



By royal appointment

Full story page three

BREAKING NEWS...

An exciting and innovative loan scheme for staff that's a first for the UK has been launched by WEC.

For full details of how we're looking to help you get ahead and cut your debt, through our new Employee Benefit Loan Scheme, turn to page six.



Sam's flying high:

Page 5



Academy's top of the class:

Page 9



Capital driving force:

Page 10



Swirl has a-peel:

Page 11

We're ready for take off

WEC Group's drive to win more orders in Britain's booming aerospace sector has been given a big boost.

The group has achieved important industry accreditation, which will be a major advantage as we work to build our order book with more aviation, space and defence work.

Major aerospace manufacturers and suppliers worldwide require compliance and/or registration to AS9100 as a condition of doing business with them.

WEC's laser cutting and water jet cutting operations have both received the accreditation.

Our Water Jet division was only launched 12 months ago and more than £1million has already been spent on the new operation, including two dynamic water jet cutting machines.



A third is due to be commissioned by the end of the year at the Shadsworth Industrial Estate factory.

And with eight flat-bed lasers and two tube laser cutting machines, we now operate one of the largest laser cutting facilities in the UK.

Managing Director Steve Hartley said: "Getting AS9100 accreditation has been a real team effort involving a lot of people.

"It will be a valuable tool for us as we look to expand our operations in the aerospace sector, coupled with our continued investment in the latest engineering equipment."

The aerospace sector is a major part of the economy in the North West, contributing more than £7billion to the UK economy and accounting for one third of the country's aerospace turnover.

Commercial Director Wayne Wild said: "We have identified a number of key areas as part of an ambitious growth strategy.

"We see aerospace as a sector where we can make great strides and we are actively working to ensure that happens. The accreditation gives us a fantastic opportunity to grow our order book."

We have also recently been approved to BS EN 1090 standard, which means the company is now compliant with the new CE Marking legislation for structural fabrication.

On the right track

Ambitious expansion plans are now in place for WEC's Rail Division as it looks to move into repair work across the network.

We have a strong track record in full-scale fabrication in the rail industry – including creating and installing footbridges, signalling equipment, lifts and ramps.

Now, new Divisional Manager Glen Mullan believes there are big opportunities for the division to win more work on repair projects across the UK.

He said: "Rail infrastructure repairs and refurbishment is a massive market and one we are looking to exploit, providing on site and off site services through our skilled repair teams.

"Network Rail's five-year CP5 spending and investment programme is worth £38billion, which gives some idea of the work and the opportunities that are out there for us."

Glen, 36, from Blackburn, has recently returned to WEC from a specialist rail engineering group where he was senior project manager.

He's delighted to be back at WEC after three years away, and excited by the prospects for the future.

When he's not at work Glen, who is married with two children, is a big football fan.

He is an active member of supporters' groups at Blackburn Rovers, sits on the national council of the Football Supporters' Federation and is a committee member at AFC Darwen.



Centre stage at festival

WEC Group's CCTV division helped the stars hit the high notes at this year's Glastonbury Festival.

The division supplied all the electrical cabinets for the musical gathering in Somerset, which is one of the big events of the summer.

Mike Allison, of the CCTV Division, says: "They were designed to an exact specification and painted in a shade of green to fit in with the surroundings.

"We were working to a tight timescale, which we met and the installation was completed in good time."



Remembering sacrifices made

Prince Harry has unveiled a stunning war memorial created by m-tec division which honours the men and women who served in the Great War.

The stainless steel First World War Arch, made in Darwen, was unveiled in Folkestone, Kent, to mark the centenary of the start of the conflict.

Thousands turned out for the ceremony and to commemorate the millions of men and women who travelled to and from the Western Front between 1914 and 1918.

The 14-metre high arch is made of highly-polished steel. It is a catenary arch, a form in architecture recognised all around the world, and sits at the top of a hill leading down to the harbour where boats awaited the troops to take them across the Channel.

It was created for the Folkestone-based educational charity Step Short. Tom Elliot, Divisional Manager at m-tec, said: "We are honoured to have played our part in the creation of this very special memorial to the

men and women who sacrificed so much for us a century ago.

"The arch is a stunning piece of design work and is a fitting tribute. It now stands at the gateway where millions of British soldiers took the journey to fight for our country and is a piece of work we were proud to manufacture."

Fabrication work for the arch was carried out earlier this year and it was delivered ahead of schedule to international property company Land Lease, which carried out the construction work.

