

Inspiring a younger generation into STEM and the Aviation Industry

Our goal: Inspiring young people to explore careers in STEM and aviation, to support and encourage their future career choices.

How can you help? By sharing your story

Name & job role:	Jo MacDonald General Aviation Unit Airworthiness Surveyor
What did you enjoy doing when you were younger?	I've always like design technology so for Christmas my parents bought me a set of wood working tools and cleared out the shed. I made a few bits. I've always liked doing an activity/making something whether it was woodwork, sewing, clay models, painting etc. I've also been into horses, something that came in useful at my apprenticeship interview when I was asked if I understood the sometimes dirty, heavy and cold work of a helicopter maintenance apprenticeship. At this point I had own horse on a full loan for some years so I could explain that dirty heavy and cold work wasn't new, and I got the role.
What were your favourite subjects in school? Why?	I loved Art and design technology. I always chose to do something out of the ordinary. For my GCSE project in DT I did a 5 piece fire companion set instead of the simple box/shelves that the other girls in the class did. Unfortunately, that meant using the forge and welder which the new teacher could not use proficiently. Thankfully I had an Art teacher and an uncle to help.
What or who inspired you to study these?	I went to an all-girls school which I think helped in pushing STEM subjects. You weren't competing with boys in the class. We were always told you could do anything you wanted to.
Did you do work experience? Where and did it help in choosing your career path?	I originally wanted to be a Vet so I did various work experience placements with animals, but it was a "take our daughters to work day" with



	<p>my Dad when I was 14 that stayed with me. My Dad was Maintenance Manger and licensed engineer with British World Airlines at the time. I spent the day helping to figure out the available aircraft as one had a defect and even went on a taxi run test of the propeller down the runway in a Vickers Viscount.</p>
<p>What was your first job?</p>	<p>Helicopter maintenance apprentice.</p>
<p>How did you arrive where you are in your career?</p>	<p>I started A levels that were geared up for veterinary science. I then took Electronics instead of Physics A level and came out with an A in the first module, so I started to look at engineering courses. I applied for a couple of apprenticeships and narrowly missed out. I then changed my coursed to ones more suited for engineering. A BTEC National Diploma gave me progression to HND if the apprenticeship scheme didn't work out. At 19 I was already too old for some of the apprenticeships that were available due to funding. The BTEC showed the hand skills that helped me get my apprenticeship the following year. Being a woman there was certainly a need to demonstrate that I realised what career the course would give me, that I could use tools to make something, that I had an interest in engineering and I was happy working in sometimes hostile environments.</p> <p>After a 4 year apprenticeship I worked towards getting both an CAT A and B maintenance license. I have worked on various aircraft, mainly large helicopters such as the S92 and AS332.</p> <p>I joined the CAA 6 years ago as an inspecting officer in Airworthiness which enabled me to gain the skills and experience to become a surveyor</p>
<p>What do you love about your current job?</p>	<p>I love the wide variety of things we deal with on a daily basis. Education is also a large part of what we do with the GA community.</p>
<p>What were the biggest challenges/barriers you had to overcome?</p>	<p>Although my secondary school was keen to give a variety of opportunities it was assumed that</p>



	<p>every student would do A levels at the sixth form. Vocational training was barely mentioned and certainly not apprenticeships. Once at sixth form it was assumed you were going to university but once my ideas changed from being a vet, I realised university wasn't for me. I left my A level course halfway through to take a BTEC national diploma in Aero science, which in all honesty was the course I should have been on all along. It gave me the opportunity to demonstrate the hand skills that gave me the edge when</p>
<p>Who have you looked up to and why?</p>	<p>My whole family have been aviation, I have followed in my Dads footsteps both as an engineer and a surveyor. I would like to emulate his easy-going helpful attitude to industry and the CAA.</p>
<p>What is your ambition?</p>	<p>At the moment, to gain further experience in the role I am in. It's taken a long time to get here!</p>
<p>What is the best advice you were given?</p>	<p>Always be at the front of the crowd when something is being explained to you and never be frightened of asking a question.</p>
<p>What advice would you give a younger you?</p>	<p>You will get where you want to be eventually</p>

