

WEC news

GROUP

Issue Four

Spring 2015



**Joining forces!
Welcoming MTL to the Group**

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to Kris

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New Machines

Laser and Waterjet
machines commissioned...



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Message from the board



WEC Group Commercial Director, Wayne Wild

It's been another exciting quarter for the WEC Group and we are thrilled to welcome metal manufacturing specialist MTL Advanced Ltd to our ranks.

The new acquisition has been a whirlwind experience as we completed the partnership deal within only 21 days of the company entering administration.

Together, we have put a business plan in place to take the company forward and become a major force in the fabrication and engineering sector.

Making the most of our experience and expertise, the WEC management team will give confidence and support to MTL's existing customer base to turn it back into a profitable business ready for a successful future.

After saving 135 jobs, we now have over 600 staff within the Group and 480,000 sq ft of manufacturing floorspace across Lancashire, Merseyside and Yorkshire, meaning we are in a strong position to accept any manufacturing challenge head on as part of the new joint venture.

Continuing with our expansion plans, WEC Powder Coating is now fully operational at our Riverside plant in Darwen. We have already created nine new jobs as a result and we hope to create more as the business develops and we implement new shifts.

We're at the cutting edge

Introducing the world's most efficient laser system!

A new world-class fibre laser machine has been commissioned at our factory in Darwen to cater for a number of large ongoing contracts.

The new TruLaser machine uses up to 75% less energy than our existing laser cutting technology, enabling us to pass on these savings to customers and making us more energy efficient overall.

Continuous investments in the latest laser cutting technology allow us to retain our competitive edge and remain one of the top laser cutting companies in the UK.

As part of our ambitious expansion plans, we will carry on investing in new, state-of-the-art machinery for each division and creating new jobs to keep us at the forefront of the manufacturing industry.



YOUR NEWS...
...YOUR VIEWS

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

Meet the powder coating team



Ian Martin, Powder Coating Production Manager

WEC News caught up with our powder coating production manager, Ian Martin.

Tell us about your background in the industry

I have been involved in powder coating for 34 years. I started as a sprayer and have worked my way to

the position I am in now. Along the way I have acquired a multitude of skills but there are always new technologies to learn and improvements are always being made to the powder and the application of it.

What are you looking forward to the most?

The WEC powder coating plant is exciting because we are new to the industry and potential customers are always on the lookout for an exceptional paint shop. My goal is to be the first port of call because of the reputation that we will have.

What are your objectives?

My objective is to be one of the best and most professional paint shops, not just in the North West, but in Britain. As WEC's reputation as the top engineering company in the country grows, I want ours to grow alongside it.

How will you achieve it?

I will always strive to be the best we can, I don't accept second best when it comes to quality and believe the team of people I have will help us to achieve this.



Powder Coating Team Left to right, top: Carl Kenny, Scott Harrison and Michael Holden. Middle: Gavin Thomas and Tracey Shepherd. Bottom: Liam Bullen, Daniel McLaughlin and Chris Goodlad.

The team have been busy preparing to get everything in place for the launch of the division this month.

Carl Kenny, pictured top left, said: "I have really enjoyed getting everything set up and looking forward to a bright future for the coating plant.

"It's very impressive and I think that our expertise and high-tech machinery will make us a serious competitor on the market."

The new powder coating plant has been commissioned and is now taking on work.



New plant based at our Riverside factory in Darwen.

WEC
POWDER COATING

The £500,000 Gema powder coating system comes fully equipped with automatic reciprocators, a 90% recovery system and a four stage in-line pre-treatment plant.

Looking to a bright future



Pictured L-R: Steve Hartley, managing director of WEC Group with Karl Stewart, sales director of MTL.

We have funded a partnership deal to acquire certain assets of metal manufacturing specialist MTL Group, saving 135 jobs.

The new partnership has more than doubled our manufacturing capacity, and the joint venture has essentially made us one of the largest laser cutting operations in the UK. The addition of MTL's 135 staff to our ranks also means that we now have around 600 staff within the group.

The deal, which brought the firm out of administration, was signed by Steve Hartley at the end of February allowing us to move forward as a new, major force in the UK's fabrication and engineering sector.

Wayne Wild, our Group Commercial Director, said: "MTL is a really great fit for our business. The company has a great track record, working with big name customers and has an impressive order book, despite the problems it has had."