Damian Collins, MP for Folkestone and Hythe and chairman of Step Short, was full of praise for our work on the project.

He said: "This Memorial Arch stands in memory of all those who served; those who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who came home.

"I would like to thank the organisations that have been involved in building the arch, in particular the WEC Group from Darwen in Lancashire, who constructed the steel arch."



Mark shows his muscle in strongest man competition

Water jet division team member Mark Eccles flexed his muscles when he took part in one of the country's top strongest man competitions.

The 32-year-old from Darwen, who joined the company earlier this year, finished fourth after entering 'Strongman Bolton'.

And as our pictures show he had to carry out a series of back-breaking feats over the two day competition – including pushing a 20-ton Army wagon and lifting an artillery gun over his head for as long as possible.

Other events, taking place in front of large crowds, included a lung-busting sandbag carrying run.

The weights involved in the competition are staggering, with competitors in Mark's category lifting up to 240kg over their heads.

Mark is no stranger to strongmen contests – but this was the first time he had stepped up from novice to the intermediate category and he was pleased with his performance.

He is now working towards a competition in Burnley in November and also has his eyes set on qualifying for the English title next year.

He says: "There were some very experienced competitors in the event so it went well.

"I started last year as a novice and I've taken part in eight

competitions so far. This was a step up for me to the next level.

"I train for around three hours, maybe three or four sessions during the week. I'm lucky that my partner Lucie is very supportive."



Get your skis on with Dean

WEC Laser Programming Manager Dean Pickup is training to become a qualified ski instructor in his spare time after being bitten by the winter sports bug.

He and his family became members of Gryffin SnowSports club in November 2007 and his love of the slopes has grown and developed since then. Dean, who helps run the club which is based at Ski Rossendale, says it is open to all and he'd love to see his colleagues take to the slopes.

He says: "We are a not for profit club run by dedicated volunteers that take pride in what they do for the club and its members.

"The club was founded in 2001 with 22 members and has the same ethos today as it did in the early days... to teach people to ski the whole mountain, on any terrain and to be fun!"

Dean hopes to be a Level 1 qualified instructor by this time next year. But he says the attraction of the club isn't just the skiing.

"Gryffin isn't just a ski club, it offers a great social aspect to its members as well, with like-minded people, and new friendships can be forged."

The club's ski season will run from Sunday October 5 until

Sunday April 12 next year. Dean says: "We meet ready to ski at the bottom of the main slope at 9.30am until 11.30am each Sunday."

For more details email Dean at dean@gryffinsnowsports.co.uk. You can also find out more about the club on its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/GyffinSkiClub) or by Twitter at www.twitter.com/GryffinSkiClub.

The club also has its own website at www.gryffinsnowsports.co.uk where you can check out the latest events.

"Our instructors are all qualified to Snowsport England Level 1 or 2, are DBS checked and hold a Safeguarding and Protecting Children Certificate and a first aid qualification."



Putting a smile on brave Sam's face

Battling five-year-old Sam Shaw was on cloud nine after a thrilling helicopter ride.

The East Lancashire youngster is recovering from a life-threatening cancer after treatment in America which was made possible when local people raised £250,000.

During his treatment Sam, from Huddlesden, drew up a wish list and decided he wanted to ride in a variety of different vehicles.

And WEC Group Managing Director Steve Hartley responded to his wish by offering him and a pal a ride in his helicopter.

Sam, who was given the all clear from cancer earlier this year, and his friend Sam Lomax took to the skies with Steve as pilot for the ride.

Sam's mum Christine described it as "an incredible experience" for the youngster.

Steve said: "It put a big smile on his face. It was a fantastic evening and he really enjoyed it."



Fundraising off to a tee

WEC Group's charity golf day for the Sam Shaw Appeal was a swinging success – raising the fantastic sum of £3,000.

The cash will go to the local charity and the Neuroblastoma Children Cancer Alliance (NCCA UK). A big thanks to all who helped raise the cash through the event.

Young Sam and his mum Christine also came to visit WEC and had a tour of our laser cutting factory. And as our pictures show Sam quite fancies the idea of becoming an engineer!

Sam is pictured with his mum who accompanied him on his big visit to WEC.

The Neuroblastoma Children's Cancer Alliance UK helps families affected by the childhood cancer through access to treatment, research, parent education and raising awareness.

The charity runs a variety of different events all year round to engage fundraisers and to support children and parents affected by neuroblastoma.

For more details and to find out how you can get involved in helping please visit www.ncca-uk.org or call 020 7284 0800.





