. In the Challenge Zone, students tackled the design and build of a mini robot-controlled chariot for an obstacle race competition, with a spiky twist.

The event was organised by the Basingstoke Consortium and involved 20 STEM-sector businesses.



Maggie Philbin takes a selfie with the AWE TeenTech team

AWE scores a diversity double

AWE has won two national awards for neurodiversity and diversity and inclusion (D&I).

We were proud to win the individual neurodiversity award and a bronze award at the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) 2019 Awards. Enei is the leading employer network for equality, diversity and inclusion in the UK.

AWE's entry for the neurodiversity award highlighted some great work, both within AWE itself and with external organisations. This has included awareness-raising sessions on autism and obsessive compulsive disorder, plus working with students with learning disabilities at local school, Dove House. In fact, two Dove House students who came on a work placement to AWE now have permanent roles here.

Tony Mather, AWE's Chief Information Officer and executive lead for diversity and inclusion, added: "I'm delighted we have received external recognition for our approach to D&I with the bronze award. It demonstrates we're doing the right things to ensure we are an inclusive employer.

"I am especially proud of the recognition of our employees who achieved the neurodiversity award.

They go out of their way to provide education and support to others covering all aspects of neurodiversity, from dyslexia to autism, and I thank them for their contribution."

AWE is working hard to create a truly inclusive culture, for example, any employee who believes they may be on the autism spectrum is supported to receive assessment and diagnoses. Our award-winning Skills Academy provides every new apprentice with an assessment of their learning ability, ensuring each is then supported effectively during their apprenticeship.

We've also signed up to the Time to Change pledge. This is a very public commitment to reducing stigma around mental health and making the mental and physical health of our employees a priority.



What we're doing on gender parity

Iain Coucher, AWE's CEO, talks about raising the profile of women in engineering.

Every year in the UK, around 46,000 students in engineering graduate. Of these, just 15 per cent are women. With an annual demand for around 86,000 engineering graduates, it is clear we need to be doing more to attract women – and men – into engineering careers.

AWE employs around 2,500 scientists, engineers and technologists, who are involved in ground-breaking, important and technically challenging work. Using some of the most advanced lasers, x-ray machines, research facilities and computing technology available, their work advances understanding of the science behind nuclear weapons and they use the most advanced manufacturing equipment to produce components and products to rigorous standards.

AWE recruits around 200 graduates a year – many of whom will be scientists and engineers. We will be looking for around 100 engineering graduates a year and we're aiming to have an equal

gender balance in our graduate recruits.

So, AWE is looking for 50 female engineering graduates – just 50 out of the 7,500 women engineers that graduate every year. The same applies to our apprenticeship scheme – we are looking for around 60 women and 60 men each year.

Employing more women engineers can help to provide the role models necessary to inspire the next generation of young women to study engineering at university. That's why gender parity is so important to us at AWE. As part of this, we have been looking at everything from our working environment to our policies and our behaviours, to build a culture that is flexible, diverse and attractive to all.

We know from our educational outreach programmes that young girls and women enjoy the opportunity to take part in science, engineering and technology activities.

I have had a long and varied career in engineering – covering defence, IT, technology and infrastructure. I have worked with many, many brilliant and outstanding female engineers – people, like me, who want to make a difference – who want to be able to point to something and say, "I was part of making that happen".



AWE CEO Iain Coucher

We're in the top 25 of companies

We were delighted to appear in the Sunday Times Best Companies Awards as one of the Top 25 best big companies to work for.

The accolade is especially welcome, as it is based on our employees' opinions. AWE's Chief Executive Iain Coucher said: "Building an effective and high-performing organisation requires a huge investment in time and resource. It takes time, but quietly, steadily and systematically we are seeing change happen.

"People understand how they are contributing, the part they play in our successes and achievements and this builds stronger working cultures. It engenders pride, excellence and trust – all fundamental to our way of working and we are really seeing the benefits of this work."

Jonathan Austin, CEO and Founder of Best Companies, said: "I would like to congratulate AWE on its achievement. Best Companies has been producing the accreditation standard since 2006 to acknowledge excellence in the workplace. Organisations like AWE have continued to focus on their employees and have been rewarded with an engaged workforce who tell us that this is a best company to work for."



Proud to be at Pride

This year was the 16th Reading Pride and, for the first time, AWE was there!

A riot of colour, fun and music, it's a popular attraction and a great way to highlight the work being done to promote equality and diversity in the community and at work. Our team had a stand in the marketplace area in King's Meadow and a grandstand view of the lively crowd.

