

WEC news

GROUP

Issue 6



WEC Apprentice of the year 2015!

Full story page 10



New healthcare benefit

Page 3



Major investments

Page 4



Lowry Sculpture

Page 7

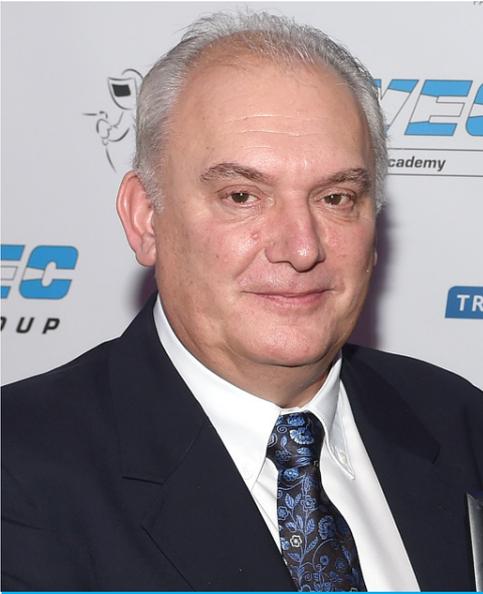


Gold at WorldSkills

Page 8

www.wec-group.com

Message from the board



WEC Group - Managing Director, Steve Hartley

2015 was an exciting and challenging year for WEC Group as we successfully rolled out the first phase of our ambitious expansion plan. With over £11m of investments injected into the business, which includes our new venture in Rotherham, we have almost doubled our manufacturing capability and crossed the 600 staff milestone. As a result of our investments we have recently secured large export orders, enabling us to start the New Year with a solid order book.

During 2016, building work will begin on our new modern 120,000 sq. ft. factory at Walker Park, Blackburn which should pave the way for further success.

Our apprenticeship programme has been at the heart of our continued expansion, and our recent achievement at the National WorldSkills competition is proof that our investments in the WEC apprenticeship scheme are paying off.

On behalf of all the board at WEC Group, I would like to wish you all a prosperous and successful 2016.

Movers & shakers!

WEC Group is pleased to announce a number of internal promotions and role changes across the board, recognising the continued commitment and consistently high standard of work from our staff.

Role Changes Include:

Paul Brierley - Production Manager, WEC Machining
 Mihaela Mladin - Quality Manager
 Mick Brown - Inspector, Engineering
 Jamie Hall - Project Engineer, Engineering
 Tony Savic - Engineering and Project Manager
 Gemma Kennedy – HR Manager
 Alan Gore - Laser Sales Office Manager
 Simon Ford - CNC Turner / Team Leader

Internal progression is always encouraged throughout the Group and we aim to support all our staff to excel in their work.

Congratulations!

EBL scheme proving a hit!

Following an extremely successful implementation of the award winning Employee Benefit Loan Scheme, we have seen a great number of employees taking advantage of the scheme and to date we have issued over £100,000 of low cost loans.

For more info and to apply go to:

www.employeebenefitloans.co.uk



YOUR NEWS...
...YOUR VIEWS

This is your newsletter and we want to know your stories. Send us your big news whether it's a birth, an engagement or a marriage, a sporting success or just something you want to shout about.
 Email stories to newsletter@wecl.co.uk

WEC rolls out new healthcare & wellbeing benefit



UK Healthcare™
Looking after every body



With effect from 1st February 2016, WEC Group employees with at least 12 months service will be enrolled onto a corporate healthcare cash back benefit scheme.

The plan is designed to help cover your day to day healthcare expenditures such as optical and dental bills by offering 100% cash back (up to agreed policy limits) on any of the available benefits.

You will have the option to upgrade to a higher level of cover, and any additional family members/partners can be included at a premium which is payable by you.

You may at the same time also include your children's details (up to 4 children per adult, up to the age of 18) who are covered completely free of charge.

All eligible employees should have received a welcome pack including full terms and conditions. If you have not received a welcome pack please contact HR.

GET CASH BACK ON YOUR DAY TO DAY HEALTH COSTS:

DENTAL TREATMENT

Dental treatment, check-ups, X-Rays and hygienist fees.

Up to £60* per year



OPTICAL

Eye tests, prescription glasses, contact lenses and repairs.

