

27th September 2012

Museum Apprentice Excels At Regional Awards

An Apprentice at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford has been named as one of the West Midlands' best apprentices in the regional final of the National Apprenticeship and National Training Awards 2012. The joint awards ceremony, organised by the National Apprenticeship Service, was held at Birmingham City Council's Banqueting Suite on Monday 24th September, where Museum Apprentice Laura Pringle won the 'Pearson Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year'.

Laura will now go forward to the National judging round where she will be in head to head competition with eleven other regional winners. The National Apprenticeship Service Awards Reception will take place at the opening ceremony of The Skills Show 2012 on the 14th November at the NEC Birmingham.

RAF Museum Training Manager, Mick Shepherd said:

"Laura joined us in 2010 and since then has gone from strength to strength not just at work but also in her studies with City of Wolverhampton College. Particularly noteworthy is the work she does giving career advice and practical training to West Midlands school children. Laura leads our team that looks after work experience students here at the Conservation Centre as well as visiting schools where she demonstrates her craft and explains what it is like to make the transition from school to work. I felt particularly honoured to be invited to accompany Laura and her parents to the awards ceremony and was extremely proud but not completely surprised when she received the 'Pearson Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year'. When one of our young Apprentices wins an award such as this it proves we are on the right track. Laura has now commenced her Advanced Apprenticeship and I look forward to seeing her develop even more."

The RAF Museum's Apprenticeship scheme began in 2005, due to a shortage of people with the hand skills required to look after its historic aircraft collection. The Museum began running apprenticeships for heritage aircraft engineers who soon proved to be a source of enthusiastic, reliable, trustworthy, capable and safe pairs of extra hands. Nurtured by the Museum's Aircraft Technicians, master craftsmen in their trade, the Apprentices rapidly developed their hand-skills and their work is now enthusiastically incorporated into Museum exhibits for future generations to admire. The Apprentices are a vital asset in the Museum's team and have enabled the Museum to be less reliant on outside contractors and to keep more work in house under its direct control.

The National Training Awards recognise organisations that have delivered outstanding training programmes and the National Apprenticeship Awards celebrate the achievements of the country's most outstanding Apprenticeship employers and their apprentices. Both awards are organised by the National Apprenticeship Service, who received in excess of 1,500 high quality entrants this year.

Karen Woodward, Divisional Apprenticeship Director, from the National Apprenticeship Service, said:

"This year's awards were a terrific showcase of the outstanding wealth of talent that we have across the West Midlands. Given the volume and high calibre of entries we received, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Laura Pringle for this superb achievement. They are a testament to the many benefits Apprenticeships and training bring to businesses, allowing employers to tap into new raw talent, up-skill their staff and grow."

The Museum works in partnership with City of Wolverhampton College for the academic and specialist vocational education of the Apprentices as well as the assessment and verification of their skills for NVQ awards.

...ends

Notes to Editors:

- The Conservation Centre will be open to the public from 12-17 November 2012 for visitors to gain behind-the-scenes access to aircraft conservation work. Visitors will have a rare opportunity to view current projects including the Wellington and the Hampden and the chance to speak with the skilled Technicians and Apprentices about their work. Open from 10.15am – 1.00pm.
- Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- FREE admission
- Open daily 10am – 6pm
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Michelle Morgans on 01902 376 212 or michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org
- RAF Museum Cosford images & logo available at: <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/media-vault.aspx>