

APRIL 2019

# The Micron



The staff newsletter of AJ Engineering and NEWCo

## MATTERS OF THE HEART FOR AJE STAFF



Keri Fickling, project manager with The Sandpiper Trust (centre) with AJE's John Farquhar, Simon Hutchins and Colin Docherty.

### **An issue close to a staff member's heart led to over half the staff at AJ Engineering being trained in basic first aid and in how to use the in-house defibrillator.**

The idea of getting his colleagues trained up came from Project Support Manager Simon Hutchins who himself has experienced open heart surgery and whose wife, last October suffered a sudden heart attack.

The workshop was carried out by The Sand Piper Trust whose mission is to save lives across Scotland, particularly in rural areas by giving the people the right skills to do so.

Simon explained why it was important to ensure the majority of staff knows how to use the equipment: "There are a few defibrillators dotted all over Forres and a wee while back AJ Engineering bought a defibrillator as it seemed like a logical step to have one on site as the quicker we can react to a heart attack the better your chances are of surviving one.

"However, although myself and other members of the team have first aid training, we felt it would be good to have a training session for the development of as many staff as possible, to better the opportunity if the worst was to happen. Lee Binks, our business development representative had recently found out about The Sandpiper Trust so suggested them."

Simon added: "The training was great and although the defibrillators are relatively easy to use, having someone from The Sand Piper Trust there to explain everything and give hands-on experience has really boosted the confidence of everyone.

"I have always had a vested interest in the heart as a few years ago I had open heart surgery to remedy an issue I was born with and recently my wife had a sudden heart attack. Luckily, we caught it in time and after some minor surgery she is well on the way to making a full recover, however it was a real eye opener that we are all vulnerable to such sudden unexplained attacks."

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# AJE involved in monster canal project



**AJ Engineering is involved in a major project on the A82 Fort Augustus Swing Bridge which will see over £500,000 of bridge maintenance carried out.**

The project will involve essential mechanical maintenance including replacing some of the technical components, which are vital to ensure the swing bridge continues to operate effectively when opening and closing across the Caledonian Canal.

Overseeing the project is Malcolm Rennie who said that AJE's role so far has been to:

- Remove the old drive mechanism and replace it with an electric alternative.
- Remove the old wheels that support the 300t bridge and replacing them with new.
- Install new access hatches, automated barriers and make a new wheel house.

The project by Scottish Canals saw members of the public being able to wander along the bottom of a drained section of the canal. Opened almost 200 years ago, the Caledonian Canal in the Highlands took 12 years to build and its waterway's 60 miles (96.5km) length includes lochs Ness, Oich and Lochy and 22 miles (35km) of canal with 29 locks.

The stretch at Fort Augustus was emptied so that the lock gates could be replaced, and this section was opened to the public for a day.

Scottish Canals drained more than four miles (7km) of the canal to provide safe access to the gates at Fort Augustus, at Loch Ness, and also nearby Kytra to replace lock gates.

Opened in 1822, with repairs and improvements made in the 1840s, the canal was built to designs made by famous Scottish engineer Thomas Telford. The waterway runs between Inverness and Fort William.

## Spotlight shines on AJE for #ScotAppWeek

**AJ Engineering and NEWCo was once again put in the spotlight for Scottish Apprenticeship Week with a ministerial visit, a school tour, and two speaking roles at events focused on the topic.**

Graduate apprentice Laura Mair who is in her second year working with AJE visited six Forres area primary schools. Laura spoke to the pupils about her role within the company and as she is a STEM ambassador carried out an interactive workshop.

Meanwhile back at Forres HQ, the staff were visited by MSP Richard Lochhead, the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science.

Speaking of his visit, Mr Lochhead said: "Apprenticeships provide individuals with an opportunity to not only work and earn, but also to achieve an industry recognised qualification to support future career ambitions. The continuing success of companies like AJ Engineering demonstrates they are providing their employees with the right skills and training to meet current and future business needs.

"I am thankful for the invitation to join the company in celebrating its 20th anniversary, to see first-hand the work it is doing to support apprentices pursuing a career in STEM."

Meanwhile, Bethany Stuart-Bass (27) who is doing a modern apprenticeship in fabrication and welding spoke at

DYW Moray's showcase event about her experiences and general manager Graham Alexander attended and spoke at an event organised by the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board in Glasgow.



## Outside support for cycle challenge

**Have you done your stint yet?**

AJ Engineering has been joined by Moray Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Sarah Medcraf and Clare Lock from Clockstudio who designs this very newsletter in support of the company's challenge to cycle 21,000 to raise money for our three charities as part of the company's 20-year celebrations.

The two women decided to show their support for the company with Sarah even broadcasting her efforts on Facebook Live.

Clare who puts together The Micron said: "It was great to be involved in such a fantastic initiative. I'm also celebrating 20 years in business, so thought as I'm connected in a small way to AJE I'd come in and get pedaling! I encourage everyone to give it a go!"

There is now a dedicated fundraising page which can be found at [www.sponsorsome.co.uk/ajengineering](http://www.sponsorsome.co.uk/ajengineering).



Left: Sarah Medcraf. Right: Clare Lock