

Engine Room



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Engineering People • Manufacturing Success

Sprouts of Growth

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1969-2009

40th

ANNIVERSARY

Avon Vale Training

Engineering People • Manufacturing Success



Skills for Growth

A national strategy for economic growth and individual prosperity

The **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills** (BIS) has just published **Skills for Growth**: a national strategy for economic growth and individual prosperity. It takes some important decisions and marks a radical shift in some of the priorities of our skills system.

Skills are a key part of our plan for economic recovery and an urgent challenge. This country's future can only be built by people who have the skills demanded by modern work in a globalised economy. Skilled people are more productive and more innovative. Skills give individuals wider options; they climb higher, earn more and get more out of work. Skilled people are the foundation of successful business.

Skills for Growth's commitments include:

- Creating a modern technician class through more advanced apprenticeships
- Investing in skills in the sectors on which future growth and jobs depend
- Empowering individuals through skills accounts giving people 'consumer choice' and better information about courses
- The introduction of light touch monitoring arrangements for our best providers
- Simplifying the skills landscape, reducing the number of publicly funded agencies by over 30 in the next three years

"An active government approach to equipping this country for globalisation means making sure we have the skills that underwrite the industries and jobs of the future. That means skills for the high tech, low carbon, more high-value added sectors that drive the growth that underwrites everything else we want to achieve as a society. These skills are becoming more sophisticated and complex, and more vital". Business Secretary - **Lord Mandelson**

On Yer Bike! Tandem Training in New Forest

The New Forest is an area of unspoilt wilderness famous for its untamed, roaming ponies, but recently it became the location of Avon Vale's annual team day. Divided into groups and mounted on tandem bicycles, we set off on a treasure hunt solving clues and criss-crossing the beautiful landscape.

It came as a quite surprise to discover so many steep hills, however everyone had a great day.



