

A day in the life of an Aldermans apprentice

Dylan Chilcott

At school what did you most enjoy, or excel at?

When at school, I always enjoyed Maths, Engineering and Art.

What was it about engineering as a career that appealed to you?

I used to like doing drawings and sketches in Engineering, and had the idea of being in the drawing office of an engineering company.

Why did you decide to pursue an apprenticeship?

I always preferred the idea of getting good experience and learning whilst earning some money. I never fancied a more theory-based route to university to start off.

How did you find your apprenticeship placement?

I contacted Plymouth City College and they organised two interviews for me.

Why did you choose Aldermans?

I had opportunities for two interviews, one was for an electrical placement in Saltash and another was for a mechanical placement at Aldermans. The interview at Aldermans was the only one I went for and wanted.

When did your apprenticeship start and end?

I started my apprenticeship at Aldermans in September 2011, and I received my apprenticeship certificate in January 2015. I finished college in July 2014 but my NVQ level 3 went on until October 2014.



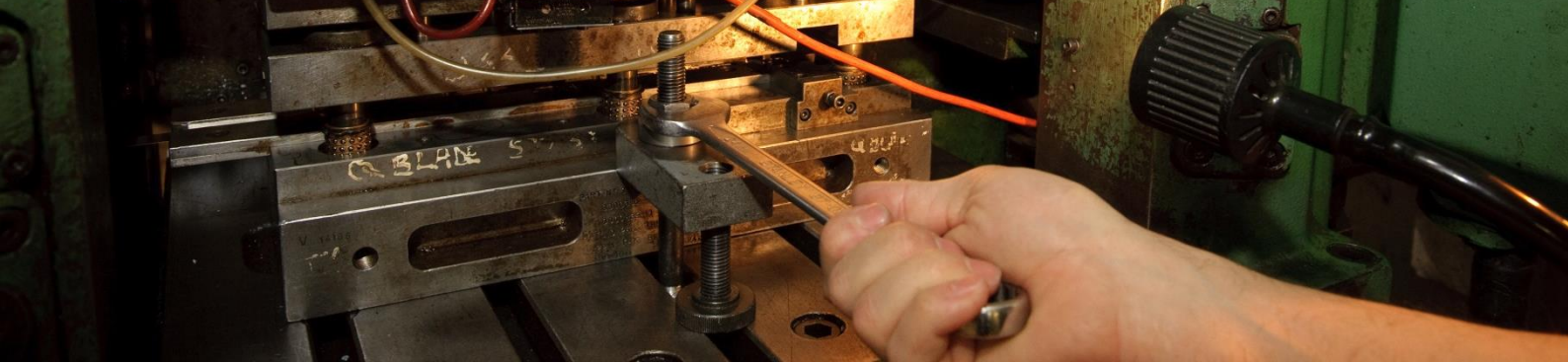
Dylan (above left) in the toolroom at Aldermans with his mentor

How has Aldermans helped you to develop your skills?

Due to Aldermans being a smaller company I have had the chance to gain experience in many different aspects, more than I would have had at another company. I found that I had more experience on a larger variety of machines than my college friends.

What's the most important thing you've learned about yourself during your apprenticeship?

During my apprenticeship I have realised that I am a bit of a perfectionist, and that it is good to have pride in the work that I complete.



During your apprenticeship, what have you achieved that are you most proud of?

I am proud of all of the tests and exams that I have passed, and also the fact that I have been given different responsibilities when it comes to being trusted with important jobs.

What have you learned about being an employee?

Being an employee is more than just doing what your employer asks you to do. You have to respect management, get on with other colleagues and work as a team to meet the deadlines that are set. Being an employee is also about making suggestions on how the workplace could be made more effective, due to you having first-hand experience of working on the shop floor.

Are there any down-sides to being an apprentice?

At the start of your apprenticeship college work can be a bit repetitive. Also, when at work you can have the less exciting jobs offloaded onto you; but it is all part of the learning curve.

What do you do on a typical day at work?

If I have had a job assigned to me, then I will get on with that. If I finish it, or do not have a job, then I will find my line manager and ask for a job. If there are no jobs then I will see if any colleagues need help or give the workshop a sweep, or tidy a machine that needs cleaning.

How has your apprenticeship helped you plan the next steps in your career?

An apprenticeship is a great eye-opener into the world of work and has given me a great opportunity to get as much experience and as many qualifications as possible whilst I am still young. Apprenticeships can lead on to higher foundation courses (HNC for example – Higher National Certificate), which I would like to do at some point in the future.

What would you say to others who might consider an engineering apprenticeship?

I would definitely encourage going down this route, as it is good to earn money whilst learning, and gaining knowledge and experience is a good thing to do at a young age. An apprenticeship has also given me the chance to do other things, like buying a car and passing my driving test. Apprenticeships are also more hands-on, and are a much more practical approach as opposed to doing A-levels which can be much more theory-based.

About Aldermans

A family firm, established in Plymouth for over 45 years, we're one of the region's best-known and respected metal fabricators.

Combining traditional skills with the latest technologies, we offer our clients an integrated metalwork service, from design and prototyping to small or large-scale production runs.

Our technologies include press tooling, pressbrake folding, CNC machining (lasering, punching, milling, turning), cutting, welding, assembly and kitting, and powder coating.

We are proud to hold the EN ISO 9001 quality management certification.

As well as investing regularly in the latest technologies, we also invest in our staff through training in manufacturing management techniques, such as lean manufacturing and Six Sigma.

We are an active member of PMG, the Plymouth Manufacturers' Group.