Up to £60* per year

WELLBEING

Complementary Therapies, Homeopathy, Reflexology, Aromatherapy and Remedial Massage.

Up to £150* per year



PRESCRIPTIONS

Standard prescription items can be claimed for excluding annual prescriptions.

Membership offers & discounts

Great savings on spas, gyms, holidays, theme parks and attractions as part of your membership package, for more details please visit the website below.



*Level 1 cover funded by WEC

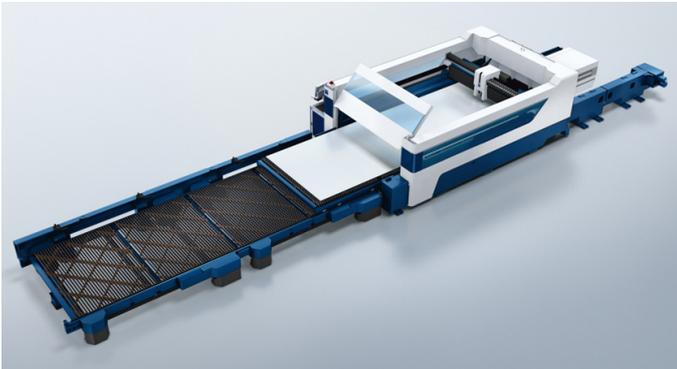
www.ukhealth.org.uk/wecgroup

Our investment spree continues!

A state-of-the-art 6m x 2.5m CO2 laser cutting machine has recently been commissioned at our Rotherham-based facility, MTL Advanced.

With high speed and superior cutting quality, the TruLaser 8000 will enable MTL to retain their competitive edge on large volume production as well as wear resistant and high strength components.

This new £1m investment will also be equipped with an "Intelligent FMS" (Flexible Manufacturing System) which is designed for automated sheet loading, unloading and part sorting.



The new FMS system will automatically load metal sheets of up to 20mm thickness and 6m length, as well as move and stack cut parts of any shape – kitting them for further use which is perfect for Kanban systems.

The automated material handling system is ideal for MTL's large contracts and batch orders as it is capable of running 24-hour operations.

MTL is already showing strong signs of recovery with month-on-month profitability throughout 2015, and the company has built a strong order book for 2016 thanks to winning back several new multi-million pound contracts.

Since the acquisition, 45 new jobs have been created and a recruitment drive is currently underway to fill more roles as we gear up for an even busier year.

MTL lands multi-million pound defence contracts

2016 is set to be an exciting year at MTL Advanced as we have secured armoured vehicle contracts in excess of over £10m from two leading manufacturers in the UAE and the UK.

As a result of our recent investments, MTL has won back a multi-million pound contract for the supply of Armoured Cabs to a UAE armoured vehicle manufacturer.

With supply commencing later this year, the contract will run for 18 months and the cabs will be manufactured using our 6 axis twin robot welding systems, complete with glass and a weapon mount system, before being painted at MTL's new wet paint facility which is to be commissioned in March.



Further to this, MTL also won a large contract with a major UK Defence customer to manufacture vehicle chassis starting this year.

Karl Stewart commented: "MTL is now successfully exporting to five continents across the globe thanks to our impressive facility and extensive manufacturing capabilities."

"The new contract is sure to build on the company's reputation for contract manufacturing in the Defence sector."

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WEC Laser expands to the Midlands!

WEC Laser has opened a brand new office in Stafford, UK as a way of facilitating its ambitious expansion plan.

With the aim of building the division's sales to a level that may eventually warrant its own manufacturing plant, the Dunston Business Village office is the first WEC venture outside of the North.

The Group's expansion to the West Midlands is designed to offer an improved working relationship with existing customers in the area, as well as opening the door to new opportunities in the Midlands and South West.

Wayne Wild said: "The new Stafford office is just the starting point of our expansion across the UK and it has great potential for growing our specialist laser cutting division even further."

Stephen Busby, Business Development Manager added, "This new development will improve our

WECJet is raising high with new 10t Crane

Our investment in our waterjet division continues following the £30,000 purchase of a new 10-ton overhead crane.



The upgrade brings the total investment for the division in the past 18 months of trading to around £1 million.