EMPLOYEE BENEFIT LOANS

Helping you to get ahead – a UK first!

WEC Group and the Jubilee Tower Credit Union have come together to create an exciting and innovative new Employee Benefit Loan Scheme that's the first of its kind in the UK.

The partnership gives you an alternative way to borrow – and the chance to switch current high interest loans and cut your debt.

We've created a framework for borrowing in a plain, simple and easy way to understand.

And the platform allows you to apply for an EBL simply and quickly – and the decision process is both fair and impartial.

It offers low cost borrowing at a fraction of other platforms – and encourages a responsible payback method and repayment period with no rollover borrowing.

The result is responsible borrowing and affordable repayments – helping you to get ahead.

The scheme is the brainchild of WEC Group Commercial Director Wayne Wild. He says: "I was looking at what employee benefits we had in place, such as our childcare vouchers and cycle to work scheme and started to investigate what else we could put in place.

"I started to think what else we as a company could do to help our staff. One of the biggest challenges facing everyone at this time is debt, whether we are talking high interest loans, credit cards or doorstep and payday loans.

"I began doing some research and came up with the idea that we as a company could lend our employees money. That has a lot of implications, for instance you need a credit license.

"I already had links with the Jubilee Tower Credit Union through my work with Rovers Trust, the Blackburn Rovers Supporters Trust, so I set up a meeting with them. The result is this scheme we have designed together.

"We've gone to the Bank of England, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority to get the EBL scheme authorised and it's the first in the country.

"It's a simple idea and one we think will have real benefits for WEC workers. For instance, it rewards employees who

have longer service more. The more service you have the more you can borrow."

Your affordable loan is only a few clicks away! For more information and to apply just visit www.employeebenefitloans.co.uk

Responsible borrowing – affordable repayments



Why chose an EBL?

REPLACE YOUR CREDIT CARD BILL WITH A MUCH LOWER INTEREST OPTION

Credit cards charge on average 20% interest per year with no set repayment plan. EBL only incur a total 10% admin fee for each period or year of borrowing with a fixed repayment plan.

RESPONSIBLE BORROWING – NO ROLLOVERS

Repayments are automatically taken out of the borrowers' wages so there is no risk to default on repayments and incur high interest penalties.

THE FIRST SCHEME OF ITS KIND IN THE UK

Credit unions are the uncut diamonds of the credit world. The partnership between the WEC Group and the Jubilee Tower Credit Union enables us to offer some of the UK's lowest interest rates.

ENCOURAGE SAVING WHILST REPAYING LOANS

A minimum savings payment of £2 per week or £10 per month will be paid alongside loan payments due.



**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.

Contact Ged Henderson on 07725 940759 or email newsletter@wecl.co.uk

How it works

1. Any employee can apply for a loan from JTCU as the company's head office is based in Darwen
2. A MAXIMUM of 10% of an employee's annual salary loan value can be applied for
3. Then 20% of this maximum for every year of service will be the maximum borrowing limit
4. Administration fee charged at 10% lump sum for each period year of borrowing, maximum two years
5. Length of repayment term can be chosen by the employee: Six, 12, 18 or 24 months
6. Any employee with a current disciplinary warning record will be disqualified from applying whilst it is live on file
7. No extra applications for loans can be accepted until the current loan is repaid in full
8. Once application is accepted a terms and conditions document to be printed, signed and returned to JTCU. Loan amount will then be credited to employee bank account
9. Repayments to begin on the next payday automatically deducted from weekly/monthly pay until repaid in full
10. If employment ceases for any reason the full outstanding balance will be due in full within seven working days to JTCU
11. A minimum savings payment of £2 per week or £10 per month will be paid alongside loan payments due under this agreement. Savings with JTCU remain the property of the borrower, but only savings in excess of the loan balance may be withdrawn
12. All loan applications and acceptance are subject to JTCU terms and conditions



Case studies



Bob (monthly paid)

Bob earns £25,000 per annum basic salary. He has been working for WEC since June 1, 2011 (ie three full years). The maximum he can borrow is:

$$\text{£}25,000 \times 10\% = \text{£}2,500 \times 60\%* = \text{£}1,500$$

(* 3 years x 20%)

He wants to borrow this over 12 months, therefore total payback =

$$\text{£}1,500 + 10\% = \text{£}1,650$$

He repays £137.50 per month for 12 months plus £10 per month into a savings account.



