



# Insight

magazine

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The Journal of the

**WARRINGTON** CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

*in association with*  
**VR** VALE ROYAL  
The heart of Cheshire

# Business and academia make oil refinery decontamination more environmentally friendly

A partnership between the University of Chester and a Cheshire-based business has led to the development of a formulation that will reduce the impact of the oil refinery decontamination process on the environment.

ProDecon Ltd, which is based in Nantwich, specialises in oil refinery decontamination and chemical cleaning. It has engaged with the Eco-Innovation Cheshire and Warrington project to team up with the University of Chester's Department of Chemical Engineering to develop and optimise a formulation to decontaminate refinery and petrochemical equipment. This will reduce the impact of the decontamination process on the environment.

The Eco-Innovation project is part-funded by the England European Regional Development Fund and is partnered with Lancaster University.

Decontamination of refinery and petrochemical equipment is an essential process to ensure the safety of the personnel involved in the maintenance work and significantly reduce the shutdown time. ProDecon has developed a process that will decontaminate equipment by using eco-friendly chemistry that produces very little waste.

Mark McSorley, Managing Director at ProDecon, said: "Scheduled plant shutdowns are extremely resource intensive events, in which time is definitely money. Our highly engineered cleaning technology is able to reduce time, energy and waste and therefore carbon emissions. This is clearly very attractive to our customers."

The formulation is being developed in the University's laboratory, utilising the facilities and expertise of both the University and ProDecon. A series of carefully planned experiments has optimised the formulation, which is now being tested in real conditions at a pilot unit located at Thornton Science Park.

MRes research student, Georgios Balia, has been carrying out the work at the University of Chester's Thornton Science Park. "I have to be a generalist in this job," he explains, "since I need to work in the lab one day, on the pilot plant the next and on a real refinery the next."

He added, "It is very exciting

for me to be working closely with a Cheshire based company to develop new world leading products to help the environment."

If you would like to find out more about the University of Chester Eco-Innovation scheme then please visit: [www.chester.ac.uk/eco-innovation](http://www.chester.ac.uk/eco-innovation)



Left to right: Henk Ketting, Consultant, Ketting Consult; Mark McSorley, Managing Director, Prodecon Ltd; Georgios Balia, MRes student, University of Chester; Alan Kidd, Chairman, Prodecon Ltd.

## Videography Services at Blue Whale Media

Blue Whale Media is a professional digital marketing agency; they have a talented Video Production team who understand that motion can add sparkle to any website. They use professional videos to showcase customers, services and products.

At Blue Whale Media, the videography team can create all kinds of videography:

- Corporate videos
- Explainer videos
- Promotional videos
- Educational videos
- Drone footage
- Question and answer videos
- Product showcasing
- Training videos

### • Event videos

The Video Production team at Blue Whale Media Ltd believes in a multi-step and detail-oriented process is the best way to produce the most exceptional quality of work.

In addition to this, the social media and marketing teams collaborate during post-production to help to ensure that videos can be seen by the right people at the right time.

The videography team at Blue Whale Media are equipped with the best gear to create professional videos for many companies. The qualified cameramen can capture a diverse range of shots with Sony's advanced PKW 4K camera and Go Pro's Hero 5. The team also has staff who are qualified drone pilots, which means they're able to capture stunning vistas and shots from any angle!

The Blue Whale Media team pride themselves on creating and editing footage into a polished final product that companies will be proud to showcase. By using creative and out of the box solutions for a variety of different circumstances. The exceptional videography team are fantastic problem solvers and can develop the best content for your company site.

Blue Whale Media's video production team visited the Body Project Gym in Warrington and created a video for their website, as well as featuring in the header of the website. Body Project Gym asked the Blue Whale Media team to create a stimulating video showcasing the gym, the staff and what they do. The scenes of the class encompass entirely what the gym does and represents who the Body Project Gym are! Having

a video on the homepage of the website bring the company to life, now people can put a face to the name Body Project Gym.

The Body Project Gym reviewed Blue Whale Media's services as 5 out of 5 stars and said: "Great service and very attentive staff!"

The Blue Whale Media team has the skill and ability to develop the best content for your company site. They are currently offering 20% off videography services; this offer will only run till the end of April.

So, head to the Blue Whale Media website today to find out how they can help you with video production. <https://www.bluewhalemedia.co.uk/video-production/>

Or call the Blue Whale Media team on 01925 552050

# From the Chief Executive

Colin Daniels



## UK economy needs a kick start

The UK economy needs a kick-start according to the British Chambers of Commerce which is in the grip of "prolonged stagnation"

"Listless" manufacturers have

suffered falling export business rather than rising order books for two quarters in a row. The first time that has happened for a decade according to the BCC.

Adam Marshall, the BCC'S director general said the end of deadlock at Westminster showed spur politicians to "tackle the prolonged stagnation that's affecting so much of the UK economy".

## Retail Sales Rise for First Time Since July

Shoppers returned to the high street with enthusiasm in January as a combination of strong jobs market, rising pay and surging confidence after the Tories general election

victory gave retailers a rare boost.

A miserable Christmas for shopkeepers turned into a buoyant start to 2020 as retail sales excluding

motor fuel surged 1.6pc on the month, making the first growth since July 2019, the Office for National Statistics said.

Separately the Confederation of British Industry said that manufacturers are becoming more upbeat with order books now at their best for 6 months.

# Local bus services changed as passenger numbers drop

LOCAL bus services have changed with reduced timetables due to a significant drop in passenger numbers as a result of the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic.

The advice to work from home and to socially distance ourselves, on top of the closure of schools and colleges, has led to a sharp downturn in bus passengers, says

Managing Director Ben Wakerley.

Despite this Mr Wakerley, can't praise his employees enough.

He said: "Our team have shown great flexibility and commitment to the town throughout the pandemic. I am extremely grateful to all of them, because the whole team are making personal sacrifices to keep buses running and to connect key workers to employment centres.