Our ability to lift 10 ton sheets of material means the new 7.3 x 2.4m dynamic waterjet machine can now be utilised to its full potential.

Gareth Taylor, Director of WECJet said, "With now three waterjet cutting machines in-house, the new crane has significantly improved our operations.

"Our new dynamic waterjet machine can cut 3mm holes in almost any material up to 200mm thick."



New office located at Dunston Business Village, Stafford

locality and relationships with suppliers and customers."

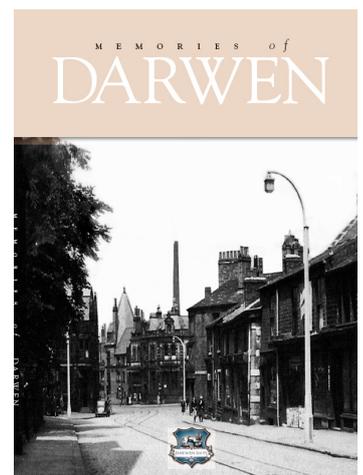
Located in the midst of the West Midlands off Junction 13 of the M6, the office is now up and running with a new Business Development Manager and an Internal Sales Engineer.

WEC Group Sponsor the Memories of Darwen!

We have recently had the pleasure of sponsoring Darwen Day's glossy new publication, Memories of Darwen.

Featuring over 260 photographs of the town, the 120-page book contrasts the old with the new and explains how the ancient East Lancashire community has evolved between the before and after pictures.

The book, which is the work of the Darwen Days community history project, was given away during a launch event at Darwen Library in November.



It's all go for Goose Foot!

2015 has been a busy year for the team at Goose Foot as the growing demand for its bespoke street furniture expertise continues to rise.

As part of a £6m regeneration project to transform the appearance of Altrincham town centre, the division was selected by the landscape architects Planit-IE to manufacture 25 bespoke tree grilles with a variety of intricate laser cut designs as well as eight 2.6m seats, which were installed in Q4 2015.



Bespoke seating as part of Altrincham regeneration project.

In addition, Goose Foot supplied twelve mild steel cycle stands, all with intricate laser cut designs.

Graham Wood said: "It is a pleasure to partner once again with Planit-IE. The changes in the square have been welcomed by retailers and restaurants alike.



Bespoke tree grilles with intricate laser cut designs

"Altrincham town centre really has been transformed by this work."

The team also recently manufactured a number of bespoke seats for Felixstowe seafront as part of a £2.8m project to restore the seafront gardens after being selected by Mott Macdonald to help design and build the seats.



Felixstowe seafront seating from Goose Foot

Goose Foot also delivered an additional seven 4m Emperor seats for Phase 2 of the Fishergate development in Preston as well as two bespoke circular tree seats. Our Emperor seat has also been specified for a new Aldi development in Preston.



Bespoke circular tree seats for Phase 2 of the Fishergate development in Preston

As Goose Foot goes from strength to strength, we are pleased to announce the growth of our team in the South. With more than 20 years' experience in bespoke and off the shelf street furniture, Graham Tarran joins us as Regional Sales Representative to grow our offering and client base south of Birmingham.

LS Lowry takes a trip back to the seaside

A 5ft LS Lowry tribute statue manufactured by our apprentices has become a seaside visitor attraction after being unveiled on the Lancashire Coast.

The sculpture celebrates Lowry's famously painted matchstick man and his dog included in several of his works and sits on the town's ferry slip site at Knott End-On-Sea where the artist created some of his acclaimed paintings.

Funded by Preesall Town Council & Wyre Borough Council, the £5,000 stainless steel project was overseen by our architectural metalwork division m-tec.