Ready for action: Neil, Jane, Simon & Richard



Close friends: Neil & Rob

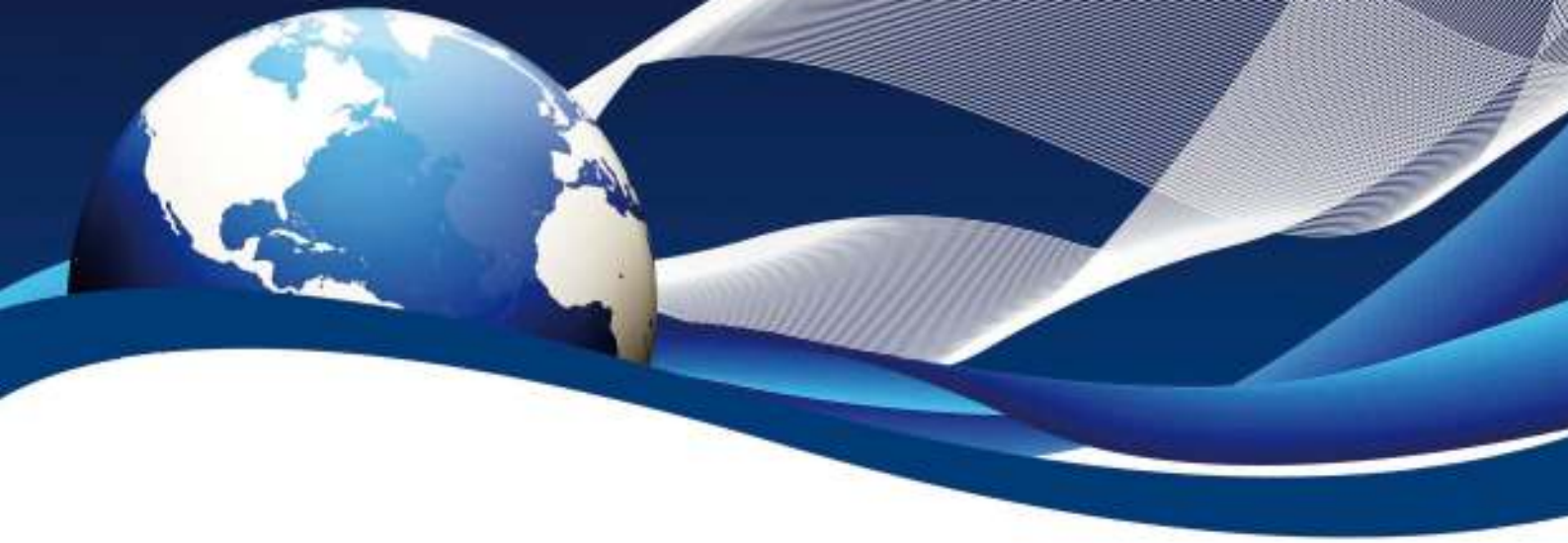
GE USA Seeks New Suppliers

Bearings & Complex Sand Casting Capabilities Required

GE in the USA is looking for new suppliers with capabilities in bearings and complex sand casting. The company is willing to look directly into any UK companies if there is a technology fit. If you think you have strong capabilities in these technology areas, please forward your details to Melissa McInnis, at the British Consulate in Chicago. Email melissa.mcinnis@fco.gov.uk



AVT Staff from left to right: Simon, Phil, Ali, Jane, Mark, Stanya, Dave, Debbie, Adam, David, Steve, Gwen, Richard, Jon, & Brian.



Employer Focus: Wilson Tool International

Since its foundation more than four decades ago, Swindon based **Wilson Tool International** has grown to become the world's largest independent tooling manufacturer.

With advanced manufacturing plants in the UK and the USA and technical sales centres in Denmark, France, Germany and China, **Wilson Tool** is a truly global operation and a market leader in the manufacture of state-of-the-art punching solutions and a comprehensive range of tools available to metal fabricators around the world.

The firm has a long history of working with apprentices and has offered apprenticeship places for more than 25 years. In fact, many senior members of staff who started out as apprentices now have supervisory roles with the firm and are fully qualified, highly trained design engineers and production engineers.



Trevor Davies (HR Manager) says:

*"**Apprenticeships are a mainstay of our company's operations** and will continue to be an integral part of our recruitment, training and development strategy in the years ahead. They provide a first class route into the world of work for young, ambitious people and help deliver the engineering and manufacturing skills that continue to be short supply across the region."*

Wilson Tool takes on between one and three apprentices per year and competition is fierce for the coveted roles. They have built a strong partnership with Avon Vale Training, who has been their training provider for more than a decade.

*"**Avon Vale brings real expertise and helps get the best from the apprentice.** They access available funding and also help in finding the right young people to recruit. We've had some really good apprentices over the years" says **Trevor Davies**.*

Wilson Tool's Apprenticeship scheme is a three to four year course encompassing all aspects of design and product engineering. Apprentices benefit from a structured training programme which in the first year sees them receiving an all round introduction to the engineering sector with placements in design engineering, on the shop floor as well as being behind the scenes in the office.



In the second year, the training becomes more specialised as apprentices learn more about the ins and outs of the design and manufacture of replacement tooling for the punch press industry. After successfully completing Level 2 of the NVQ in Performing Engineering Operations, apprentices are encouraged to go on to achieve NVQ Level 3, covering more advanced engineering competencies.

Trevor says; *"**Apprenticeships deliver on all fronts** – they provide young people with an excellent opportunity to develop and hone their skills in a real working environment and give employers access to a **pool of highly motivated individuals who are keen to learn and get on**"*



Evolution not Revolution

Since 2002 **Avon Vale Training Ltd** has been a wholly owned subsidiary company of **Wiltshire College**.

However in August this year the organisation was dissolved as a separate limited company and became an operating division directly within the Employer Responsive Team of **Wiltshire College**. The decision to “merge” with the college was taken by the Board because it was deemed to be in the best long term interests of employers.

The merger was not due to any weakness but rather because of Avon Vale’s strong and continuing success. Financially Avon Vale remains very strong, recruitment levels are up despite the recession and the high levels of attainment and quality were reflected in the recent award of the Training Quality Standard (TQS).