"Customers can help Drivers by using our app, Touch & Go, Midas or contactless bank card payments instead of cash wherever possible, but cash is still accepted."

Warrington's Own Buses have implemented a new timetable. The revised timetables keep buses running on most routes, but they are less frequent than previously, reflecting passenger demand and to stop empty buses running around town unnecessarily.

The new timetables will be posted on the website: [warringtonsownbuses.co.uk](http://warringtonsownbuses.co.uk).

The bus company has had many enquiries about period tickets, such as Touch & Go, and are investigating the options, with a view to making an announcement next week.

The company has been praised for relaxing rules to allow older people to travel free at any time of the day.

## Keeping Uk connected

Loganair, Scotland's Airline, has reacted to the closure of Flybe by announcing plans to safeguard the UK regional connectivity by taking up 18 routes formerly flown by Flybe.

The 18 routes - from existing Loganair base airports at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Newcastle - will be launched progressively over the next three months.

These 19 weekly flights to Isle of Man from Liverpool John Lennon Airport .



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Colin Daniels, Chief Executive

# University strengthens team with new Executive Dean of Business and Management

**The University of Chester is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Kurt Allman as its new Executive Dean of its Faculty of Business and Management.**

Professor Allman is a highly experienced academic, with particular expertise in innovation, enterprise, and knowledge exchange. He joins the Faculty from Keele Business School, where, for the past five years, he was its Director and led its recent industrial collaboration focus.

Throughout his career he has worked with well over 1,000 enterprises, secured almost £18 million of research and grant funding, and supported nearly £20 million of local growth, particularly from smaller technology enterprises. His teaching has also won several accolades, particularly for placing students alongside entrepreneurs. Professor Allman will take up the role this summer.

Professor Eunice Simmons, the University of Chester's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, said:

"Kurt has significant experience of placing a business school at the heart of its enterprise community. Chester Business School enjoys a significant position in the region educating graduates that can make an immediate impact on the businesses they join, developing successful careers in their chosen professions and making a valuable contribution as University of Chester alumni."

Professor Allman said: "I'm delighted to be joining the University of Chester and leading the Faculty of Business and Management. Chester Business School has a great reputation for student satisfaction, employment outcomes, and a pioneering and growing portfolio of work based education. Its research clearly benefits both business and society in terms of dealing with the challenges they face. The Faculty is therefore clearly purposed to support the aspiration of the region for knowledge and innovation powered growth that is inclusive and sustainable. Over the next few years the Faculty will

strengthen its industrial focus and connectivity, whilst developing an increasing emphasis on sustainability, digital technology and innovation, and community engagement."

Professor Allman, prior to working at Keele University, held the role of Associate Dean for Enterprise, Engagement and Employability at Salford Business School. During that time, the School doubled

its business interactions. This built upon a significant tenure at Manchester Business School, where he was responsible for a number of major grants that supported student and regional enterprise initiatives. Kurt has also worked in Italy on the EU's Framework V and VI Information Society programmes, aimed at improving digital connectivity throughout Europe.



## Two student teams reach national finals of The Pitch 2020

The University of Chester's Business School is enjoying double success with two teams in the final 10 of a prestigious national marketing competition.

Five students from the University's Marketing degree programmes will compete in The Pitch, organised by the CIM (Chartered Institute of Marketing) later this month.

The two teams impressed the judges with their bright new ideas to help supermarket giant Lidl on its plastic reduction journey. They will compete against eight other universities in the finals at CIM Moor Hall, Cookham on Friday, February 28.

The Pitch is a nationwide competition designed to recognise and reward the marketing talent of the future. The top three teams will be invited to attend CIM's Marketing Excellence Awards 2020 later this year, sponsored by Lidl.

Entrants had to come up with a marketing communications plan to publicise Lidl's progress in reducing its plastic packaging ahead of its target in 2022, whilst also encouraging customers to reduce their own plastic use.

Eugene Pam and Dipanjan Paul, in the first Chester team, devised two innovative campaigns; Marine Giants and Go Greener. After extensive research into the Lidl brand they developed their first

idea, the Marine Giants campaign, to help garner public support by commissioning artists to create giant sculptures of a whale, turtle, coral and a fish in four major city stores from recyclable plastic donated by the public.

Dipanjan, studying Marketing Management and Business Management and from Gariahat in India, said: "The Marine Giants campaign would be a statue made from deposited plastic. It can be likened to the 'Knife Angel' that was displayed in Chester, or the Fish Sculpture, Moby, which was recently put up at our Parkgate Road Campus, where students and staff can leave plastic bottles inside the frame. This would primarily seek to drive engagement, create awareness and initiate word-of-mouth. This campaign would go on for the first year.

"The Go Greener campaign is a screen that will be placed outside major Lidl stores that will show a colourless globe. As Lidl gradually fulfils its sustainability goals, the globe will slowly gain colour. It will help customers visualise Lidl's progress and might encourage them to be 'a part of the process'.

"The judges' feedback echoed that they generally loved the idea which is fantastic. I am really excited for February 28 and want to make myself and the University proud. I am sure it will be a great learning and networking experience for me."

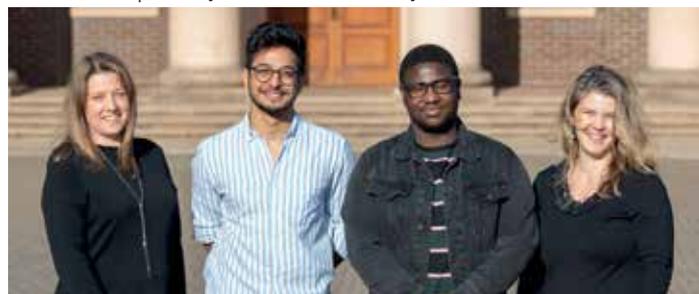
Eugene, studying Marketing Management and from Manchester, added: "I'm really proud to have reached the final of The Pitch and I'm looking forward to going to the competition and presenting the idea of the Marine Giants, as it's something I've worked hard on and am also passionate about. This is going to be an amazing experience and something that will help build my future career."