The AWE team had a fantastic day and their stand was busy all day with people dropping by to hear about career opportunities and pick up some rainbow goodies. There were even some rainbow science demonstrations.

This year's theme was Love Unites and the Love Unites Parade brought the spirit of Pride to the centre of Reading. It's a high-profile opportunity for groups, organisations and individuals to show their support for both Pride and the ongoing campaign for equality.



Jonathan Austin, CEO of Best Companies with AWE employee engagement champions, Alex and Caroline

Every penny and every effort go to make a difference

AWE has a long history of support for local charities, which is a high priority for our employees.

Our current charity partners are Thrive and Bucket List Wishes (BLW), both smaller charities which achieve great things. Bucket List Wishes helps adults with a life-limiting illness to realise a long-standing wish, while Thrive uses gardening to bring about positive changes in people's lives.

Several teams from AWE have spent time working on Thrive's three acres of grounds at Trunkwell House. As Jan Broady from the charity explained: "Assistance with the heavier work means our therapists are able to spend more time directly with our clients."

BLW has been able to fund nine wishes with our donations so far. These included chauffeur-driven nights out in London's West End, a private safari at Port Lympne Zoo in Kent and afternoon tea in a five-star hotel.

AWE volunteers also signed up to help out with the charity's Marvellous music festival and its Bling and Bellini Ball. BLW also runs regular dress sales (see www.bucketlistwishes.org.uk for more info.) BLW founder Gini Blesky said: "Every penny goes on granting wishes and your volunteers make a huge difference because we're only a small charity. We've raised just over £650 so far and we're grateful for the dresses they donated to our sales."

We raise our hats to both these amazing charities and all the other local organisations that do so much to help our local communities.



An AWE volunteer repairing path edging

School wheely pleased with new trike

AWE's Charity Fund has helped Brookfields School in Tilehurst buy an adaptive tricycle and complete a new cycle track.

Brookfields is a school for children with special educational needs and the tricycle enables pupils with mobility problems or visual impairment. It means they can have fun with their friends, enjoying an activity which is normally inaccessible to them.

Deputy Headteacher Debbie Mallam said: "We are very grateful to AWE for this amazing donation. The track and tricycle allow us to support the pupils to make the best progress they possibly can. The pleasure the children have got from using the tricycle is great to see. It enables them to move independently and interact with their peers in outside activities."

Brookfields was nominated for a donation by AWE's Julie Richards, who used to work there. She said: "It was fantastic to watch them zoom round the cycle track. I am very proud to be associated with the school and even more delighted AWE's gift will aid improved mobility and movement."

Some of the £5,000 donated from the Charity Fund was used towards buying the tricycle, while the remainder was the final push needed to ensure the new sports track became a reality.

Whether using walkers, wheelchairs or trikes, all the students are able to participate in the "Golden Mile" of five laps of the track.

Student Yanne was delighted to show off the new tricycle: "The trike is great, I love being outdoors and it is a fun way to strengthen my muscles."

A happy Yanne on the new trike





A first for nuclear forensics

The first NuFor conference, organised by AWE, the Institute of Physics (IoP) and the South West Nuclear Hub, at the university of Bristol, attracted top international experts from the field of nuclear forensics.

NuFor brought together experts from a diverse range of disciplines to share their knowledge and experience in this fascinating field of science.

Many of us are aware of the use of forensic science in tracking down criminals. The same meticulous approach is also used in nuclear forensics, which directly supports international nuclear security. The conference was a chance to showcase research, new advances and discuss technical challenges in the field. It also provided a networking opportunity for technical specialists across different disciplines.

The conference featured several prominent expert speakers from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Metropolitan Police, US National Nuclear Security Administration, UK Ministry of Defence and AWE.



Nuclear forensics involves field testing, scientific research and work in the laboratory

Colleagues honour "chirpy" firefighter

After four decades of dedicated service, veteran AWE firefighter Mark Hills has hung up his fire kit for the last time.

Originally, Mark was all set for a scientific career, but that soon changed. In 1977, aged 18, he joined the then Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) at Foulness, in his home county of Essex, as a laboratory worker. While there, Mark signed up as an auxiliary firefighter, an ambition he'd had since childhood.

He qualified as full-time firefighter in 1979, spending a year seconded to Potton Island as a lighthouse keeper. In 1986, Mark and his family moved to Hampshire and he became a firefighter at Aldermaston. He has served at both Aldermaston and Burghfield, seeing

nine Chief Fire Officers and many other faces come and go.

Mark also worked as a retained firefighter at Tadley, where he served for 10 years.