MTL operates from a 300,000 sq ft capacity factory in Rotherham and the manufacturing facility includes laser cutting and bending, high definition plasma cutting, waterjet cutting, gas profile cutting, robotic plasma tube cutting and robotic bending.



MTL also carries out CNC machining, fabrication with robotics and has a number of semi-automated and manual welding stations. The extensive robotic welding and armour plate manufacturing capabilities MTL has brought to the table will enable us to win new contracts in the Defence and Aerospace sectors.

Together we now have a total of 18 laser, 4 waterjet and 2 plasma cutting machines on our plant list. This includes the largest laser machine in the UK, capable of cutting parts up to 20m long x 3.2m wide x 20mm thick with a bevel capability of up to 45 degrees!

In addition, MTL house one of the largest waterjet machines in the country, with a 12m x 3m bed which complements our current set up in Blackburn. Its 2 high definition plasma cutters can cut profiles up to 25m x 5m with bevel capability to 40 degrees, and they've also got a tube cutter which can cut up to 1000mm dia. and 40mm thickness.



Now available: Large laser cutting up to 20m long x 3.2m wide x 20mm thick with bevel capability of up to 45 degrees!

Karl Stewart, sales director of MTL, is excited for the future and the opportunities that now exist. He said: "The synergy with WEC Group is very strong and this deal makes both businesses much stronger entities.

"It enhances our capabilities and capacity and that is a major advantage to all our customers.

"MTL has certain specialities that WEC hasn't been involved in which can now be offered to the Group's customers, including our large laser cutting and bending capabilities.

"And WEC Group has operations and areas of expertise that we haven't been involved in, such as its new powder coating division. The additional capacity is another massive positive that comes out of this deal."

Steve Hartley, WEC Group founder and Managing Director, said: "In 35 years of trading we have always grown the business in a strategic and sustainable way.

"Adding MTL to our family is a logical move for us and for MTL and we look forward to the future with confidence."



We now also have plasma tube cutting capability of up to 8m x 1000mm dia x 40mm wall thickness!

To find out more about MTL and its operations please visit the website:
www.mtladv.com

MTL - putting names to faces

Now you know about the MTL partnership deal, it's time to get to know the MTL team...



Howard Kellett
Finance Director

"The financial strength of WEC Group will be a major factor in the future success of the combined businesses."

"The new partnership between WEC & MTL opens many doors for exciting new opportunities."



Andrew Fearnough
Sales & Operations
Planning Manager

"People are integral to our business, with the knowledge, skills and diversity present in the new partnership the possibilities are endless."



Anita Adams
HR Manager



Mick Coates
Programmes Manager



Shaun Levitt
IT Manager



Dave Tuckwood
Supply Chain Manager

Simon Pugh
Production Manager



Karl Stewart
Commercial Director

"The synergy with WEC Group is very strong and this deal makes both businesses much stronger entities."

www.mtladv.com

mtl

It was a Hat-Trick at the Hive Business Awards!



WINNER IN THE

Blackburn
& Darwen
Business
Awards
HIVE 2015

The Manufacturing Excellence Award

The judges were impressed with our very high manufacturing standards and our ambitious expansion plans. We were also commended for our commitment to apprenticeships and our continuous investments in state-of-the-art technology.



The Eureka Award

We won this award based on our innovative Employee Benefit Loan Scheme. 47 loans have been granted so far, amounting to £55,000 over the past six months. The scheme aims to combat debt caused by high interest pay day loans.



The Bright Spark Award

James Pickles blew the judges away with his achievements in the under 30 category. He was recognised for the positive impact he has made in the workplace with the introduction of lean manufacturing processes and his contribution towards the set up of the new powder coating division.



The Hive Awards is the first ever event to celebrate the best of businesses in Blackburn with Darwen, and the Hive is a group of business leaders working together to inspire prosperity.

We are one of the many companies in the area who support the plan for prosperity which aims to create new jobs in the Borough, to get more locals in work and bring new investment to the town.

We were up against some fantastic companies and it's a great achievement for us to win the three prestigious awards.

A Premier chance to shine

The tremendous success of our award-winning training academy was highlighted at a special event attended by Prime Minister David Cameron.



The PM came to Lancashire to speak to more than 300 apprentices from across the North West to mark National Apprenticeship Week.

