

The Micron



The staff newsletter of AJ Engineering and NEWCo

HAPPY NEW YEAR & HERE'S TO 2025!

AJE and NEWCo focus on looking ahead but it's easy to forget how well we have done, so to set us up for 2025, we felt it was important to take a look back over 2024 to the achievements we have made. There has been a lot of internal investment from new machinery being purchased to new job roles being created. At NEWCo the expansion plans are ongoing and our apprenticeship and training schemes are as strong as ever.

JANUARY



Jack Lowes completed his degree course top of the class and with first-class honours. Jack joined AJE in August 2019 after applying for a welding job, but after seeing Jack's potential, and discovering that Jack's desire had been to complete a degree at Moray College, he was offered the chance to become the firm's second graduate apprentice. He completed his graduate apprenticeship degree in Design and Manufacturing with Robert Gordons University.

FEBRUARY



Alan and Graham were delighted to received framed football tops from two local clubs they began sponsorship deals with in 2023.

They were presented with the gifts as a thank you from Forres Mechanics and Forres Girls Football Club. In August 2023, it was announced that AJ Engineering had given its support to Forres Mechanics Football Club by sponsoring their home and away kits. Then a month later, the Forres Girls Football team were kitted out in new strips when AJE supplied the club with 38 new, numbered strips.

MARCH

AJE played an integral role in the design of the entrance way to the Perth Museum which is the new home to the Stone of Destiny.

The museum opened to the public last Easter following a £27m development project. At its heart will sit the stone, also known as the Stone of Scone, returning to Perthshire for the first time in over 700 years. Working with Nairn-based Black Isle Bronze, AJE created the stainless steel frame to support two new bronze entrance features.



APRIL



A Scottish politician visited AJ Engineering as part of Scottish Apprenticeship Week. Highlands and Islands Green MSP, Ariane Burgess, was welcomed to AJ Engineering to learn about the company and its passion for investing in young people. She met a number of employees including trainee apprentice James O'Neil (see picture) and Frazer McBeath from Nigg Skills Academy.

MAY



A group of youngsters attending the Trooping of the Colour in London washed a number of the AJ Engineering vehicles in exchange for some financial support towards their trip.

Six youngsters from the 2nd Forres Boys' Brigade cleaned a fleet of vans as a thank you for a donation towards their visit which will take place in June.

The group received an invitation to attend the Parade last June, but with the trip costing £3,000, they reached out to local businesses for sponsorship and support.

JUNE



We reported how the CNC shop had expanded with the employment of three new members of staff and investment in two new machines to ensure the company keeps up with demand and stays ahead of the game. The Doosan DNM 150 and the Doosan Lynx 2100LB, have Fanuc control systems which is consistent throughout the machine shop. The purchase of these machines allows the CNC team to keep up with demand and provide competitive pricing and attractive lead times to clients.

JULY

AJE employee Lee Binks was given a promotion to a newly created position within the company. Lee was promoted in recognition of his hard work and dedication and was given the title Pre-Construction Manager. His role involves managing and co-ordinating the large scale bids on behalf of AJ Engineering.

Graham Alexander, director and general manager of AJE said: "This role will see Lee lead all aspects of large-scale bids and develop our strategies for winning work and developing links with key clients. This is a completely new senior position and role within the company."



AUGUST

We played a key role in the development of a 100kW wave energy device which has been in operation at the South Harbour, Port of Aberdeen.

Aberdeen-based ZOEX Power working alongside Sealand Projects secured funding from the Seafood Innovation Fund, managed by Cefas for Defra, to develop and build the ZOEX wave energy converter (WEC).

The device can be mounted on feed barges to replace CO₂-emitting diesel generators, providing a clean energy source. It can also be installed in breakwaters, harbours, and offshore wind turbines.

According to ZOEX, it can revolutionize wave energy harnessing in small sea-states, offering cost-effective clean energy for off-grid locations.



SEPTEMBER



NEW equipment which is enabling AJE to become a key player in the production of transmission structures became operational at the company's Waterford site.

The £700K investment in the kit also meant the firm was able to advertise for new machine operators and other staff. The equipment was imported from America-based firm Peddinghaus who produce the toughest steel fabrication machinery in the world.

The investment in the Anglemaster HD Angle Line which was made possible after AJE secured a grant from Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) was made at the tail end of 2023.

OCTOBER

NEWCo embarked on a £539,000 project that will significantly increase productivity and efficiency, and help meet growing demand for its services. Its premises will be expanded by 50 per cent and two new overhead cranes will be installed. The company secured a £172,700 contribution from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) towards building and plant and equipment costs. The improvements which are underway, will enable the company to continue its growth through increased capacity and efficiencies in production. Overhead cranes will make handling materials and projects more efficient, as well as improving safety and cutting carbon by reducing forklift use. The expansion project will support five jobs, including an apprentice, and bring about an estimated £800,000 increase in annual turnover within three years.



NOVEMBER

A 250-tonne crane was used to install a large pipe bridge which was fabricated by the AJE team as part of the Northumbrian Water and Tees Valley Pipeline Project.

The project on behalf of Farrans, is to provide a resilient supply of clean and clear water to customers for decades to come and the work carried out by AJE was completed smoothly.

Fabrication of the 25m long x 4.5m wide pipe bridge began in June. The structure was fabricated in two sections due to its length to allow for transport and was assembled on site at Alwent Beck on the River Tees.

A team from AJ Engineering worked alongside a team from Farrans, to make sure the installation of the pipe bridge went according to plan. Project manager Kevin Smith, said given the scale of the pipe bridge, everything went smoothly.



DECEMBER



A £200K investment allowed AJE to bring an important part of production in house saving time and improving efficiency. The Morgan Rushworth HDPX 3006 High-Definition CNC Plasma Cutting Machine, which is fitted with a state-of-the-art Hypertherm XPR plasma system offers quick and high quality cutting of steel up to 35mm thick and 80mm thick using standard gas cutting techniques. The maximum size plate that AJE can now process is 6m x 3m wide. The investment means that there is now no need to outsource the work to companies in the south of Scotland or England saving valuable time.

We hope you have enjoyed our round up of 2024.

This year and into 2026 looks just as busy and, with the increasing investment in electricity transmission and water treatment, we are looking forward to more growth. Current projects such as the Bolton WwTW continue at pace and there are a number of substation projects at different stages of completion. We will always continue our commitment to trainees and apprenticeships and there will be news very soon about another graduate apprentice graduation.

We wish you all a very happy and healthy 2025!