Avon Vale was brought closer to the college to spread its expertise in serving local industry across other college operations. Also Avon Vale employers will benefit from a more complete offer of services and training from all the areas of the college.

There have been a few changes internally as job roles have altered. However, employers should not notice any immediate changes. **The backing of Wiltshire College will strengthen Avon Vale’s commitment to raise standards and support industry.**



Good for Business

The National Apprenticeship Service launched the ‘**Good for Business**’ Campaign at the end of October, which will run through till November and then resume again in January.

‘**Good for Business**’ will promote the fact that Apprenticeships bring business benefits for employers and will focus on two key messages:

- Apprenticeships increase productivity
- Apprenticeships improve efficiency

The campaign is designed to highlight the business benefits of Apprenticeships to employers, particularly those looking to take on apprentices aged 16-18.

Using strong, simple messaging backed up by case studies, it will demonstrate that apprentices are a good investment for organisations, bringing new ideas, lower recruitment and training costs and providing loyal staff who match business needs.

Research shows that consumers favour businesses who offer Apprenticeships. The campaign offers companies who provide Apprenticeships an eBadge for their website or stationery to highlight to their customers

their commitment to Apprenticeships. For more information contact

Nadine Lee on 0117 372 6511 Nadine.Lee@lsc.gov.uk.





Celebrating 40 Years of Leading Skills & Training

One hot sunny day at the end of June, Avon Vale celebrated its 40th anniversary with a party and awards ceremony. The event, held at Lackham House, Lacock, marked a significant milestone for us.

Over the years we have grown as more and more companies have asked us to help train their staff. We have become one of the UK's leading providers of engineering training and apprenticeships. We guide about 300 apprentices each year, and since establishment in 1969, **we have trained almost 2,500 engineers.**



Sally Challoner with the apprentice finalists & their Training Co-ordinators

Hosted by BBC Points West Presenter, **Sally Challoner**, the awards are designed to recognise excellence among apprentices and outstanding support given by employers. Timed to coincide with national Vocational Qualification (VQ) Day, they help raise the profile of apprenticeships and vocational training. The South West's leading business figures and engineering employers plus industry bodies and politicians were in attendance along with past employees who helped shape the company.

Like any good birthday party there were balloons, a cake and some bubbly. A buffet lunch, prizes of driving experience

days at Castle Combe and photos in the gardens followed the presentations.

General Manager, **Steve Gale**, said; "After forty years, it's very satisfying to step back and realise that we are responsible for training an entire generation of engineers. To see youngsters grow during their apprenticeship and go on to develop successful careers is rewarding. Many former apprentices are now in senior positions running huge operations.

This is a very special time for us as we have **recently achieved the Matrix award and the Training Quality Standard (TQS)**, whilst our learner achievement rates remain extremely high. One thing which is very clear to me is that we have been successful as a company because of the passion and commitment of our staff.

Despite the intense challenges industry currently faces, I am resolutely optimistic about the future. The employers best placed to prosper are those that invest the most in the skills of their workforce. I know that there are thousands of bright, enthusiastic young people eager to become fine engineers. We need to provide the right opportunities to realise their potential."



Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director LSC said: "Through the Apprenticeship programme and other work based learning, **Avon Vale Training has demonstrated a fantastic contribution to skills development across the region.** I would like to congratulate them for their commitment to delivering high quality training over the past 40 years and wish them continued success."

Avon Vale Training Awards 2009 - The Winners

Outstanding Commitment Award: Apprentice = **Ryan Rollings** - Rochling Engineering Plastics

Outstanding Commitment Award: Advanced Apprentice = **Lisa Breerton** - Schneider Electric

Employer of the Year: SME (1 to 249 employees) = **Thomson Aero Ltd** - Frome

Employer of the Year: Large (250+ employees) = **Rotork Controls Ltd** - Bath

Achievement Award: Apprentice = **Dan Sims** - Structural Systems

Achievement Award: Advanced Apprentice = **Brad Hannaby** - Dowty Propellers (a part of GE Aviation)

"Virtual Avon Vale" - The Future of Learning

Futuristic

Have you ever cried out "Beam-me-up Avon Vale"? Well there is no need, as Virtual Avon Vale is here. Unlike teleports and time travel, *Virtual Avon Vale* has stepped from the future to make learning easier for our apprentices.