L2M are the second Chester team with students Megan Clelland, Megan Davies and Lucy Sherratt. Research into other sustainability focussed marketing campaigns and the Lidl brand led them to focus on a social media campaign that will showcase an emotionally appealing film. This will feature a young child, to really engage with Lidl's target audience of young families. As well as the film, there will be publicity stunts both

in store and online, with the aim of going viral, as well as regular updates using the store's existing magazine.

Megan Davies, studying Business Management and Marketing Management, said: "It is a big mix of emotions! We were not really expecting to hear anything, so are really pleased to have been chosen. We are excited to be going to the finals."

Jane Martin, Programme Leader for BA Hons Marketing Management, said: "We are so proud and excited that not one but two of our student teams have been selected for the final of the CIM Pitch. They have worked really hard on this project and have come up with some fantastic ideas. We are looking forward to watching them present their Pitch at Moor Hall and wish them the very best of luck."



Left to right: Jane Martin, Marketing Management Programme Leader; Dipanjan Paul; Eugene Pam; and Julie Martin, Senior Marketing Lecturer.

# Student research shines at national tourism convention

A pair of students from the University of Chester Business School impressed industry professionals at a national tourism conference with a presentation on the influence of the digital tourist.

The presentation by Monica Escobedo and Paris Taylor Flint was voted the most highly rated of all the talks on the day and they have since delivered it to students across the Business School. It highlights the changing habits of tourists when it comes to choosing their dream destinations and the importance of social media, especially Instagram and YouTube, to the tourism industry.

The future tourism professionals, both studying International Tourism and Management with

Spanish, gained 100% positive feedback from the delegates of the TMI (Tourism Management Institute) Convention when they explained the importance of Keeping up with the Followers in their presentation about travelling, FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) and social media.

The International Tourism degree at Chester is accredited by the TMI, the UK's national professional body for destination management. The University co-hosted the conference for the Institute with Marketing Cheshire.

Monica, from Los Angeles, explained that both students are taking every opportunity they can to gain experience and to network during their time at Chester. She said: "Being able to get

involved in the conference was an opportunity that we wouldn't have had without the support of our lecturers and the University and it is really helping us with our future in tourism."

Paris, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire, added: "Speaking at and helping organise the conference has enabled us to get involved with industry professionals and has given us an insight into event planning and tourism management. We were pleased to get such positive feedback."

Martin Metcalfe, the Programme Leader for International Tourism Management said "We are so impressed with the professionalism of Monica and Paris and that they are taking every opportunity

to enhance their experience from working on the Chester Heritage Festival to being student experience representatives. We wish them every success with the rest of their studies and beyond."

Both students have clocked up enough volunteering hours to gain their Chester Difference Excellence Award, which showcases all the experience and employability skills they have achieved during their studies. Monica enters the third year of her course next year and is doing a one year internship for Marketing Cheshire to complement her studies. Paris begins her internship in Spain with a translation company. Both are looking ahead to graduate roles in the industry.



Monica Escobedo and Paris Taylor Flint.

## Blue Whale Media works with local mobile phone company

Blue Whale Media is especially proud of its website design service and the recent work created for Everything Mobile. Everything Mobile in Warrington approached Blue Whale Media to create a stunning new website and an engaging new logo.

Everything Mobile are experts in mobile phone procurement and recycling in Warrington. They work with insurance companies, mobile phone retailers and network operators to source brand new, used and refurbished handsets and accessories/parts.

Our graphic design team developed a new and unique logo that matches the brand colours

of Everything Mobile for ultimate brand awareness. The colours of the logo were then matched throughout the pages on the website. It is essential to pick the right colours for a website; it is about creating a memorable brand than just aesthetics.

The website design team at Blue Whale Media created a whole new website for the client; they ensured that no dark colours were featuring on the website. Everything mobile's website has an up to date and modern look with a sleek quality to show the professionalism of the company. The website design team has also enhanced interactivity with animated elements as website

users scroll up and down the website. An easy-to-use contact form has also been implemented onto the website, so that any visitor wishing to enquire about the company's services could do so, quickly and efficiently. The Blue Whale Media team can create a responsive web design that improves the user experience, which will translate into a positive perception of a brand or business.

The content writing team also developed content for Everything Mobile to fill the site pages. The content has been written and is optimised for search engine optimisation (SEO); this is so that the website will appear in the search results and links with

relevant social media platforms. They also developed compliant and professionally written content that informs website viewers of their services. They worked closely with the SEO team to ensure that each page was correctly and efficiently implemented with keywords and phrases. Having clear and keyword-rich content on a website should deliver the company message, target the audience, engage them and persuade them to take action.

If you need an updated online presence for your business, contact the Blue Whale Media team on 01925 552050. We can help with your website, hosting, branding, marketing and videography.

# IT provider joins forces with National Nuclear Laboratory

**IT service provider, Yellowbus Solutions Ltd, based at Warrington's Birchwood Park has joined forces with the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) to improve how network and IT services are delivered to end users within the nuclear industry.**

Birchwood Park business park is home to some 49 companies within the nuclear, engineering and science industries and Yellowbus boasts some of the best IT service offerings within the nuclear and engineering sectors.

The partnership between the National Nuclear Laboratory and Yellowbus Solutions will continue with a view to seeing continued improvement to uptime and efficiency in support of NNL's road to innovation in its IT journey.

NNL was formally established in 2008 and brought together the UK's nuclear research and development capability into one organisation. Its workforce represents a combined 10,000 hours of expertise in nuclear

science and technology.

As part of the ongoing project, NNL is looking to make improvements across all areas of the business to support its overall objectives, with IT/Tech being an area for focus.

Mike Douglass, commercial director at Yellowbus, said: "We want to change the way the nuclear sector views IT and Technology. Tech should be looked at as a business advantage and used to its full potential.

"When business objectives are aligned with the correct IT strategy, then business growth and innovation will improve. We have worked with NNL for many years and have similar goals on innovation within nuclear.

