AWE is celebrating its ninth consecutive success at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Awards.

The company won a range of major health, safety and environmental awards and received several commendations.

This is also the second year in a row in which AWE has won both the National Defence Sector Award and the International Dilmun Environmental Award.

There were also commendations for the company under the RoSPA training (health and safety) category and the managing occupational road risk (MORR) category.

This was the first time AWE had put itself forward for either of these awards.

Heather Young, AWE’s director of Assurance, said: “We were delighted to win these awards – especially as it is the ninth successive year AWE has been recognised by RoSPA.

This underscores our continuing commitment to improve our health and safety, as well as our environmental record across all our sites.

“Our aim is to achieve world-class standards in safety and environmental management and these awards reflect that aim.”

There was also success for AWE’s construction management department which was given the RoSPA gold award for construction-engineering occupational health and safety.

Mike Ryan, head of construction, said: “Following progression through bronze and silver, this is the third year running we have been awarded a gold award for construction occupational health and safety.

“This award is recognition for all those involved in making AWE a safe place to work.”

David Rawlins, RoSPA awards manager, said: “AWE has shown a commitment to protecting the health and well-being of its employees and other people.

“Entering the RoSPA Awards reinforces the message that good health and safety is good for business and clearly demonstrates an organisation’s dedication to improving performance in this crucial area.”

There was also jubilation on the night for AWE’s contract partners. Emcor, AWE’s on-site facilities partner, won the gold award for occupational safety, and Hertel won the gold award for construction-engineering.

New man at the top
AWE has a new MD. Robin McGill, pictured above, takes over from Don Cook, who is returning to the USA after three-and-a-half years in charge. Robin was previously chief executive of the Institution of Engineering and Technology.
Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) dogs and handlers are enjoying improved accommodation thanks to new kennel facilities at AWE's Burghfield site. The Canine Management Centre can house up to 20 dogs, each with its own heated sleeping area and run, and humans haven’t been forgotten – the building also offers modern facilities for the handlers.

“The old kennel compound was dated and cramped and the dogs were in old-fashioned single wooden kennels,” said Sergeant Andrew Whitlam, who was previously a police dog handler for 12 years. “I’ve seen many dog kennels in my time, but these are by far the best facilities I’ve come across.”

Andrew, who joined the Burghfield dog section in March 2008 following a post at the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in Whitehall, is delighted with the long-awaited new compound.

The building contains two sections – kennels and facility. There are two kitchens – one prepares dog food while the other caters for the MDP officers – plus a vet treatment room, isolation pens, dog showering facilities, male/female changing and shower rooms, offices and rest rooms. Each dog has its own sleeping quarters with a raised bed and an outside run with a smooth float concrete floor.

“This is much better for the dogs’ paws pads as it’s not abrasive like normal concrete, plus it’s easy to clean and wash down,” said Andrew. The compound also incorporates a specially-designed training and agility ground and two large enclosed runs where the dogs can exercise freely.

The Burghfield MDP team has 12 dogs – 10 of which live at the kennels. Two, Bertie the sniffer dog and tactical firearms support dog, Hawk, are home kennelled with their handlers.

The kennels were made for AWE by Sherlock, one of the country’s leading kennel manufacturers, whose customers include the RSPCA, while the project contractors Edmund Nuttall won AWE’s Contractor of the Year award for its health and safety performance.

“The dogs were a little bit anxious at first – just like humans are when they move house – but it didn’t take long for them to settle down and now they love it,” said Andrew.

Dog and handler are true partners

A partnership for life. That’s how Burghfield’s dog training officer Graham Trayling describes the relationship between an MDP dog and his handler.

“The dog and the handler act as a united team – there’s such a strong bond between them,” said Graham. “An MDP handler and his dog will be together for the dog’s working life – which can be up to seven years. They come as a package – if the handler gets posted somewhere else, the dog goes with him. It’s a real partnership.”

Graham, who has over 30 years’ experience in the Metropolitan Police with 25 of those as a dog handler, says that all the MDP dogs on AWE sites are trained to police standards.

“Many of the dogs are sourced and part-trained by the Army, then they come to AWE and we complete the training – much of which is unique to AWE as we have such an unusual environment," said Graham. “We have a lot of concrete here, so the dogs need to learn to track on concrete whereas they may have originally been taught to do so on grass. Also, there are unusual facilities to search – huge industrial buildings – so we have to train them for that environment. It’s challenging but exciting – we’re developing new techniques and moving dog training forward for the whole country.”

To become an MDP dog handler, standard police training is undertaken for two years. Andrew experienced the same training when he first joined the Metropolitan Police.

Three young AWE scientists represented the company at an exhibition and reception at the House of Commons.

It was held by SET for BRITAIN, which is encouraging and promoting Britain’s early-stage and career research scientists, engineers and technologists.