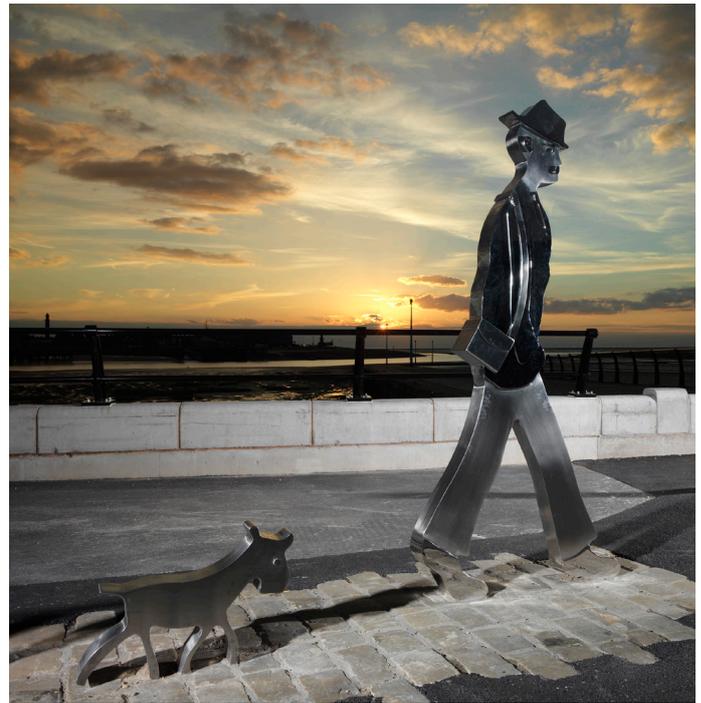
Tom Elliot from m-tec said, "It's fantastic to have worked on a 'local' project and to be creating a piece of work honouring a true Northern genius."

The Mayor of Preesall, Philip Orme and his deputy Gordon McCann visited our training academy to see the statue as it took shape.

The mayor said: "The design is fantastic and it is great that the work has been carried out by apprentices.

"The idea is to get more people into the village and to give them something to look at."

LS Lowry is said to have often stayed in the boarding houses on the front in Knott End and used the ferry slip in several of his paintings. This is one of just three sculptures in tribute to the artist in the UK.



WEC CCTV in Dubai

We exhibited at Intersec, Dubai in January, it was very successful in bringing promising enquiries for our CCTV export division.

One of our 2015 export highlights was the contract we secured for Qatari Armed Forces Air Base, and we are expecting similar contracts to come into fruition as a result of this year's exhibition.

John Whittle, CCTV Export Manager said, "Export sales are at the heart of our future growth plans, and we now successfully export to 14 different countries across globe."



Intersec at Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre

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WEC Group Apprentices crowned Best in Britain!

Our apprentices have once again done the company proud after making it to the WorldSkills UK final and bringing home a Gold and Bronze medal in Construction MetalWork.

18-year-old Thomas Woodburn, a third year apprentice at our Training Academy was crowned Gold medallist after beating off stiff competition - including four other WEC Group apprentices - at the three day competition which was held at the NEC, Birmingham from 19 - 21 November.

His score of 93.5% is the highest ever recorded in the UK for this category, with the other WEC Apprentices Chris Taylor, James Ennis, Ryan Smith, and Harry Chadwick only a couple of points behind.

Thomas will now spend the next two years preparing for the chance to represent the UK at the WorldSkills competition in Abu Dhabi as part of "Squad UK" in October 2017.



24-year-old Chris Taylor, who has just begun the fifth year of his apprenticeship, also managed to snatch the Bronze Medal as well as scoring higher than previous gold medallists, and Ryan Smith received a Highly Commended from the judges, despite being the youngest in the competition.



Our apprentices competed against almost 100 entrants from around the UK to make it to the final 13, with WEC Group and East Lancashire contributing almost 50 per cent of the national finalists.



Kris Mercer said: "All our apprentices did fantastically, considering it is the first time WEC apprentices have entered the competition! We achieved both regional and national wins in less than 6 months of signing up to the competition.



This is a tribute to WEC Group's investment in our Training Programme and the hard work put in by the lads themselves."

Thomas will now participate in a training and development programme which will include the selection of Team UK ahead of WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017.

He said: "I'm really looking forward to training with Squad UK and preparing for the chance to represent the country in Abu Dhabi.

The UK is currently seventh in the WorldSkills rankings after winning three Gold, four Silver and two Bronze medals at WorldSkills Sao Paulo 2015.



Steve Hartley wins prestigious Honorary Apprenticeship Award!

Congratulations to WEC Group Managing Director, Steve Hartley who has received an Honorary Apprenticeship award from Director of Themis Simon Jordan.

A Themis Honorary Apprenticeship is awarded to individuals that have served an Apprenticeship and had significant involvement in shaping the development of apprenticeships within their workplace.