Virtual Avon Vale (sometimes called "Moodle"), is an online classroom. It has information and learning materials designed to help apprentices with their course. Many colleges and universities have similar systems, but Avon Vale's has been specifically designed to assist with engineering apprenticeships. If there is something an apprentice doesn't quite understand then the chances are there's a useful explanation at *Virtual Avon Vale*.

Access

Virtual Avon Vale can be accessed at anytime from anywhere with internet access.

The web address is: <http://virtual.avonvale.co.uk>
(Do not put www. in front of the address)

Alternatively you can access it from the Avon Vale Training website www.avonvale.co.uk by selecting the 'e-learning' page in the main menu and then clicking the *Virtual Avon Vale* button.

Blasting Off

Each apprentice has a personalised account where they can access information to support the specific courses they are doing. Its easy to login: navigate to the homepage, then type the unique Username & Password into the login box on the left hand side of the screen.

The Username is the initial of the apprentice's first name followed by their surname – with no spaces and all in lower case (eg: Joe Blogs would have the Username of - jblogs). The Password is temporarily set at the word: virtual

Once first time visitors have agreed to the Site Policy Agreement, they will go to their Profile Page. Clicking on the link "*Virtual*

Avon Vale" in blue at the top left of the screen will lead back to the Home Page.

How Does it Work ?

It will take a while to run through all the things *Virtual Avon Vale* can do. The best thing to do is to take a look yourself.



Perhaps the most useful thing to open is the Student User Guide available in the main menu. This should answer almost all your queries. If the wheels have fallen off and you are really very stuck then contact the help desk at: virtualsupport@avonvale.co.uk

We hope that *Virtual Avon Vale* will be a valuable support to apprentice learning. Like most things the more you put in the more you'll get out. So we encourage all apprentices to get involved. Update your profile; contribute to the site forums and use it to contact your Trainer. We would welcome your feedback and comments.

Good Luck !

Virtual Avon Vale will help you with your course, so be sure to take advantage of what's on offer!

Fascinating Facts!

- Lightning bolts generate temperatures five times hotter than the 6000°C heat of the sun's surface!
 - The poison-arrow frog has enough poison to kill about 2,200 people!
 - Camels have three eyelids – to protect their eyes from sand in the desert
- The fastest computer in the world (the IBM ASCI white supercomputer), weighs as much as 17 elephants
 - 75 percent of your brain is made of water
- Mint contains menthol which (temporarily) deadens the hot receptors in your mouth
 - You are born with 300 bones, but when you reach adulthood you only have 206





Apprentice Profile:

“ I left school at 16 and wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I got a job housekeeping at **Center Parcs** in Longleat Forest. The job was OK but I struggled with the hours. I had to get up for work at half 5 in the morning! After about 18 months I wanted to do something different and start a proper career.

At school I enjoyed English, sport, science and metal working. I was keen to do something practical which involved metal. I got the phone book and went on the internet and started contacting firms to see if they were looking to hire. I was really determined and contacted loads of firms. In the end a break came and **Salisbury Switchgear** offered me a position as an apprentice welder. **I think they were impressed how eager I was.** I had phoned them 3 times in a week to see if they would consider me.

Salisbury Switchgear contacted **Avon Vale Training** and together they organised my apprenticeship. I went to college on day release every Wednesday for two years to complete the NVQ in *“Performing Engineering Operations”* (Level 2) and a VRQ. At work I learnt MIG & TIG welding and built “switchgear” cabinets which are metal cabinets used to house electrical controls. I made things for the **BBC** and for the **MoD** for use in Iraq, and also cabinets used at docks so ships could plug into them and powerup.