The three – among 180 young people selected from 600 UK submissions – were invited to present posters in the exhibition, held as part of National Science and Engineering Week.

They were Lindsay Coy, 25, research and development scientist; Peter Beavis, 29, an organic materials scientist; and Anna Walmley, 24, a materials scientist.

Lindsay’s poster, exhibited in the physical sciences session, highlighted the development of remote detection of illicitly-trafficked nuclear material.

She said: “It was a real honour to represent AWE and I welcome the opportunity to raise the company’s profile. It was also a valuable networking opportunity.”

Lindsay joined AWE on the graduate training scheme in 2005 after completing her BSc degree in physics with medical physics at the University of Cardiff.

Peter, who joined AWE a year ago, presented a poster in the same session as Lindsay on nanomodification of poly(siloxane) polymers and foams for thermal and radiation stable materials.

“I have been collaborating with Bristol University on a project to measure the effect that nanoparticles have on the free volume between polymer chains at the molecular scale using a technique called positron annihilation lifetime spectroscopy,” he said.

Anna also enjoyed the chance to represent AWE externally and meet other exhibitors and visitors.

“The event was a great chance to meet other young researchers, to network and enjoy our visit to Parliament,” she said.

Anna came to AWE on the graduate training scheme two years ago after completing her BSc (Hons) degree in materials science at the University of Birmingham.

Her poster – in the engineering session – was entitled “Syntactic foam: building for the future, not mashing in the past.”

“It describes a programme of work looking into the rapid manufacture of syntactic foams,” she said.

“We have produced a novel syntactic foam (a rigid closed cell foam) using a selective laser sintering technique which drastically reduces current production time and costs.”

Trio star at the Commons
An innovative model-making process used for the first time at AWE could help save the company around £1 million, and two months’ building time, on the new High Explosives Fabrication Facility at Aldermaston – formerly shortened to HEFF but now known as Cronus.

It involved the production by the rapid prototyping department of a small model of a section of the steel reinforcement bars that will go inside the concrete structure of the finished building. The model was then used by the construction contractor Kier Construction Ltd as an aid to create a full-size mock-up of the reinforcement to allow it to test different construction methods to improve safety and minimise installation. The technology has been so successful, it is now likely to be utilised in a number of other construction projects at AWE to assist in visualising technically complex aspects before installation.

Bob Cross, facility manager (construction), explained that the small model – made of glass-filled polyamide and measuring around 47cm by 3.3m and 28cm high – took the rapid prototyping department 38 hours to make. “Initially, the department was given design data in a format that they couldn’t use, so we involved three to four weeks’ work to translate this data into software they could use,” said Bob.

Mike Ryan, head of construction, added: “The completed model was handed over to the contractors last October. They then spent three weeks building the full-size mock-up at an off-site location – it was about seven metres wide, five metres deep and just over two metres tall.

“As we were going into the construction of a very technically challenging building, the mock-up has allowed the contractors to trial different methods of installing the reinforcement before the actual work starts later this year.”

The whole process has allowed for quicker and safer methods of construction, as well as identifying that 34 per cent of the designed reinforcement required some minor modifications. If that had to be rectified during actual construction, it could have cost around £1 million and up to two months extra on the Cronus construction programme.

The rating was achieved in various ways including:
- installing a rain-water harvesting system and using water-efficient fittings
- using condensing boilers and heat exchangers
- through construction management – using best practice in terms of prevention of water and air pollution.

Martin Townsend, director of BREEAM, said: “The Orion facility is exceptional, not just in achieving a BREEAM excellent rating, but its totally unique design means AWE has truly innovated to make a building that will stand the test of time.”

The technology will have been tested during an eight-week trial building on the AWE sites, which are owned by the Ministry of Defence, if required to be used in the BAE Systems standard in line with Government policy.

## Futuristic lab makes the grade

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## Planners give the go-ahead for key Mensa facility

Planning approval has been granted for Mensa, the replacement warhead assembly and disassembly facility, to be built within AWE’s Burghfield site.

The development will replace the existing facilities – including the “great garages” built up to 50 years ago – with a facility which will incorporate modern environmental and safety standards. Located at the centre of Burghfield site, the new development will carry out the same work currently undertaken in the existing assembly and disassembly facilities.

Andrew Jupp, AWE’s director of Infrastructure, said: “The planning approval is very good news. Our thanks go to the many people across AWE who have worked together in a real One Company effort to ensure success.”

Operations in the replacement assembly and disassembly facility will continue to be regulated by the Health and Safety Executive’s Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and Hazardous Installations Directorate, as well as the Ministry of Defence Nuclear Weapons Regulator.
Gary is region’s best

A second-year electrical apprentice from AWE has been recognised for his hard work by the National Skills Academy Nuclear andCogent Sector Skills Council.

Gary Jones won the Regional Apprentice of the Year for the Southeast/East and was one of just five finalists from around the country to attend the awards ceremony in Manchester.