Simon Jordan said, "We presented Steve with the accolade due to his vision, commitment to apprenticeships and the desire he demonstrates in helping his young staff to develop to their full potential."

There's only a handful of Themis Honorary Apprenticeships in existence, and they are awarded based on recommendations and testimonials about a person's commitment to apprenticeship development.

Well done Steve!



WEC APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2015



A great night was had by all, and we presented our best apprentices with awards based on their attendance, commitment and welding excellence, and also rewarded those who have successfully completed the five year course.

The standard of work from our apprentices was fantastic this year, and it was very difficult for the judging panel to make a final decision.



This year's Apprentice of the Year title went to Jonathan Holding, for his consistently high standard of work and effort. In second place was Elliott Mounsey and in third place was Craig Masterton, who also scooped the Commitment Award.

Each apprentice received a trophy and a WEC certificate of completion.

Other awards on the evening included "Welding Excellence" which was won by Josh Wickers and the "Outstanding Academic Achievement" award was won by Chris Calvert.

Kris Mercer, said: "Our apprentices are an exceptionally talented group of young people and it's important to reward them for their efforts."

Congratulations to all of our apprentices for your fantastic work and commitment!

APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR 2015 WINNER JONATHAN HOLDING



See more photos at: [facebook.com/wecacademy](https://www.facebook.com/wecacademy)

1ST YEAR GRADUATES



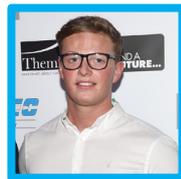
Luis Stevenson
Welding & Fabrication



Kylie Cooper
Business Admin



Harry Chadwick
Welding & Fabrication



Elliott Grierson
Welding & Fabrication



Sam Holden
CNC Machining



Andrew Gardiner
CNC Machining



Craig Masterton
Welding & Fabrication



Jonathan Holding
Welding & Fabrication



Ryan Smith
Welding & Fabrication



Elliott Mounsey
Welding & Fabrication



James Walmsley
Welding & Fabrication



Matthew Walsh
Welding & Fabrication

5 YEAR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM GRADUATES

Graduates of our 5 year Apprenticeship program are now fully qualified and time served engineers.



Grant Grunshaw



Ryan McDermott



Liam Thompson

WELDING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Josh Wickers had a total of seven welding nominations throughout the year.

This is the most that anyone has ever received, demonstrating his high standard of welding and natural ability.



JOSH WICKERS

MACHINING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Matthew Moore was selected as the winner of this brand new category as he consistently produces a high standard of work and always puts 100% effort into every task he is given.



MATT MOORE

COMMITMENT AWARD

Craig Masterton was selected as the winner of this award based on his consistently high level of work, excellent time-keeping and attendance, as well as going above and beyond what has been expected from him.



CRAIG MASTERTON

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Chris Taylor won this award for the second time after excelling academically, achieving 12 distinctions out of his 12 level 3 City & Guilds exams.

This is rarely accomplished even on a national level.



CHRIS TAYLOR

Apprentices fabricate viewing platform for BRFC Training Academy

Our first year apprentices have fabricated a brand new viewing platform at Blackburn Rovers Training Academy in Brockhall Village.

The new platform, which has been designed by Craig Emery from our CCTV division, makes it possible for photographers, cameramen and media teams to capture football matches with an unobstructed view of the pitch, whilst also being sheltered from the elements.

Craig Emery said, "It has been a great joy to work with these up and coming fabricators, they are great set of lads who show much enthusiasm for their work and I look forward to working with them again on the next project."

This is yet another testament of the outstanding quality of the workmanship that comes out of our Welding & Engineering Training Academy.

A big well done to everyone involved!



Viewing platform at BRFC Academy Ground



Newlyweds: Rebecca and Tim Greenhalgh

Rebecca and Tim tie the knot!

Congratulations to Recruitment Officer Rebecca Greenhalgh (was Hickey) and husband Tim who got married on 12th December at The Old Courts, Wigan.

It was the first wedding the non for profits arts organisation had ever held before, and in exchange for getting married there, the newly-weds did some volunteering at one of the venue's acoustic nights which included glass collecting and ticket selling.