One morning we were called to a meeting and told that with immediate effect the company had ceased trading and was going into liquidation. It was totally ‘out of the blue’ and was shocking for everyone. I was worried myself. **I was out of a job and only part way through my apprenticeship.**

No one was advertising so I started searching again. I rang around companies and got on my motorbike to ask them in person if they had a vacancy. Although they all said ‘no,’ I kept going and revisited them a week later to hand in my CV. When I went back to **Steel Fabrications Ltd** in Westbury they said that something had come up and asked if I could start on Monday.

I now weld sports car chassis for **Caterham**. I'm in my final year of the apprenticeship and hope to qualify next summer. **Avon Vale** are taking me through the NVQ (Level 3) in *“Fabrication & Welding Engineering”* at work, and I go to City of Bristol College to complete my City and Guilds course every Friday.

I took up Taekwondo about 2 years ago with a group called P.U.M.A (the Professional Unification of Martial Arts). Taekwondo is from Korea and has fast, high and spinning kicks. I now train

Clio Yates

around 7 times a week and go all over to different P.U.M.A Taekwondo clubs. I'm part of my association's squad of tournament competitors which includes quite a few world champions. **I've just been selected for a tournament in Cork, Ireland** and will represent Britain in the coloured belt categories. It's really exciting.

Engineering is a good career for me. I've always liked being hands on and practical and wouldn't be happy in a job where I was tied to a desk. Engineering is also much better paid than more traditional jobs for girls such as child carer or hairdressing and there are lots of opportunities to get on.

You have to be realistic and it's not for all girls. I'm a welder and work in a very male environment. In the past I think some people have felt threatened by a girl. You have to stay focussed on doing a good job.

I feel that I have to prove that I'm at least as good as the guys.

I knew when I left school that I wanted to start earning money, and its great that I can get qualifications at the same time. Hands-on experience is what really matters. I wish more young people knew about apprenticeships. We were told very little about them at school and they are a great way to learn.

Apprenticeships need to be better publicised! ”





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Big Money for Little Firms

South West Micro-Business Employer Scheme for 16-18 yr old Apprentices

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) is funding a scheme to incentivise micro employers (1-9 employees) in the South West region to take-on 16-18 year old apprentices.

This is a limited scheme which will work with approximately 100 employers/100 apprentices across the region. All apprentices will have started on their training on or before 31 March 2010.

Apprentices can either be a new recruit or a conversion from "Jobs without Training" (JWT) to an Apprenticeship with the same employer.

Employer Eligibility Criteria

- Employer must be a micro, private sector employer with 1-9 employees and based in the South West region
- Employer must not have taken on an apprentice within the last 18 months
- Employer will advertise the Apprenticeship vacancy on the Apprenticeships vacancy system

Employer Financial Incentive

- **£1000** when the apprentice, recruited as a new employee, has started their apprenticeship
- **£500** when the apprentice, as an existing employee, has started their apprenticeship (i.e. for employers who offer Jobs without Training)
- Only one grant per business will be paid

For further information contact the Project Team Lead Coordinator **Christina Gill** Tel: 01793 608013 Email: christina.gill@apprenticeships.gov.uk or give **Steve Gale** a call at Avon Vale on 01249 661199.



Who are Avon Vale Training ?

Avon Vale Training is a leading provider of work-based training. We serve the engineering and manufacturing sectors, and strive to develop workforce skills to help industry compete more effectively.

Our training is award winning and our achievement rates are excellent. We provide a comprehensive service of all training requirements, which includes management qualifications, Apprenticeships & NVQs, specialist technical skills, to bespoke training solutions.

Operating across the South of England we have 40 years experience of supporting business. We work with small family companies to major multinationals and design every training programme around the particular requirements of both learner and employer.

This newsletter is distributed to hundreds of engineering companies, industry and educational bodies across the region. If you would like to feature your company or services then please get in touch.

Avon Vale Training, Avon Vale House, Cocklebury Road, Chippenham, SN15 3QH.

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