AWE's Station Manager Craig Hedges said: "We'll all miss his happy chirpy character and his cheeky sense of humour, but he'll now have more time to pursue his many hobbies. Mark is a keen motorcyclist

and is out on his bike in all winds and weathers going to various venues for bike meets.

"He's also very creative, he paints portraits and makes wonderful things, including the rocking horse he built for his granddaughter."

Mark's colleagues honoured his contribution at his final parade. He received a commemorative firefighter's axe and certificate of thanks for his service and listened to tributes and memories of his career from fellow firefighters.



Mark Hills, left, receives his commemorative firefighter's axe from AWE's Chief Fire Officer Paul Southern

Graduate into a career with AWE

Meet Alice and learn about life as a graduate at AWE...

Alice graduated in mathematics and joined AWE nine months ago. We asked her why she had chosen to come to AWE and what she has been up to since:

"AWE is a unique workplace! I knew I wanted to work in finance and business management but being able to do so at such an interesting place makes it so much more rewarding. The graduate scheme also offered a lot more flexibility and opportunities than I had seen advertised elsewhere.

"So far, I've worked in project controls, central finance and I'm now in supply chain. Working in a range of different departments has enabled me to really understand the business and develop a variety of skills. I enjoy being able to work alongside very knowledgeable people and they have all been such welcoming, friendly teams.

"The best thing has been the chance to work on innovative projects at the forefront of the industry. As well as placement work, there are so many projects outside of this that I get to work on and I often get to take on key roles, even so early in my career."

How does she see her career progressing?

"It feels to me that early career employees are taken very seriously here. Everyone around me is always looking for ways for me to contribute to the business, but also ways for me to develop myself and my career. After two years on the graduate scheme we receive a promotion and what is very useful is that after working in such varied roles on the graduate scheme, I can now visualise where I see my career heading."

Alice also enjoys the other benefits of working at AWE:

"The amount of annual leave we get is very generous and is made even better by working a nine-day fortnight! Getting an extra day off every other weekend makes a very big difference to my work-life balance. There is also so much flexibility around the hours I can work, and flexibility around the working location. People here want you to do well and are always happy to give up their time for you, whether you just want to learn more about what they do, have a catch-up over a coffee or seek some mentoring.

"In fact, I couldn't think of a better first job for someone straight out of university. You will be filling a full-time role, but also have loads of great opportunities outside your day job. You will be starting alongside other graduates, all from different backgrounds, which is a great opportunity to network and make friends."

Pupils rise to the challenge

AWE graduates “really inspired” the keen youngsters who took part in the 2019 Primary Science Challenge.

The challenge is an annual event, sponsored and delivered by AWE and run in partnership with educational charities the Educational Business Partnership West Berkshire (EBPWVB) and the Basingstoke

Consortium. This year saw two teams of AWE graduates delivering demonstrations and events across 18 schools in Hampshire and Berkshire.

With a series of fun workshops to promote interest in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and related career opportunities, this year’s challenge was voted “brilliant – unlike anything we’ve done before” by one young pupil.

The budding scientists enjoyed experiments and activities including Save Greg the Egg (spoiler – the eggs didn’t always make it), designing and building an air-propelled car and building catapults.

Two competition finals were held, with Brimpton CE Primary School

winning the Berkshire section and Chalk Ridge Primary School taking first prize from the Hampshire entry. They each won a trip to Winchester’s Science Centre. Second prize was a £100 voucher for the schools to spend on science equipment and all the schools taking part received a set of science books for their school library.

AWE graduate Luke Pagan said the challenge had been a great opportunity: “All the children were so enthusiastic about our experiments, they were such good fun to work with. We hope they have gone away with a positive image of science.”



AWE graduates with winners Chalk Ridge Primary School

‘Engineering’ with AWE

Thirty teens from nine local schools teamed up with AWE graduates for the 2019 Royal Institution Engineering Masterclass series.

The six-week programme, for pupils aged 13-14, was run by the graduates and hosted at The Hurst Community College, Basingstoke.

This year’s masterclass theme was “Forces and Motion” in modern life. The sessions were very hands-on and the teams, each including students from the various schools, had great fun putting theory into practice, building Newton’s cradles and working scale models of wind turbines. As part of a challenge to build and race balloon cars, the youngsters also learned about drag race car parachutes and how an electric car works.

This was followed by ship engineering and design, with the teams testing their new-found knowledge of marine engineering by constructing mini cargo boats and sailing them across a pool. They then moved on to aeronautics and astronautics, building working gliders and rockets.

A fun challenge in the final session included a quiz and a tough egg obstacle course race. This consisted of a steep ramp, down which a car was pushed; a boat which had to carry the egg across the pool without capsizing; and an egg-carrying parachute launch out



The winning multi-school team

of a second story window.