Held at BAE Systems in Warton, our Training and Development Manager Kris Mercer and former apprentice Ben Whalley sat on the Q&A panel.

They took part in the discussions about apprenticeships and answered a series of questions from the Prime Minister and apprentices.

We were there as one of the UK's top three apprentice employers alongside BAE and MBDA Missiles.

Kris Mercer said: "The event was fantastic. It was a chance to shine and tell the Prime Minister and apprentices about the success of our academy."

The PM also praised our training. He said: "Here in Lancashire we are seeing a massive push for apprenticeships. I think of BAE Systems near Preston or other Lancashire companies like WEC."

Kris and Ben spoke about the reasons behind why the WEC training academy is so successful, the career paths that are available after completing an apprenticeship and the range of skills and qualifications we provide.

There's fair weather ahead

Our apprentices save the day for church, putting their new skills into practice...

First year apprentices at the training academy have been busy working on a new weather vane for a local church.

We're donating the completed project to St Cuthbert's Church in Darwen where it will have pride of place on top of the newly refurbished roof, which had recently been damaged in a storm.

The apprentices have put their new skills into practice and used traditional metalworking and blacksmithing techniques to create an exact replica of the original vane from scratch.

Keep up the good work!



Original

Replica

Weathering the storm: The new vane replica takes shape

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

Apprentices recreate Lowry's iconic matchstick man and his dog!

A stunning statue created by our apprentices in tribute to Lancashire artist LS Lowry is set to become a seaside visitor attraction.

The work celebrates one of Lowry's famously painted matchstick men and his dog, included in several of his works, and will be located at Knott End on the Lancashire coast.

It will sit on the town's ferry slip site where the artist created some of his acclaimed work during summer stays at the seaside village.

Apprentices at our award-winning training academy have been busy crafting the statue, which has been designed in stainless steel and will stand more than 5ft tall when installed on site.

The project is being overseen by Tom Elliot, divisional manager at m-tec our specialist architectural metalwork and fabrication division. The Lowry statue is scheduled to be unveiled in Knott End in early May. The £5,000 project is being funded by Preesall Town Council and Wyre Borough Council.

The Mayor of Preesall Philip Orme and his deputy Gordon McCann visited our training academy to see the statue taking shape. The mayor said: "The idea is to get more people into the village and to give them something to look at."



The sculpture is based on the iconic matchstick men depicted in Lowry's famous paintings.

Congratulations are in order!

We're delighted to announce that Kris Mercer has been promoted to the role of Training and Development Manager.



Kris Mercer (right) pictured with first year apprentices back in 2009 whilst building a suit of armour

Since launching the unique training academy in 2006, Kris has trained over 80 apprentices to an extremely high standard. Many of these apprentices have now progressed in their careers.

For nearly 10 years, Kris' hard work and dedication has helped our apprentices to carve out successful engineering careers.

His passion and drive for our training academy has been an integral part of the company's growth and success since 2006. Today, 14% of our total workforce is made up of apprentices from our academy and 52% of our welders/fabricators in Darwen are apprentices or graduates from the academy.

Thanks to Kris' commitment, the academy has won numerous awards over the past few years and we have recently been recognised as one of the top three apprenticeship providers in the UK.

Congratulations, Kris, for making the training academy such a success!

facebook.com/weacademy



From the Left: Kevin Hudson and Ian Steggles from Laser

The last men standing!

Congratulations go to Ian Steggles and Kevin Hudson, who won £1,990 in the laser division's latest "Last Man Standing" competition.

After the competition rolled over three times, Ian and Kevin repeatedly picked the winning teams from each week's Premier League fixtures.

The pair have put their winnings to good use. Kevin has paid off his family holiday and Ian is planning a trip to see Manchester City play Barcelona at Camp Nou.

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



Newlyweds Gareth and Emma with Rocky

Love is in the air!

Gareth Singleton, Senior Projects Manager from our Special Projects division, got married to Emma on Valentine's Day.

Gareth tied the knot with Emma at St John's the Baptist church in Burnley on February 14. And to make the day extra special he arranged a little surprise.

Emma has owned a show cob called Rocky for over 16 years, and on their way to the venue from the church, Gareth set up a little detour for Rocky to meet them on their special day!