Sue (weekly paid)

Sue earns £360 per week basic salary. She has been working for WEC since March 28 2003 (ie 11 full years). The maximum she can borrow is:

$$\text{£}360 \times 52 = \text{£}18,720 \times 10\% - \text{£}1,872 \times 100\%* = \text{£}1,872$$

(* max five years x 20%)

She wants to borrow this over 24 months, therefore total payback =

$$\text{£}1,872 + 20\% = \text{£}2,246.40$$

She repays £21.60 per week for 104 weeks plus £2 per week into a savings account.



Simon

(disciplinary warning on file)

Simon earns £22,000 per annum basic salary.

He currently has a warning on file from August 1, 2014.

It is live on file for

six months.

He cannot apply for a loan until the warning has expired (ie February 2015) and he has no other warnings on file.

Mick's peak performance raises cash for children

WEC Group worker Mick Brown hit the heights when he set off on a gruelling fundraising drive for charity.

Mick, who works in the engineering division, raised £826 for Ethan's Gift – a charity that helps disabled children lead more fulfilling lives – through his marathon efforts.

Accompanied by his nephew Andy Lomax he kayaked 60 miles up the Caledonian Canal in Scotland.

Then on the way home the pair successfully conquered the Three Peaks challenge of Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowden.

Mick said: "Ben Nevis was very snowy, we got lost in the clouds on Scafell and on Snowden we ran down the railway line on our descent, which was awesome."

"I'd like to thank everyone who sponsored me in the engineering department at the Spring Vale Road site and Denis Royle for taking some football cards round for me at the Junction Street Works.

"We raised £826 for Ethan's Gift Charity, who help disabled children lead more fulfilling lives so thank you very much to everybody."



Mihaela's art in focus at Blackburn Cathedral

WEC Group quality coordinator Mihaela Mladin's striking artwork is about to wow visitors to Blackburn Cathedral.

The talented 52-year-old is working towards a second exhibition of her paintings at the cathedral.

Full details of the event have yet to be confirmed, but the art show will also include sculptures created by WEC welder William Buchanan.

Mihaela, who went to art school in her native Romania, is a keen painter and her work has already had a wide audience at the cathedral. She says: "I've painted forever!"

She is looking forward to the latest show, saying: "I'm working towards an event that will hopefully also be a bit of a social event for visitors.

"I'm working on a number of landscapes on different subjects around the Blackburn area as well as some with a sea theme."

Mihaela, who lives in Blackburn, has strong links with the cathedral and her first job when she came to England was working in the coffee shop there.

She says: "I held an exhibition there two years ago and one of the works from that, a piece on the Virgin Mary, can still be seen in an office in the cathedral.

"The exhibition I'm planning will also have some sculptures in wood created by William. We're really looking forward to it."



Pictured above is Mihaela and a piece of her striking artwork.

Our apprentices are onto a winner!

Congratulations to Kris Mercer and everyone involved in our training academy for their tremendous success in this year's National Apprenticeship Awards.

Our academy was chosen as the winner of The BAE Systems Award for Large Employer of the Year in the Liverpool, Cumbria and Lancashire region finals.

WEC Group will now represent the North West in the national finals competing against companies including Rolls-Royce, Tata Steel, ITV, DAF Trucks, Redrow Homes and South West Water.

The national award winners will be revealed during a ceremony at the LG Arena in Birmingham on November 13.

“We are proud of our young people who themselves put in a lot of hard work to complete their training and education.”

The award comes as this year's latest intake of 12 apprentices start their WEC training at the academy.

Kris, our Welding and Engineering Instructor, is pictured here (far right) picking up the regional award at an event held at Liverpool Town Hall. He said: “This award is something we are very proud of.”

The academy, which was the brainchild of Managing Director Steve Hartley, has put together a programme to train people to the high standard required by the WEC Group as it continues its growth and development.

Steve Hartley said: “It's a massive achievement for us to win this award and we are delighted.

“We put a huge amount of effort and money into ensuring our young people get the best training we can give them. It sets them up for a rewarding career in the engineering industry.

“The award is down to the hard work of Kris Mercer, who heads up WEC's training academy, and all the staff who contribute to making it a success year after year.

“We are proud of our young people who themselves put in a lot of hard work to complete their training and education.”

Claire Blott, Interim Deputy Director Employer & Delivery Services in the North West, Skills Funding Agency, said:

“The quality of entries we have had for the Liverpool City Region, Cumbria and Lancashire awards this year has been exceptional.”



Looking to the future

WEC'S Training Academy was set up in 2006 to meet the challenges of the skills shortage in engineering and fabrication.

