NEWS RELEASE

02.03.2020

Sisters are doing it for themselves!

Most people believe that engineering is still very much a male profession.

But at the Fife Ethylene Plant at Mossmorran, more and more females are choosing to make a career in the field.

In the last decade the number of females joining the apprenticeship programme has seen a steady rise.

And as International Women's Day approaches this weekend, we found out from three females at differing stages of their FEP careers how they have found working in a male dominated environment.

Niamh Blanski (19), from Dunfermline is a third year Electrical Technician apprentice.

She attended Queen Anne High School in Dunfermline where her favourite subjects were maths and physics - because she was good at them.

She completed four Highers in Maths, English, Physics and Graphic Communication.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do until the start of S4 when my brother did an apprenticeship and I thought that sounded ideal. I looked into it and applied for the ExxonMobil scheme and was lucky enough to be accepted.

"I left school at the end of S5 and started my apprenticeship at Forth Valley College in 2017.

"I would encourage any girl who is thinking about a career in engineering to go for it. It's led me into this great career.

"When I was deciding what subjects to take for my Highers a lot of my pals didn't want to do maths and science because they would be the only girls taking them. There were only

two or three other females in my classes, but that really didn't bother me and I've never regretted it.

"I am hoping to have a great career here at FEP."

Zoe Smith (22), from Lundin Links is a Machinery Technician at FEP. She began full-time work at the plant last September after completing a four-year apprenticeship.

The former Waid Academy pupil says she didn't like school and left with Standard Grades in Craft and Design and Physics and an Int. 2 in Maths.

"I always fancied a career in engineering and I found out about the apprenticeship programme when I went along to a careers fair at school.

"I did my apprenticeship at Rosyth Dockyard and was one of the last people to do it there.

"It was tough going as I didn't have Higher Maths like some of the other apprentices. But I knew that if I wanted to get a good job at the end I would have to work extra hard, so I did.

"Although there were only two girls out of around 30 in my college class it didn't faze me at all. It just made me more determined to succeed!

"When I got told I had a full-time job here I was over the moon and I am loving my work."

Laura Neville (27), is a process planner at FEP, with responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the plant, both from the control room and in the field.

She lives in Dunfermline with her husband Vaughn and their dog Ted.

But the route to her dream job wasn't a straightforward one.

"At school it was always maths and chemistry I was interested in because I was always very technically minded."

She left school with Highers in Maths, Chemistry, English, German and Business.

"I decided to go to university to study Maths because at that point I wanted to be a Maths teacher, but I quickly realised I wasn't ready for uni and I left after the first year.

"Before I left school in S4 I had applied for an apprenticeship here, but I wasn't successfulthe, after leaving university I got a job here at FEP in administration.

"When my boss heard that I was really interested in being an engineer and had previously applied for an apprenticeship, he encouraged me to change. In 2012 I started an apprenticeship in process engineering and I've never looked back.

"I got a permanent job in 2015 and I really enjoy the challenges my job brings every day.

“You are always having to think on your feet and it is good to have a challenge and not get bored.

“There were three girls out of about 20 on my college course and we weren’t treated any differently from the boys.

“I would encourage any girls thinking of an engineering career to follow their dreams. They won’t regret it.”