A great day was had by all. Gareth said: "This day marks a great achievement in my life. I've married the best girl in the world!"

Congratulations to you both and wishing you all the best for the future.

Keep up to date with our company news by following us on Twitter (@wecgrouppltd) or Facebook (fb.com/wecgrouppltd)

There's something in the water at WEC...

There's baby talk in the air at WEC Group after a spate of happy deliveries.



Reuben James Aspden

Marvin Aspden from our laser division and his girlfriend Iona welcomed their new arrival, Reuben James Aspden, into the world on January 25 at 2.57pm weighing a healthy 7lb 7oz.

Danielle Rutter from Laser and partner Lee had their baby girl, Grace Finch, on October 8th weighing 9lb 11oz.



Grace Finch

Chantelle West from accounts and partner Simon celebrated the birth of Tilly-Mai born on May 15 last year at 2.57am weighing 7lb 11oz.



Tilly-Mai

There must also be something in the water at 5750 components, as Jo and Tony Holt's first child Isabella Faith came into the world on February 9 at 5.46pm weighing 6lb 1oz. Tony is a laser operator.



Isabella Faith

Also in Knowsley, proud parents Gary Chapple and Jeanette Smith welcomed Joshua Ray, who arrived on March 31 at 2.47am weighing 7lb 7 1/2oz. He's pictured here with his older brother Lewis.



Joshua Ray

Press brake operator Anthony Jervis and mum Claire are celebrating the arrival of Jack Bernie on March 9 at 1.38pm. He was a bouncing 6lb 12oz.

Congratulations to all the proud mums and dads!



Jack Bernie

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Bryan & Amy hit the road running for charity

Sherburn Metalwork's General Manager Bryan Bentley is pulling on his running shoes and striding out for a great cause later this year.

The 41-year-old is taking part in the Great North Run on Sunday 13th September and is hoping to raise hundreds of pounds for the Sue Ryder charity.

Before that he'll take to the streets of Manchester with his partner Amy – in the Great Manchester 10k Run in May. Bryan started running in his 30s and his previous efforts raised over £400 for Sue Ryder – thanks to the generosity of WEC Group workers.

He says: "I took it up to get fit, though I'm not built for running, and it has continued since then.

"I'm hoping to beat both my personal best for the Great North Run and increase the amount of money I raise for the charity. But before that we're doing the Manchester Run for a bit of fun."



Pictured: Bryan Bentley and partner Amy

Bryan is currently pounding the streets around his home as he builds up his training regime ready for both big challenges. He says: "I'm running about five to six kilometres, four or five times a week at the moment. It's going well so far!"

Elouise and Sean's charity race success

Our marketing assistant Elouise Pemberton and CAD programmer Sean Procter completed the Winter Warmer 10k race to raise money for local charities.

Elouise and Sean raised nearly £150 between them for their chosen charities Nightsafe and The Rosemere Cancer Foundation after taking part in the Blackburn Winter Warmer 10k race in February.

Not only did they raise a substantial amount of money, but the pair also beat their personal best times – Out of a field of 500 runners, Sean came in 66th place with a time of 43:06 and Elouise came in 275th place with a personal best time of 54.52!

Elouise and Sean would like to express their gratitude to all those who sponsored and supported them.



Elouise Pemberton and Sean Procter collect their well deserved medals after completing the tough 10k route.

Are you taking part or training for a sporting event? Tell us about it in the next newsletter.
Email stories to: newsletter@wecl.co.uk

Fulledge Colts kick off in style

The players of Fulledge Colts under-15s football team are sporting smart new kits thanks to WEC Group.

Our sponsorship of the East Lancashire youngsters means that the club has been able to buy branded Adidas sportswear.

And they will be taking to the pitch in the branded kits for the up and coming Amsterdam Cup, summer tournaments and 2015/16 season.

Matthew McRae, CEO of our machining division, has a 15-year-old son who plays for the team.

Joe McRae is a former Liverpool Academy player and striker for the club and he is currently the highest league scorer this season, with 41 league goals so far.

Fulledge Colts U15's coach Alex Norwood said: "The players will represent the WEC brand with impeccable behaviour and sportsmanship in both domestic and international competitions."



Going with the flow at WECJet

WECJet is going through an exciting spell of growth after commissioning a new waterjet machine.