To top it off they had a fantastic photographer, Brian Cannon, who has photographed a number of well-known musicians in the past including Oasis and The Verve.

Rebecca and Tim then jetted off to Berlin for four nights to celebrate their honeymoon and watched the first band they went to see together when they had just met!

Congratulations and all the best!

Keep up to date with our company news by following us on [Twitter \(@wecgroupLtd\)](#) or [Facebook \(fb.com/wecgroupLtd\)](#)

Meet Maisy and Daisy!

There's more baby talk in the air at WEC Group...



Maisy Jane Currie

Danny Newton from our laser division and his girlfriend Leah welcomed their new arrival, Daisy Ann, into the world on November 4th weighing a healthy 8lb 6oz.

John Currie also from Laser and partner Michelle had their baby girl, Maisy Jane, two weeks early on December 7th weighing 6lb 8.5oz.

Congratulations to the proud mums and dads!



Daisy Ann Newton

We Raised £1069 for Kevin Burnett's Headstone & North West Blood Bikes!

A big thank you to everyone who donated and bought a raffle ticket – we managed to raise a fantastic £712.79!



Also a big thank you to Steve Hartley who has kindly donated an extra 50% of the total, taking the amount raised to £1069.

Among the fantastic prizes up for grabs was an Apollo Hybrid Bike which was won by Paul Turner, pink champagne won by Tom Elliot and a bottle of champagne won by Joe McAlary.

Your generosity has helped Sylvia and her family raise money for Kevin's headstone after he tragically passed away in September at just 11 years old. The money will also help North West Blood Bikes who provide a vital out of hours transportation service for blood between hospitals.

Welder of the Year 2015!

Congratulations to our fourth-year apprentice, Josh Wickers who won our Welder of the Year 2015 award and £100.



Josh was nominated nine times in 2015, which is more than any other welder in the company, and he produced some outstanding work.

Well done Josh!

YOUR NEWS... ...YOUR VIEWS

This is your newsletter and we want to know your stories. Send us your big news whether it's a birth, an engagement

or a marriage, a sporting success or just something you want to shout about. Email stories to newsletter@wecl.co.uk

Mark hits the road running!

5750's Mark Hannah had a busy year of running in 2015, raising a total of £806.25 for different charities.



He ran the Liverpool Spring 10k in 1hr 11mins for Roy Castle Lunch Cancer in memory of his father, Harry and raised £406.25.

He also took part in the gruelling Great North Run half marathon finishing in 2hr 56min for the Scout Association

and raised a further £400. Well done Mark!

Onwards and upwards for Andrew!

2015 proved to be the year to remember for second year CNC Machining apprentice Andrew Gardiner.



33-year-old Andrew gained his fourth Kyu purple belt in Genjitsu, a unique and multi-style martial art, after passing two intense gradings following months of preparation. Taught at a specialist club in Darwen, his purple belt has improved his overall speed, accuracy and agility.

He also completed his first year BTEC with full distinctions across the board as well as tying the knot with his wife Katie in August!

Love is in the air!

Sherburn Metalwork's General Manager, Bryan Bentley has plucked up the courage to propose to his fiancée Amy Bryans.



Bryan popped the question in Vienna, Austria and they are planning to hold the big day in 2017.

Wishing you both the best for the future from all at WEC!

The last man standing!



Congratulations go to Colin Steele who has won £1,920 in the laser division's latest "Last Man Standing" competition.

He scooped the jackpot thanks to Manchester City's defeat over Swansea on 12th December – despite it nearly being a draw!

Colin said, "I am putting my winnings towards my daughter's wedding in 2017."

Gareth Taylor, Assistant General Manager for the Laser Division, has been running the Last Man Standing competition in Laser for the past two seasons.

Blanket Appeal for Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary!

Bleakholt Animal Rescue Sanctuary is appealing for old blankets, towels and sheets to use for bedding during the cold winter months.

Vivien Simmons adopted her rescue dogs from the sanctuary last year and Archie, one of her adopted canines recently passed the Kennel Club bronze medal in good behaviour – something which is great for a rescue dog with a no doubt difficult past!

Archie is going on to try and achieve the Kennel Club Silver medal which is a lot more difficult, so Vivien now has her work cut out with him.