We had a strong story to tell the awards judges. Today, 10 per cent of our workforce is made up of apprentices. The majority are welding apprentices.

As well as learning the skills that we need as a company our apprentices are also actively involved in projects that help the community.

Giving Dave his freedom back

A GULF War veteran confined to his home after losing a leg has regained his freedom, thanks to the fast work of our apprentices.

Dave Wild had the lower half of his left leg amputated after it became infected following complications after surgery.

And he was left devastated, having been told it would take the council three months to measure, and install, a ramp at his home in Delphinium Way, Lower Darwen.

Our apprentices went to work after we were contacted and asked to help. They made and fitted a steel ramp within 48 hours, free of charge. Delighted Dave said: "I was really chuffed with it."

"Being trapped in here was like being in a posh prison, and I couldn't get anywhere. I could just go from the kitchen to the living room, and back.

"As soon as they put it in, I was up and down it. It was like I got my freedom back."

Mr Wild served for 10 years in the Army before being injured during the Gulf War in 1992.

Blackburn with Darwen Council's armed forces champion Councillor Trevor Maxfield contacted WEC on his behalf. He was full of praise for the work of our apprentices, saying: "It shows how committed they are to the community."



Dave is pictured here with Kris and some of his apprentices.

Driving forward new technology in capital

London's Mayor Boris Johnson has officially welcomed the first British built, pure electric buses onto the capital's roads – with WEC's Sherburn Metalwork staff playing a major role in their creation.

Our fabrication operation in Sherburn-in-Elmet supplied bus builder Optare with the structures for the new pioneering vehicles.

It's the latest chapter in the successful supply partnership that operates between Optare and WEC Group.

The new vehicles were unveiled at a special ceremony hosted by the Mayor at London's Mansion House.

The four Optare MetroCity single deck buses are currently being trialled on route H98, which operates between Hayes and Hounslow.

Their introduction is the first step of the Mayor's plan for all single deck buses in central London to be zero emission at tailpipe, as part of the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone, from 2020.

Gopichand Hinduja, co-chairman of Optare's parent company the Hinduja Group, pictured with the mayor, described the new bus as "a prime example of the UK's manufacturing excellence, technology and innovation."





Going through the right channels

WEC Group has fabricated a stainless steel outdoor seating installation for ITV's new MediaCity home in Salford, which allows staff and the public to interact with a logo sitting on the top of the ITV building.

The 16m long stainless steel 'ribbon' was inspired by the curved form of ITV's new logo, twisting and turning to create different seating spaces.

The installation sits in the piazza area of Media City in front of the building, a space open to staff and the general public. Seating, 'lean-to bar-like spaces' and reclining spaces have all been fashioned from the sculpture.

Swirl sculpture has real a-peel

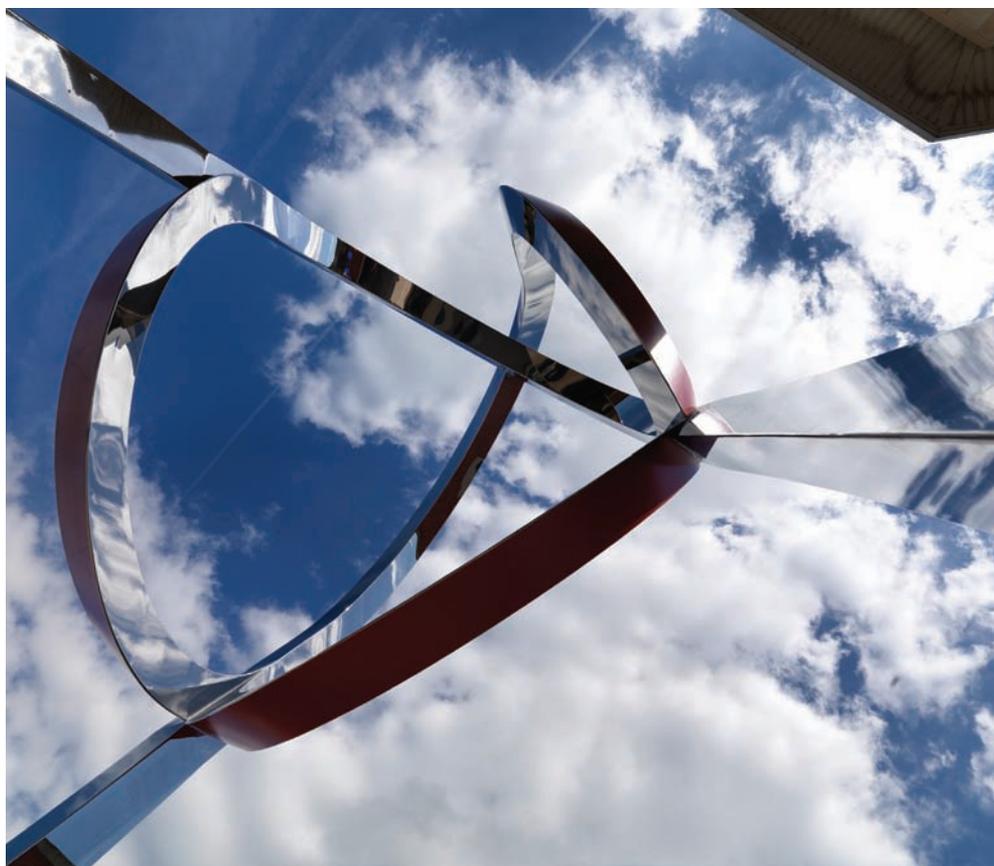
A dramatic sculpture created by m-tec division has taken pride of place in the heart of an English market town.