"We have had the opportunity to support NNL's mission with their IT improvement projects, and with both businesses now being located within the Science corridor at Birchwood Park, we look forward to a long and successful

partnership with them.'

Nichola Newton, head of IT at NNL, said: "Yellowbus has been a fundamental partner in supporting the National Nuclear Laboratory IT department's commitment to improve network coverage and resilience across all of its sites. Yellowbus continues to understand NNL IT needs and collaborates effectively to ensure these are achieved."

Martin O'Rourke, commercial

director at Birchwood Park, said: "We love to see collaborations forming between our occupiers on the park, and believe it's what sets Birchwood Park ahead of the rest. With a burgeoning community of businesses based within the nuclear, engineering and wider science industries, there are definitely exciting things happening here. We look forward to seeing the successes for both Yellowbus Solutions and NNL as a result of this partnership."



## Business couple receive their OBEs together

Warrington entrepreneurs and business owners Wendy and David Maisey, who were both awarded the OBE in the New Year Honours, have received their awards.

The investitures were carried out by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace and were in recognition of their contribution to international trade and the British economy

with more than 20 years of exporting through their company ICC Solutions Ltd.

Wendy Maisey said "I grew up on a council estate and I am the first person in my family to receive an honour. To be recognised for our commitment and services to the UK economy and international trade is so humbling, to be at the Palace with my family means the world to me.

"We work hard to create employment and opportunities for local people in Warrington, and we're looking forward to a celebration that we have planned at the end of the month.

David Maisey added: "It was a surreal day. We've been to the Palace before as ICC Solutions has been granted four Queens Awards for Enterprise previously for international trade and innovation, but this was very personal and special.

"To also have our longest serving member of staff with us Paula Turner, who has been with ICC Solutions for over 23 years, was the icing on the cake. We feel it's very much a team effort'.

ICC Solutions employs around 45 highly skilled people at St James Business Centre in Warrington. It has also successfully developed an exporting skill, which helps young people achieve their skill section of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award through international trade education – and helping to inspire future British exporters.

The couple support many local charities including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Warrington Youth Club.



# Awards for people who did so much for WDP over the last year

**PEOPLE and organisations who made outstanding contributions to the work of Warrington Disability Partnership over the last year have been rewarded.**

The 25th "Appreciation of Efforts" awards took place at the charity's annual meeting and volunteers, members of staff and others were among those receiving accolades.

The event celebrated a busy and very successful year which made a positive impact on the lives of disabled people.

Awards were open to the public to nominate individuals and organisations who they felt had gone the extra mile to improve the lives of local disabled people.

Those receiving awards were: Ruben and Elena, the youngest-ever award winners. This inspirational brother and sister raised thousands of pounds for Warrington Hospital, alongside being National Young Ambassadors for ADHD.

Steve Park and David Boyer, executive directors at Warrington Borough Council for encouraging

the involvement of disabled people in the design stages of buildings and developments.

United Utilities for their support for disabled people and ensuring that accessible facilities are available for staff and visitors at all of their sites.

Birchwood Shopping Centre who have worked with WDP for over 27 years and have recently become host to the latest Mobility and Independent Living store and the extended Birchwood Shopmobility Scheme.

The Duck Pond Social Group for their extensive support given to WDP throughout the past year, which included their Five Years Face Your Fears Challenges: Creepy Crawly Day, Sexy Bingo, Santa's Grotto, Disability Awareness Day and the Three Peaks Challenge.

Sarah Mathews, marathon runner extraordinaire. She completed 52 marathons in just 52 weeks, raising awareness of unseen disabilities and raising funds for WDP.

Pat McLaren, director of

partnerships at Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for her ongoing support to WDP including the development of the Mobility and Independent Living Service in Warrington Hospital, Disability Awareness Day and personally supporting WDP's fundraising events.

Beth Trainer, a carer and a charity champion who supports a number of local charities and is Princess Elsa, or maybe Princess Jasmine from the Santa's Grotto and Disability Awareness Day.

Westy Silver Service and Friendship Group for providing a variety of services in the local community which help reduce isolation, offers both social and educational activities for those who need it.

The Staff and Volunteer Awards also took place at the annual meeting. Nominations were taken for the various awards categories from staff and volunteers for people who made outstanding contributions to the work of the charity last year.

The successful nominees were

Volunteer of the Year Winner – Ellie Thompson; Volunteer of the Year Certificates – Ben Gemmell and Janet and Debbie from the OWCH Pain Management team

Best Newcomer (Volunteer) Winner – Sue McMillan

Best Newcomer (Volunteer) Certificates – Leigh Walmsley and Louise Trivass

Best Newcomer (Employee) Winners – Julie Darbyshire and Hilary Evans

Best Newcomer (Employee) Certificates – Debbie Gorvett

Employee of the Year Winner – Veronica Hudson

Employee of the Year Certificates – Sam Calderbank and Jane Pendlebury

Personal Development Winners – Paddy Toole and Laura Atkinson

Team of the Year Winners – Santa's Grotto Volunteers

Team of the Year Certificates – The Independent Living Team



## £250 million deal secures 1,000 local jobs

WOOD Nuclear, which employs 1,000 people in Warrington, has been acquired by the Jacobs Engineering Group, an American-owned international engineering group, for £250 million.

Jacobs already employ about 250 people in Warrington and another 850 in Manchester working on nationally important projects for Sellafeld Ltd, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, the Environment Agency, Highways England, Network Rail, and other clients in the North West.

Wood also employ 250 at Knutsford and the acquisition means Jacobs will have a UK workforce of around 11,000 with plans to recruit up to 400 more in highly-skilled jobs over the next year.

The combined team in the North West supports projects and programmes across nuclear

and defence, transportation, environmental, buildings and other sectors.

Jacobs' plans also include investment in the UK's largest independent nuclear research, development and testing facilities at Birchwood Park, Warrington, to provide capability such as remote handling, cyber, inspection technology capabilities and test rig facilities.