We recently invested £500,000 in a state-of-the-art waterjet machine with a 7.3m x 2m bed, a much larger version of our existing kit. The machine was commissioned in March and has since been used to cater for some of our larger contracts.

The new kit and the recent partnership deal with MTL has boosted our total number of waterjet machines to four, enabling us to tender for larger contracts. The increased capacity will also significantly improve the division's lead times.

WECJet is currently tendering for a number of aerospace contracts as a result of the recent AS 9100 accreditation and the new waterjet cutting machine.

Great work from the WECJet team!



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...YOUR VIEWS

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newsletter@wecl.co.uk

Our teams are on the road again!

WEC is continuing to promote the business as we take part in a number of trade shows throughout the year.

Graham Wood, our Goose Foot Street Furniture Divisional Manager, exhibited at the Regen 2015 conference in Liverpool and generated some promising new leads. Many councils, architects and regeneration consultants attended the show and had great things to say about our street furniture.



One of the latest projects from Goose Foot included 10 bespoke seats for Colwyn Bay in Wales, a contract that came in the back of our attendance to the previous Regen conference.



Goose Foot stand at Regen 2015 in Liverpool.

Homebuilding & Renovating Show

NEC BIRMINGHAM
26-29 MARCH 2015

Sponsored by **Anglia**
Home improve



LogFire stand at the Homebuilding & Renovating Show 2015 at the NEC in Birmingham

Our LogFire division is continuing to take the stove and flue market by storm, and after a last minute offer, the team exhibited at the Home Building & Renovating Show at the NEC in Birmingham. The four day show hosts thousands of visitors each day and the exhibition had some promising results from building contractors, home owners and many more.

Thanks to all of those involved for their hard work and dedication as it is continuously taking WEC Group from strength to strength.

This year the group will be exhibiting at a number of exhibitions including:

- Subcon, Birmingham 2 - 4 June
- Offshore Europe, Aberdeen 8 - 11 September
- DSEI, London 15 - 18 September

Subcon
2 - 4 JUNE 2015 • NEC BIRMINGHAM

OE 2015
8-11 SEPT 2015
Offshore Europe ABERDEEN, UK

DSEI
15 - 18 September 2015
The World Leading Defence & Security Event
ExCeL, London www.DSEI.co.uk

All aboard as Sherburn bus takes to the air at transport museum

The team at Sherburn Metalwork has manufactured a custom-built bus for Optare that has been given to the London Transport Museum as a new interactive feature.

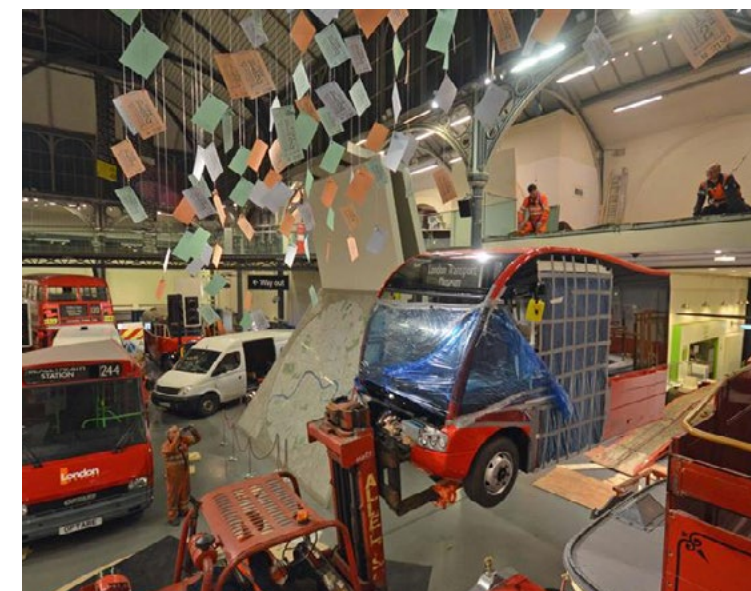
The Solo midi bus model, which was given to the museum for free, was suspended in mid-air before being loaded up into the upper deck of the All Aboard play area.

The unique design of the Solo is popular with bus operators and passengers and it will now hold a firm place in the hearts and minds of young people who visit the museum. Children can sit in the driving seat and use the indicators, change the bus blinds and look at the CCTV.