The £85,000 piece of art, called 'The Swirl', is now turning the heads of locals and visitors to Didcot.

The work resembles the peeling of an apple and was inspired by Oxfordshire's great apple growing tradition.

The sculpture stands eight metres high and is supported by three vertical legs. Its fabrication is grade 316 stainless steel, which is mirror polished and finished with red paint on one of its faces to represent the colour of an apple.

Architect Maria Rosa Kramer had her design selected in a competition advertised by the Arts Council of England. She said: "It was fantastic to finally see it in context and I think it looks better in reality than it did in the designs too."



GETTING TO KNOW...

WEC Group
Managing Director
STEVE HARTLEY

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

A jet fighter or airline pilot

What's your favourite holiday getaway?

Has to be Cyprus!

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Building my house! Also model aircraft and fast cars

Who is your favourite singer?

Elvis Presley

What is your favourite film?

The Good, The Bad And The Ugly



Who is the person you admire the most?

Bernie Ecclestone

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

To write everything down – all the important things

If you could have a superpower what would it be?

The ability to read minds!

What makes you smile?

When something I wish for happens

What's your favourite food?

Bacon sandwich!

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

Richard Branson

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

Hmmm, there are so many... probably making a bomb with oxyacetylene and a crisp bag – nearly blew my eardrums out!

Your greatest achievement to date?

Getting WEC Group to where it is today, along with Moira my wife

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

Hard to say, as I'm proud of many things in my life, from a business point of view installing the first laser cutter was a big milestone for me. It's something I had wanted to do for a long time.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Winter is coming

WE are currently offering 25% off our LogFire Stoves to all our staff. You could potentially get your own LogFire wood burning stove for as little as £765 (4Kw Stove).

With more than 33 colours to choose from and various pedestal options, this could be the perfect Xmas gift for the family!

For more information and pricing, please visit <http://www.flexiflueliners.com/LogFire-Stoves/>

Prices are already discounted by 10% and you can claim your extra 15% staff discount by using the coupon code WECPROMO14

Finance options through your wage are also

available; please contact HR for more info.



We are now also manufacturing a wide range of chimney products and flue connection pipes. To find out more about those, please visit www.flexiflueliners.com

Get in the saddle with our cycle scheme

OUR great cycle to work scheme is still available to you. Get fit, lose weight,

help the environment – and save money!

All staff can sign up to the scheme to obtain bicycles and safety equipment while saving income tax and national insurance.

You can obtain bicycles and safety equipment usually up to a limit of £1,000! The scheme works by having the bike and equipment cost taken from your gross salary.

That means you can spread the cost of a new bike over either 12 or 18 months.

We are offering this benefit in partnership with Cyclescheme Ltd, the UK's No.1 Cycle to Work provider which works with local, independent bicycle retailers and has over 1,800 partner stores nationwide.

To find your local Cyclescheme Partner Store, check your savings

and request a certificate go to:

www.cyclescheme.co.uk

help with childcare costs

OUR Childcare Vouchers scheme offers the chance to make huge savings in childcare costs.

The scheme is aimed at helping staff with children up to 15 years of age.

There is no ceiling on earnings and it's available to all working parents.

You can sign up for up to £243 of childcare vouchers per month (£55 a week) instead of the equivalent salary and save the tax and NI that would normally have been deducted from your gross earnings.

We're operating the scheme with Allsave Ltd. For more details email: info@allsaveuk.com or call 01256 339100.