The acquisition expands Jacobs' UK employee base to nearly 11,000 and increases access to specialist talent – particularly in locations across Cheshire and Cumbria, as well as expanded reach into Europe, Japan, Middle East, South Africa and the US.

Clive White, Jacobs' critical mission solutions international senior vice president, said: "We're delighted to bring the significant expertise of the Warrington and

Manchester Wood Nuclear team into Jacobs

"The existing knowledge of the team, combined with the new investment in Birchwood Park, will secure the area's status as a world-class nuclear hub and

opportunities for local talent. We look forward to making the integration process as smooth as possible for our teams and are excited to develop together as a business that is even better equipped to solve the problems of the future."



# College embraces Skills Week

**WARRINGTON & Vale Royal College** come together to mark their annual Skills Week celebrating the skills students develop as part of their vocational study programmes and an opportunity to showcase their skills.

Throughout the week students from across the college participated in competitions and projects, some of which were in collaboration with or sponsored by some of the colleges employer partners. Many employers were keen to get involved with #SkillsWeek as they saw it as a great opportunity to work with young people and identify prospective candidates for future roles within their businesses.

Within the construction, motor vehicle and engineering department's students spent their day on Wednesday 5th February competing against each other to win top prizes donated by employers such as Klein Tools, Ansel Lighting, Sockitz, Ideal Industries, CEW and MKM

builder's merchants.

Winner of the plumbing competition, Charlie Edwards, who was awarded with plumbing essentials kit as his prize said "This competition was fun way to learn a new set of pipe bends that we hadn't done before, because design contained 90° and 45° pipe bends. We also had to do a lot of soldering throughout the competition, which is something I will have to do a lot of as fully qualified plumber."

Prize winner in the electrical installation competition, Rio Brown was thrilled to receive a £165 Megatester as his prize on the day, saying "This was great prize because even though they're expensive to buy, it's something I'll use most days as an electrician."

Andrew Atkin, Senior Curriculum Manager at the college said "Skills Week is a fantastic opportunity for our students to showcase their skills to the employers that attend during the week. Many students have secured apprenticeship roles on the back of past Skills

Competitions, we are hoping for more of the same this year."

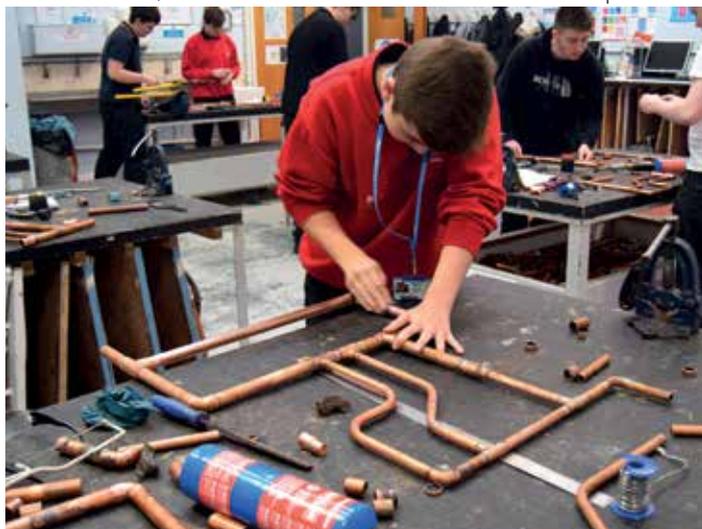
Skills Week wasn't just for the construction trades students though, students from across the college participated in the Skills Week initiative with students on our Health & Social Care and Graphic Design course in Winsford joining forces to produce health promotion campaigns on behalf of local leisure centre group – Brio Leisure. Three representatives from Brio Leisure visited the college to judge the entries produced by students covering topics such as drinking, hand washing, OCD, sugar, breast cancer, stigma's, smoking and energy drinks. The team from Brio Leisure described the work produced by the students as "very professional and moving".

Overall winners – Bethan and Laura produced a campaign on breast cancer awareness and were awarded a 7 day pass to the Brio Leisure sites and a goody bag as their prize.

Other exciting projects included

an 'Under the Sea' themed make-up competition within the beauty department, a bridal hair competition within the hair department, fastest tyre changing competition in motor vehicle and the colleges media students were invited to showcase their skills by capturing some of the activities as they happened throughout the week. So keep an eye out for their edited films appearing on the colleges social media channels.

Assistant Principal, Cath Brierley said "Skills Week is fast becoming a key date in our college calendar, as students across all subjects are provided with the chance to demonstrate the skills they have learnt and developed during their time with us and apply them as part of an employer led project or competition. These opportunities not only provide them with a great experience, but can be used as examples of the skills they have developed during their studies within a real life setting when applying for university, apprenticeships or jobs upon completion of their studies."



# Students build and program robots for national contest

STACKING plastic bricks might not seem like the toughest of tasks, but when you have to build a robot to do the job it can take weeks.

Students at Warrington's Priestley College started building and programming their robots at the end of last year and finished in time to enter into the First Tech Challenge UK in Liverpool.

The competition pitted Priestley's two robots against other schools and colleges with one of their creations invited to take part in the London finals.

"This was such a popular enrichment activity we had to enter a second team," said tutor Linda Seymour.

"Obviously the robotics challenge was to test their ability to build and program a robot, but also to see how they managed to work in team."

Priestley College entered the competition to give its science, technology, engineering and maths students a chance to shine in a national competition.

Former Bridgewater High School pupil Dan Cliffe said the two teams first had to decide who did what job.

"A couple of us built and programmed the robot. Some of the other people in the team were in charge of documenting the progress we made," he said.

At the regional heat Priestley students had to partner with another robot to complete the brick-stacking challenge.