Norman Godfrey, Deputy Chief Scientist of AWE and Chair for the Board of Governors to The Hurst Community College, presented prizes and goody bags to the students afterwards.

He said: “Encouragingly, equal numbers of male and female participants took part. Our graduate team received good feedback from parents, who felt it was beneficial to see female engineers and physicists teaching these classes.

“Two female students actually said they wanted to be engineers when they grew up because they had enjoyed the series of classes and extending their learning beyond the school syllabus.”

Service technician in running for WISE award

AWE’s Steph Webster is a finalist in the WISE Technician of the Year Award – the first time we’ve reached the finals.

Steph is one of those people who achieves a great deal while managing several roles at once. She joined AWE in 2015 as a Control and Instrumentation apprentice, aged 25, and now works as a Service Technician.

We asked her what prompted her to up sticks from her home in Wales and relocate to Hampshire:

“I moved because there were very few opportunities where I grew up. I was really excited to join the apprentice programme at AWE but it was also a bit daunting. I was going back to college at the age of 25, on top of being a single mum and running a household,” said Steph.

“It definitely paid off when I stood proudly in front of my son

and family at my graduation three years later. I was asked why I chose AWE for my apprenticeship, but the truth is, AWE chose me! At that time, I was over the government age limit for an

apprenticeship and so I was really happy to be given such an opportunity. I loved my apprenticeship – it was really hands-on and practical and now I’m using those skills every day and working alongside some brilliant people.”

Steph is also passionate about inspiring others to think outside the box in their career choices. A keen supporter of our careers fairs and

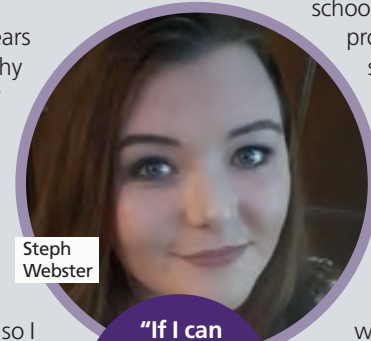
school outreach programmes, she said: “If I can do it, I can show others that they can too.”

The WISE Awards recognise individuals and organisations who are actively

working to achieve gender balance in STEM in the UK – with a target of one million women in STEM by 2020. The

Technician award category showcases inspirational women working in hands-on STEM roles.

The winners will be announced at the WISE Awards in London in November. We’ll let you know how Steph gets on.



Steph Webster

“If I can do it, I can show others that they can too.”

Blessed are the eyes in the sky!

AWE's specialist drone team had an unusual assignment when a drone was used to inspect the roof at St. Mary's Church in Tadley.

The drones are more usually occupied in site-related inspections. A small drone carrying a camera was launched to fly around the church tower and roof. Its mission was to provide detailed aerial imagery and videography of St Mary's, enabling visual confirmation that lightning protection on the bell tower and the roof itself are in good condition.

This saved the church team having to fund a costly manual inspection. The suggestion came from town and borough Councillor David Leeks, who is a member of AWE's Local Liaison Committee, who felt that the drone would be an ideal tool for the job.

It's a great family innings

The Lerigo Charity XI – an entire cricket team with the surname Lerigo – played their hearts out to raise money for St Michael's Hospice, raising more than £1,000.

Organiser Mike Lerigo, who works at AWE, paid tribute to everyone who worked hard to make the event a success. It was held at Ramsdell Cricket Club in north Hampshire.

"A big thank-you to all the family and friends, especially those who drove the 500-mile round trip to support us and raise funds for such a worthy cause," said Mike.

Mike also welcomed a £500 donation from AWE's Charity Fund, boosting the total to £1,336.

Jackie Ridge, Head of Fundraising for St Michael's, said: "It was wonderful to attend the match, we are so grateful to the cricket teams, to their friends and families and AWE for their amazing support." In addition to the cricket, there were plenty of stalls, a raffle and a quiz in the evening plus, of course, a magnificent players' tea in the pavilion.

St. Michael's Hospice was established in 1991 and cares for more than 500 patients a year across the community. Its aim is for anyone faced with a life-limiting illness, their families and carers, to attain the highest possible quality of life by providing a choice of specialist care and support.



Left to right, Nick Parnell-Smith (Ramsdell Cricket Club), Jackie Ridge (Head of Fundraising at St Michael's Hospice), Godfrey Kent (Ramsdell Cricket Club President), Nicola Lawrence (Corporate & Community Co-ordinator at St Michael's Hospice) and Mike Lerigo (AWE)

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