

July 2015 Presidential Blog Dawn Bonfield

I have been a bit remiss with my reporting lately - sorry! National Women in Engineering Day (NWED) took over my life, and the lives of our office staff and probably many other people, for a good few weeks over May and June and everything else seemed to go on hold, so I have some catching up to do here.

National Women in Engineering Day

Firstly though I just have to say how delighted we were with the success of NWED. The overview of the day and its impact can be seen [here](#), but to summarise, we had over 170 events that we know about this year; over 750 resource packs sent out to schools and organisations by post; we reached over one million people with our twitter thunderclap and we trended in first place in the UK and 5th place worldwide with the #nwed hashtag on twitter. The day was mentioned in Westminster parliament, in Scottish parliament and was the subject of two tweets by David Cameron. HRH Prince Charles visited one of the events (Selex ES) in Scotland and met our Immediate Past President Carol Marsh; our video (that I feature in) [Pushing Boundaries](#) was viewed over 2000 times on the day (with many more young people than this seeing it, as it was shown in schools); the day was reported in over 150 national newspapers and journals, with over 16,000 people visiting the [NWED website](#), and the BBC4 Radio programme Woman's Hour featured a woman engineer every day that week. The day was also celebrated internationally with events going on in Kuwait (that our incoming President Benita Mehra spoke at), India, South Africa and the United States. We were absolutely delighted by the take up of this day and I congratulate everybody who was involved, and a special thank you to Amina Khalid in the WES office who masterminded it all this year.



Other things have also happened recently though, so here are some of them:

Presidential Commission on Diversity in Engineering

At the very end of May I was surprised and honoured to get a call from David Balmforth, President of ICE, asking me whether I would undertake a commission for his Presidential year on Diversity in Engineering. Despite the impending National Women in Engineering Day and the work involved, which momentarily made me wonder whether I would have time to do this, I quickly realised that this was an opportunity that I couldn't turn down, and so accepted the challenge. I am now in the process of consulting on this, and coming up with creative ways of increasing diversity in engineering. I intend to call it Disruptive Diversity, so if you have any bright ideas then please do let me know office@wes.org.uk This is due to be finalised in early October so watch this space.

Diversity Leadership Group's Work Experience Guidelines

I have been involved with the Diversity Leadership subgroup of the Royal Academy of Engineering and we have been producing some work experience guidelines to help companies to increase their ability to offer work experience placements. Currently insufficient placements are available in the engineering sector, especially to a diverse group of students, and this guidance was developed to address this issue. The guidance has now been published and can be found [here](#). The next task of the subgroup is to work on a mechanism of engagement with parents to encourage them to see engineering as a desirable career choice for their children. Any ideas here would be greatly appreciated.



50 Influential Women in Engineering

We have been working on this initiative for a couple of months pulling together the team who will formulate the list, and we now have a team in place consisting of WES, Prospect Union, Harvey Nash,

Matchtech, IET and The Daily Telegraph as media partner. The list will be launched in conjunction with National Women in Engineering Day 2016.

Corporate WES Partner Sharing Day

We had the first of our corporate partner knowledge sharing days in May and this went down very well. We had four short presentations from our partner members and then some really useful discussion on practical ways that companies can improve their diversity. Some partners are much further down the line than others, and it was very useful to all to share and compare experiences. I took the opportunity to tell our members of the very many other things that WES has been doing with their financial assistance too. Next one is during the [WES student conference](#) on 20 November. If you would like to be involved and become a WES Corporate partner please get in touch with me.

Funding for STEM Diversity Networks

In June a group of women in STEM networks got together to discuss 'the elephant in the room' which is the lack of funding for the many passionate groups who work in the area of STEM diversity. This was the second such group meeting, the first being held last year at around the time of the BIS Developing Women in Engineering funding call, and the aim of that first meeting was to see how we could work together to elicit some government funding (which turned out to be unsuccessful). This time we were indebted to Suw Charman-Anderson (founder of Ada Lovelace Day) for getting us all together, and we spent the evening discussing what possible funding sources we could tap into, amongst other things. Whilst we didn't come up with any new pots of gold, it was still very worthwhile getting together, and I absolutely advocate that we continue to do so on an informal and regular basis.

[RIAT – Royal International Air Tattoo](#) and [Harwell Science Open Day](#)

This amazing air show takes place at Fairford in Gloucestershire in July and is always a huge privilege to attend. We have a stand in the Technozone and here is a picture of WES council member **LisaMarie Brown** on the stand this year. Three days of great air displays and really interesting visitors, young and old. I can't wait to go back again next year. Thanks to Tom Mallin and the organisers for having us there.

On 8 July I also attended the Harwell Science Open Day with a WES stand, and this is another great example of ways to reach out to the younger generation and engage them with science. If Harwell Science Campus and their amazing facilities can't do this and inspire the next generation, then nobody can.



LisaMarie Brown on the WES Stand at RIAT

Well, hopefully I have caught up a bit now.

Thanks for reading this blog, and see you next month.

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