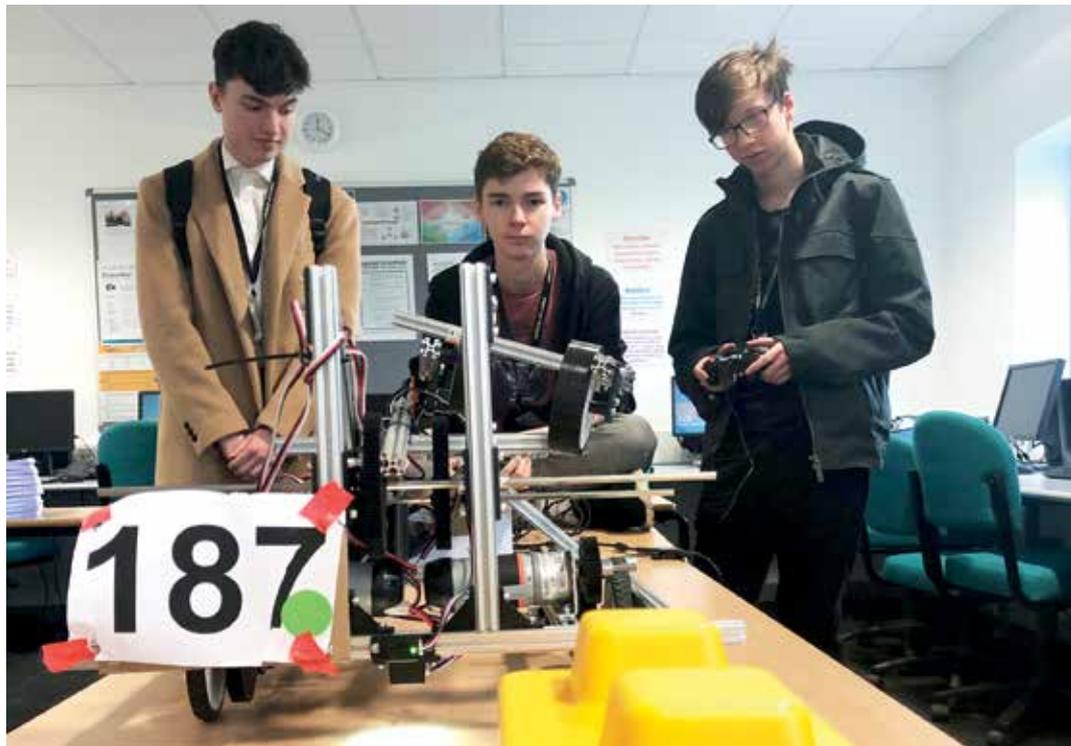
Once again it was a test of teamwork as they decided whose machine was best at delivering the bricks and which one was suited to stacking them.

"We built a really reliable robot that only had minor problems during the event," said Danilo Nerici, who previously studied at Bridgewater High School

The First Tech Challenge UK aims to join a global community of young innovators and industry mentors – building relationships

beyond the playing field.

Priestley's Jakub Bugajski, who studies computer science, German, maths and electronics, said: "It was great to take part in something like this, especially as most of us want to go into working with computers in some way after college."



## Student showcases energy research on international stage

A PhD student at the University of Chester has presented her research on how to use grass cuttings for clean energy at an international conference.

Mubashra Latif, who is originally from Pakistan, is studying for a PhD exploring how to generate clean heat and power through using biomass. In particular, through carefully planned experiments, she has developed a strategy to utilise garden and municipal grass clippings as a potential biomass feedstock for heat and power generation.

Mubashra is studying for her PhD through the Eco-Innovation Cheshire and Warrington project, which is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and is partnered with Lancaster University. Mubashra is also being supported by local biomass CHP manufacturing company Biogen Systems. Her research is now being tested in real conditions, using one of the commercial biomass Combined Heat and Power (CHP) units that are sold by Biogen Systems.

Mubashra Latif, who is based at Thornton Science Park, presented her research at the 13th Annual International Biomass Conference

and Expo 2020, held in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Conference attracted people working in all the different sectors of the biomass industry, including biomass fuel and technology providers, municipal leaders, project developers, investors, scientists, academics and policy makers. It served as a global platform to create new business opportunities, as well as to connect experts to discuss novel solutions to the challenges faced by the biomass industry, which is still relatively in its infancy.

Mubashra presented her research work in the session 'Advanced Biofuels and Biobased Chemicals'. She said: "Attending this Conference gave me the opportunity to have one-to-one meetings with different biomass industry experts and exhibitors, who were most informative. It was great to learn about so many new technologies in such a short interval of time. I am very thankful to the University of Chester, which has always been a pillar of support for me and sponsored my travel to this conference for the benefit of my PhD development and future career growth."



# England call-up for Priestley captain Moore

A YOUNG woman from Warrington has been called up to the England Students Rugby League squad.

Megan Moore, captain of Priestley College's girls' rugby academy, will train with other elite players whose goal is to be selected for the team who play Great British Teachers on 18th March.

"I was a bit shocked when I heard I'd got in, but I recognised some of the other girls at the trials so knew I wasn't out of my depth," said the 18-year-old.

"My goal is to play for the England national team and this takes me a step closer to that."

Moore, who also plays for Warrington Wolves women's team, found out about the call-up in January, but had to keep the news secret until the squad was officially announced two weeks later.

She secured her place after trials in Manchester, which involved an hour of drills and another of match play with nearly 100 other players. Only 24 made the cut.

It was the second England call-up for a Priestley College student in less than a month after footballer Kenny Bernal played for England U18s Schoolboys against Australia in January.

Priestley is now sponsoring Megan to help pay for her travel and kit costs.

Principal Matthew Grant said: "We're extremely proud of Megan for her achievements and passion for the sport so we are glad to be supporting her beyond college. Everyone at Priestley wishes her well in securing a place on the England team."

Moore, a former pupil at St Gregory's Roman Catholic High School, will now complete a two-year programme with the England squad.

It is an incredible achievement for the teenager from Great Sankey who only picked up a rugby ball because her primary school needed a girl in their team to

qualify for certain tournaments.

Lee Mitchell, Community Rugby League Manager with the Warrington Wolves Foundation,

coaches Moore in the Priestley rugby academy.