The 18-year-old, who is an electrical maintenance fitter, said: “I have put in a lot of hard work at AWE so it’s nice to be recognised.”

AWE’s Apprentice Academy’s technical and craft training manager Marcus Hutchings, who attended the awards dinner with Gary, said: “He has put in a great deal of effort during his apprenticeship and, with the additional work he does for charity, he is a great ambassador for the company.”

Before joining AWE, Gary spent two years as a supervisor with Winchester churches’ nightshelter. He still gives his time as a volunteer, travelling regularly to Winchester to help the local homeless.

“Gary is impressed with the scope and the scale of AWE. “When I speak to people, from all areas of the business and at all levels, I get a clear sense of challenge, excitement and national purpose,” said Don. “This is a great time to be at AWE and my experience here is something I’ll never forget.”

The good relationship AWE has with the community was praised by Castle Lake, and the connections strengthened with West Berkshire Council. AWE has been assessed by Ofsted as “outstanding” in all areas of the business and at all levels. I come from a world of banking – which we must make accessible to everyone. For that we need to have a strategy, success factors and performance indicators so everyone can align to them.”

Robin is also heavily focused on safety. “I come from a world of extremely high safety culture. AWE has clearly come a long way and has dramatically improved safety standards, but we now need to recalibrate our understanding of performance and compliance. “I have some simple aims for this company. We have to be safe, secure and clean. We have to make the programme: We all have to understand what makes us financially successful. And we need to understand our role in securing that success.”
It’s hair-faced cheek

The fun-loving spirit was certainly in the air at AWE during Comic Relief. Hundreds of AWE staff took part, doing “something funny for money” and raising thousands of pounds.

At Burghfield, the normally clean-shaven LUPUS construction management team showed their loopy side when they grew beards – and then dyed their facial carpets red. “No one was allowed to shave for a month,” said DMP’s Toni Jones.

Gift just breathtaking

AWE has given a boost to a training scheme in Tadley which offers free life-saving skills.

The Heartstart UK: Tadley Triangle Scheme teaches people basic life-saving skills, including learning the recovery position and what to do if someone experiences a heart attack or loses consciousness. The £200 donated by AWE’s Community Committee went towards replacement artificial lungs, used in training.

AWE’s Marge Wilson, a volunteer with Heartstart, said: “This is a fantastic donation. When you see someone, no matter how young, put someone in the recovery position – it’s a great achievement. It gives them the confidence to try this in a real situation and that could save a life.”

Bryan Vowell, the scheme co-ordinator, said the local branch originated after community response officers were called to an incident and found nothing had been done at the scene to help those in need of medical attention.

“It’s great to get this donation as without this sort of support we would be spending more time fundraising rather than teaching,” said Bryan.

Heartstart sessions cover Newbury, Reading, Basingstoke and the districts of Tadley. For more information or to book a session, call Bryan Vowell on 0777 3678 198 or email hs.tadleytriangle@gmail.com

Diet sparks a charity trek

Two receptionists from AWE – Janna Gay and Dion Farrell – are celebrating a combined birthday of 100 years by taking part in a 50-mile charity trek in the Grand Canyon in September.

Janna said: “It all began last year when we started losing weight. Between us we have lost eight stone, but we’d like to lose one more.”

Janna, 60, and Dion, 40, hope that undertaking the trek will help them to achieve their goal weight while also raising money for the Children’s Adventure Farm Trust.

The pair have been training for the gruelling hike by walking along coastal paths in Cornwall.

To sponsor the pair, who both need to raise a minimum of £3,000 each – visit www.justgiving.com/jannagay or www.justgiving.com/dionfarrell1

Firemen face fun soaking

Children and carers at Naomi House Children’s Hospice gave AWE’s firefighters a soaking during a visit.

Firefighters Simon Hall and Ciaran O’Sullivan from the AWE fire and rescue service took along one of AWE’s fire appliances to Naomi House – AWE’s local charity of the year 2008 – as part of Ciaran’s pledge to raise funds for the charity by running the London Marathon.

“They all seemed to enjoy seeing us in our uniforms and the children loved the fire engine and positively encouraged the soaking of Simon’s fire helmet,” said Ciaran.

TA Chris helps heroes

Chris Stockwell, a computer-aided design system manager, has raised more than £2,200 at AWE for Help the Heroes, the charity that helps support wounded British servicemen and women injured in current conflicts.

The charity is particularly close to his heart – he’s been in the Territorial Army for 22 years. Chris serves as Battery Sergeant Major with 457 Battery Royal Artillery, based in Southampton. He is shortly moving to 39 Signals Regiment in Bristol as a training Warrant Officer when his current post ends.

Chris began fundraising shortly after last year’s 100th anniversary celebrations of the TA by collections and selling wristbands and pin badges. He and his TA unit also raised £3,250 while cleaning the war memorial outside Winchester Cathedral.