If you happen to have anything that would be useful to the sanctuary, please drop your items off at the Junction Street reception and Vivien will be happy to take them for you.



Vivien Simmons with her pooches - Archie and Ollie

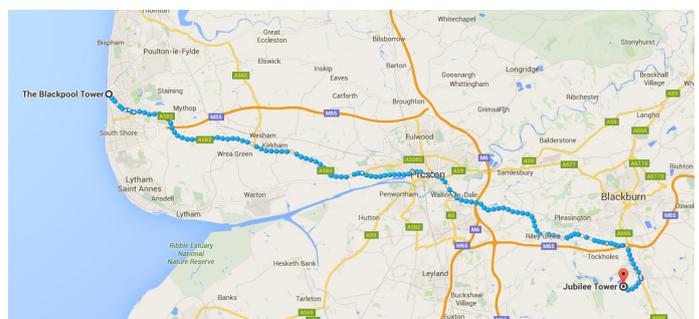
Support Paul in his two tower trek!

Welder and fabricator Paul Thompson will be taking part in a sponsored walk from Blackpool Tower to Darwen Tower on the 2nd of July, in support of East Lancashire Hospice.

In memory of his late friend, David Taylor, who spent his final days in the Hospice, Paul is taking part in the tough 30 mile walk which is predicted to take well over ten hours.

Paul has a target of £500 and would be grateful of your support.

If you would like to sponsor Paul and help him to reach his target, please visit his Just Giving page: www.justgiving.com/Paul-Thompson.



No mean feat: 10 hour trek over 30 miles from tower to tower!

**YOUR NEWS...
...YOUR VIEWS**

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or a marriage, a sporting success or just something you want to shout about. Email stories to newsletter@wecl.co.uk

GETTING TO KNOW...

MIKE ALLISON CCTV Sales Manager

When you were a child what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always saw myself as being in the police force; I love police documentaries on television and have a real interest in crime investigations.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

With 3 children, spare time is not something I get a lot of....however I do enjoy live music, going to the pub, Cycling, Walking, and watching Blackpool FC.

Who is your favourite singer?

James Dean Bradfield, lead singer and guitarist with in my opinion the greatest band on the planet.... Manic Street Preachers. I'm a big fan of all types of music really, but in particular heavy metal & rock music, the current album from Slipknot is playing in my car at present....

What is your favourite film?

I'm a big Bond fan, so it would probably be one of those; I'm not a massive film buff but enjoy films like the Oceans trilogy.



Mike Allison, CCTV Sales Manager

What makes you smile?

Most things really, I love a good laugh, always try and see the bright side of everything!

What's your favourite holiday getaway?

I like Greece, or just heading up to the lakes for a few days. I am going to Singapore in August 2016 so that will top the lot I'm sure.

Who is the person you admire the most?

At this point you say Steve Hartley right??

If you could have a superpower what would it be?

I do actually have a superpower... just don't use it that often!

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

The grass isn't always greener on the other side !

If you could meet someone living or dead, who would it be?

I'd like to have a good long chat with John Lennon (dead) for someone alive I'd like to have a beer with Chris Evans and talk about his antics, music and life so far...

What's your favourite food?

A good steak, or Italian food, I do really enjoy restaurant quality pizzas!

What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

Back in the mid to late 90's I used to follow bands on tour around the country, one night I slept in my car in Brixton, London after going to see a band called Faith No More at Brixton Academy, didn't get a right lot of sleep, scary place, my car had broken down!

What would you say is your greatest achievement to date?

Bringing up 3 very individual, beautiful children.....and consistently leading WEC CCTV to bigger and better things obviously....

What's the highlight of your time at WEC Group?

There are many actually, I guess one of my greatest hours was securing an order for almost 1 Million pounds to supply masts out to the Kuwait oil company, and also just being part of the roller coaster that is WEC!



In loving memory of Robert Gould

WEC Group is the proud sponsor of Langho FC's new football kit in memory of our late staff member, Robert Gould.

Rob was a highly valued member of the team and worked for us as a welder/fabricator for many years whilst helping out with the football club in his spare time.

Worn with pride by the Langho FC football team, the new shirts feature Rob's name written across the back and will be framed for the Gould family at the end of the season.

His talent and passion will never be forgotten. Rest in peace Robert.