"Megan has supported girls who are new to the sport after joining

the academy so it is inspiring for them to see her progress in this way," he said.





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For more information about how you can work with Priestley College go to [www.priestley.ac.uk/employers](http://www.priestley.ac.uk/employers) or contact Pam Gardner (Industrial Placement Coordinator) on 01925 633591 Ext 162 or email [p.gardner@priestley.ac.uk](mailto:p.gardner@priestley.ac.uk)



# Priestley College awarded UK's first Dual Rugby League Development Academy



PRIESTLEY College's rugby programme has scored a national first after introducing a successful women's squad and becoming the UK's first ever Dual Rugby League Development Academy.

The Rugby Football League has awarded the college Dual Rugby League Development Academy accreditation thanks to the ongoing successful partnership with Warrington Wolves.

Speaking to the young players at Victoria Park, RFL player development manager Phil Jones said it was a historic moment for all those involved.

"This is a first and that can never be taken away from any of you, Priestley College or Warrington Wolves," he said.

"I'd like to congratulate Priestley because we see this as a model for how these academies should work."

Priestley set up its rugby academy three years ago and it was initially just for boys.

However, the growing number of girls taking up the sport led to enough demand for a women's team.

With the men currently unbeaten in the league and two of the Priestley women playing for Wolves, both sides of the academy are enjoying success.

Speaking at the presentation at Victoria Park, principal Matthew Grant paid tribute to the staff at Priestley, Wolves and to the Rugby League for backing the academy.

"This was about having faith in young people that they can benefit from something like this academy," he said.

"I am a great believer that you can learn from sport, so this is all about taking the new skills you have learnt and using them in whatever you do next."

In its second year, the academy's men's captain Karlton Bates went on to train with Warrington Wolves and secure an Academy Contract. While this year our top try scorer Alex Speakman has also been training with the Wolves academy.

Community rugby league manager Lee Mitchell also has high expectations for the women.

"Their programme will become more intensive next year and that's just a natural progression as the women's game at Priestley continues to thrive," he said.

Head of sport at Priestley Nigel Howells said many of the players would progress to a higher level of rugby, but that being a part of the academy prepared all of them for different futures.

"You are not just getting good rugby league, you are getting a good education and academic qualifications," he said.

"That's what we are about. It's a marriage between the two and doing things well on the pitch and off the pitch."



# Refuelling station for natural gas HGVs opens at Warrington

EUROPE'S biggest natural gas refuelling station for HGV's has opened at Warrington.

The station is at Omega South, on the M62 and is one of four operated by CNG Fuels, who plan to add another six to eight stations over the next 12 months as it expands its network of HV refuelling stations to meet growing demand.

They say demand for renewable biomethane compressed natural gas (Bio-CNG), the low-carbon and low-cost alternative to diesel for HGVs, has soared 800 per cent since 2017 and is set to more than double this year.

The new station at Warrington and another at Northampton are capable of refuelling over 1,000 HGVs a day, more than doubling the 600-a-day capacity of existing stations at Leyland, and Crewe.

CNG Fuels claims it has helped hauliers save 55,000 tonnes of CO2 since it began supplying renewable and sustainable Bio-CNG in 2017. That's expected to rise to 90,000 tonnes by the end of this year as demand increases by more than double, thanks to major brands such as John Lewis Partnership, parcel company Hermes, and Home Bargains committing to switching from diesel.

All the fuel supplied by CNG Fuels is renewable and sustainable biomethane approved under the Department for Transport's Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) scheme.



The gas is currently sourced from waste feedstocks, such as food waste, and is the most environmentally friendly and cost-effective alternative to diesel for HGVs – it cuts vehicle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by up to 85% and is 35%-40% cheaper than diesel.

The company is now securing supplies of biomethane from manure to create a fuel that will be net zero emissions on a well-to-wheel basis. It expects to begin offering carbon neutral biomethane across all sites from next year at the same price as the renewable biomethane fuel it currently supplies.

HGVs account for 4.2 per cent of UK carbon emissions, so decarbonising the sector is essential to meet the UK's goal of achieving Net Zero by 2050.

Philip Fjeld, CEO of CNG Fuels, said: "We're at a tipping point. Fleet operators are waking up to the urgency and scale of decarbonisation necessary for net-zero emissions by 2050 and we're seeing demand for our fuel increase rapidly as a result. Our customers ordered hundreds of new biomethane fuelled trucks in 2019 and that trend is only set to accelerate over the next decade.

"We're making the transition to carbon neutrality easier for

fleet operators by developing a nationwide network of public access biomethane stations on major trucking routes and at key logistics hubs."

The station in Warrington is catering to several major hauliers based in the area. It can refuel up to 800 HGVs daily and serve 12 vehicles simultaneously.

CNG Fuels is also consulting on how its network of refuelling stations can best accommodate low-carbon hydrogen and battery electric technologies for HGVs, so that it can support customers when these become commercially viable.

## Union anger as Crosfields closure is confirmed

UNILEVER has confirmed that its Warrington plant is to close before the end of the year.

The closure is being blamed on a sharp decline in demand for the Persil and Surf soap powders which are made at the Bank Quay site.

A total of 123 staff are employed on the site – known to generations of Warringtonians as "Crosfields" and the company says it will do everything it can to support them in the coming weeks and months.

The GMB union described the decision as a "hammer blow" for Warrington and said it would demand proper compensation for the workers.

It is 136 years since the works was opened by Joseph Crosfield.

A GMB spokesman said: "Unilever happily exploits its historical legacy but for its UK manufacturing workforce that is increasingly ringing hollow.

The closure decision has come swiftly after the company announced it was carrying out a review of the plant's future – sparking claims that it was not a proper review.

But the company says it can find no way to justify keeping the plant open.

In a statement Jon Strachan, vice president of supply chain for Unilever in the UK and Ireland, said: "Following the review we have, unfortunately, been unable to identify any commercially sustainable solutions for the site.