SML built a low entry floor combined with the front axle being positioned in front of the door to allow the children to climb aboard easily.

Sam Mullins, Director of London Transport Museum, said: "The bus will be a key attraction within our new All Aboard family play zone, and a heavily visited, and photographed feature for all our museum visitors. The new play zone will encourage our youngest visitors to learn through imaginative and creative play"

The project was completed in just seven days after a lot of hard work and dedication from the team. Well done to all of those involved.



The Solo midi bus being lifted into position as part of the All Aboard play area at the London Transport Museum.



Sitting pretty: The new seats have caught the eye of visitors

Hitting a new bench mark

The Goose Foot Street Furniture team has been busy manufacturing 10 eye catching seats for Colwyn Bay's promenade.

Goose Foot worked with Freshwest Design to produce the seats and benches for the North Wales seaside town.

The seat frames were laser cut and fabricated using 316 marine grade stainless steel and kebony syp timbers.

The final fabrication, assembly and installation were undertaken by Freshwest Design. The street furniture has been designed to stop people in their tracks and provoke discussion from the general public.

Goose Foot General Manager Graham Wood said: "We hope that these seats will be an asset to the local community and an attraction for visitors on the promenade."

The town's Waterfront Project combines the renewal of coastal defences with regeneration improvements to the prom, creating a modern, sustainable and attractive waterfront.

www.goosefootuk.com

GETTING TO KNOW...

WEC Group Director MAXINE WILD

When you were a child what did you want to be when you grew up?
A vet or an RSPCA Inspector.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Spending time with my family & friends, visiting new places & holidays, eating out, entertaining at home and spending time with my horse, Jazz.

Who is your favourite singer?

My music taste is quite varied to be honest & I enjoy listening to lots of different music / singers. If I had to pick one though I'd say Amy Winehouse.

What makes you smile?

Prosecco :)
and of course my son Mason.

What's your favourite holiday getaway?

This is a tough one as I've loved everywhere I've visited. I've been to Las Vegas a couple of times now & love it. We go to Kilkenny every year with friends which have to be one of my favourite places in the world. At the top of my list though is Rio & Buenos Aires, Argentina where Wayne and I visited on our honeymoon, both were amazing.



Maxine Wild, WEC Group Director

Who is the person you admire the most?

There are so many revolutionaries, inventors and great achievers in the world – it would be hard to choose one. However, Martin Luther King stands out for me.

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

"Marry a man who can cook," clearly I don't take any notice of advice I'm given! So I think my answer here is, live life to the best of your ability, most of all be yourself and do what makes you happy.

If you could have a superpower what would it be?

To see into the future.

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

If you'd have asked me 25 years ago - it would have been Nathan from Brother Beyond. Nowadays though I'd say Sigmund Freud.

What's your favourite food?

Anything Italian, in particular pasta, pizza and Italian meats. Anything that doesn't feature on a dieting app!

What is your favourite film?

I don't watch massive amounts of films but I'm addicted to box sets on Netflix and have a nightly fix of 2 x episodes of Sons of Anarchy.

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

Marrying Wayne??
Other than that I'm not sure what comes to mind is suitable for print! As they say, "What goes on in Vegas - stays in Vegas!"

What would you say is your greatest achievement to date?

Academically, I'd say graduating from law school & gaining the initials LLB Honours after my name. However, on a personal note I have to say I'm proud of my achievements as a mum, I am lucky to have a gorgeous, bright and comical little boy!

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

Attending awards ceremonies, in particular when we won the Business of the Year award. Such events make you proud of all that we've achieved as a business. Also, hosting the WEC & Annual Apprentice awards are most definitely my highlights. I really enjoy presenting the awards nights; it makes me very proud to be part of everyone's achievements.

A special thanks from Maxine & Wayne...

"We'd like to say a big thank you to Mushy and Shane at HSS Hire Blackburn for helping AFC Darwen out on Saturday March 28. They very kindly loaned us a pump to clear surface water off the pitch free of charge, enabling the game to go ahead and the side to beat Ashton, taking AFC Darwen through to the final of the Reusch Cup!"



LogFire Stoves - 25% Staff Discount

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).

There are lots of colours to choose from and different pedestal options. For more information and for pricing please visit: www.logfirestoves.com

To benefit from this offer please contact Craig Mollet on: craig@logfirestoves.com