"Therefore, with regret, we are now proposing to close the factory – we know that this news will be difficult for our employees and the broader community, and we are firmly committed to supporting them in every way that we can, should the proposals go ahead.

"Unilever has a number of factories in the UK and here in the north west, so we will discuss any redeployment and reskilling opportunities for our affected employees as part of consultation.



"We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of those who were involved for their passion and their commitment to the review."

GMB and Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols have both voiced their disappointment at the outcome of the review and will continue to campaign on behalf of displaced workers.

Last year the company announced around 15 redundancies at its Warrington site after one production line closed.

# Fire control centre sold for £19.50 million



THE North West Fire Control Centre at Warrington has been purchased by private clients of Deutsche Bank for £19.50m. Dating from 2009, it was built at a cost of around £14m it is the home of the fire authorities Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumbria to jointly handle 999 emergency calls and mobilise fire fighters. Fire Control North West have a

lease running to June 2033 on the three-storey building at Lingley Green Business Park. Craig Barton, who along with Jason Winfield at Cushman and Wakefield, represented the vendor (AAIM), said: "We are delighted to conclude this disposal on behalf of our client. The process was highly competitive, as there is strong appetite for quality buildings with long-term income, to good tenants.

It is also another a reflection of the strength of Warrington, both as a destination which occupiers desire, and which investors want to secure real estate within." The purpose-built centre, which received planning consent in 2005, was one of nine across the country to the specification of the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, at the time of the Blair Labour Government.

But it was surrounded in controversy from the start, with planning consent being opposed by Great Sankey Parish Council and others on the grounds that it would be an eyesore and was too close to residential property. It was due to go live in 2009 but in fact stood empty for several years because of computer problems. It was still mothballed in 2011.

## Apprentice offers advice to those want to follow in her footsteps

AN apprentice from Warrington is encouraging others who want to take the next step in their career to sign up for an engineering, IT, safety or operations apprenticeship.

Carla Bernardino, an apprentice with Amazon, is hoping she can inspire the next wave of apprentices to apply for positions at Amazon centre across the UK. It's National Careers Week and Carla offers some words of wisdom for anyone thinking about applying for an apprenticeship.

She said: "Apprenticeship programmes like the one I'm on are fantastic for anyone who wants to continue learning or training but doesn't want to go to university or college. The Amazon apprenticeship programme is perfect for anyone aged 18-plus who either has GCSEs or A-levels or good life experience. You'll have the opportunity to get paid while you learn and the hands-on experience is second to none."

Once Amazon apprentices are fully qualified, they will have the opportunity to work in Amazon buildings across the UK including fulfilment centres, delivery stations, sortation centres and

corporate offices.

Here are Carla's top tips for wannabe apprentices to find the perfect role.

- 1) Do your homework. It sounds obvious but research the type of apprenticeship you want.
- 2) Pick a company that matches your ambitions
- 3) Throw yourself into it. When it's time to leave the classroom and start the practical side of the apprenticeship, make friends, ask questions and really become part of the team.
- 4) Watch and learn. You really can learn a lot by paying attention to everyone around you. I feel that the way some of my mentors conduct themselves teaches me so much and sets a standard for how I want to work myself.
- 5) Organise your time. The combination of learning in a classroom and working in a real-life setting is brilliant, but it does require some forward planning. Remember that everything you do on an apprenticeship is important and you must learn quickly how to balance your time so you're putting the time into the theory as well as the practice.





# Priestley's footballers win division

## with unbeaten run

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PRIESTLEY College football team has proven that practice makes perfect after they won their division without losing a match.

The College won six of nine matches, drawing the other three, to comfortably take the second division in the North West Colleges Western Conference.

Coach Josh Greaves said the results were reward for the players' dedication to training overseen by himself and Priestley's football academy manager Dan Jordan.

"The lads have taken training very seriously this season and really developed as players," he said.

"Myself and Dan have enjoyed working with them as they are so coachable and absorb all the information we have been giving them like sponges.

"It is no coincidence they have been unbeaten this season, as the work they have put in on the training ground has been nothing short of exceptional."

Priestley's second team scored 31

goals and conceded just 10.

Their standout results were a 6-2 win away to St John Rigby and a 3-1 victory at Winstanley.

They finished four clear at the top, ahead of Sir John Deane's, with a game in hand that will now not be played.

Captain Mo Essa said: "We have improved a lot as a team and we are more than just teammates, we are like brothers."

Josh said the team's success was a good sign for the college's football programme next year.

"They have dominated possession of the football in every game this season and the philosophy that myself and Dan both share is clearly being displayed on the pitch," he said.

"The fact that most of them are first year students means we are very excited about next season and the future of football at Priestley."

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# College footballers show their class with county places

**FOOTBALLERS** from Priestley College make up a third of the county first team squad after showing impressive form all season.

Oliver Quarmby, Jamie Benson, Kenny Bernal, Josh Sigsworth and Jack Smith secured their spots after trials and have gone on to impress in matches for Cheshire.

Priestley's first team captain Quarmby said: "To have five players from Priestley in the first team squad is a massive achievement.

"For me personally, it is a huge thing because we are now playing just before academy or pro team level."

Priestley's best players attended Cheshire trials together and their familiarity helped them impress the coaches.

"We ripped it up to be honest," said Oliver, a former pupil at Lymm High. "We all communicated really well and played how we would at college."

Quarmby paid tribute to Priestley's second years who helped welcome him and other Year One players into the squad,



which regularly saw 30 students training last year.

Now, as one of the older players, he does the same ensuring that success breeds success.

In 2019, Priestley won the Cheshire Cup and reached the finals of the

national AoC Cup.

Among Priestley's first team is Kenny Bernal who has also secured a place on the England College's U18 squad.

The 16-year-old has trained with Athletic Madrid and Priestley's

head of football Dan Jordan is currently helping him to find a professional team to play for.

"I'd like to be a professional footballer, but if that doesn't work out I am studying Business, Maths and English so I will always have them to fall back on," he said.

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