*7th January 2014 – for immediate release Further information: Chris Pockett, +44 1453 524133*

**Renishaw engineer honoured at national Young Woman Engineer of the Year awards**

Lucy Ackland, a project manager working on Renishaw’s next generation metal 3D printing machine, was awarded the Women’s Engineering Society (WES) Prize at the IET’s Young Woman Engineer of the Year awards ceremony held in London, UK, during December.

27-year-old Lucy, who is currently based at Renishaw’s Additive Manufacturing Products Division in Stone, Staffordshire, but lives in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, was presented with the WES prize which is awarded to a young female engineer who is able to engage and inspire young people’s involvement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Recognising outstanding female engineers has never been so important after recent statistics from the IET’s Skills and Demand in Industry survey showed that women represent only 6% of the UK’s engineering workforce. Further IET research showed that only 1% of parents of girls were likely to encourage their daughters into engineering, compared to 11% for parents of boys.

After joining Renishaw as an apprentice aged just 16, in 2012 Lucy completed a first-class engineering honours degree which was funded by the company. She is a STEM ambassador and has run engineering-based activities for young children over many years, including school projects, talks, seminars, after school engineering clubs and judging STEM club projects. In 2014 she was invited to join the board of trustees of the charity Young Engineers.

Lucy said: “I’m so happy to have won this award – it means a lot to be recognised for the work I do in a really exciting, upcoming industry. I’m pleased to be considered a role model for future generations of female engineers because I believe engineering is a really enjoyable career choice but sometimes people are put off by misleading stereotypes.”

Michelle Richmond, IET Director of Membership, said: “The lack of women in engineering is a very significant problem, contributing to skills shortages which damage the economy. The shocking reality is that the UK is missing out on half of its potential engineering and technology workforce by failing to attract women into the industry. It also means that women are losing out on interesting and rewarding career opportunities.”

She continued: “The difficulty in attracting women into engineering is down to a combination of things: from the careers advice girls are given in schools, to schools not instilling girls with the confidence to opt for science and maths at A-level, through to employers needing to do more to make their approach to recruitment and retention more female friendly. But it’s also a result of the lack of inspirational engineering role models for girls – which is where our Young Woman Engineer of the Year winners can play a vital role.”

Dawn Bonfield, WES President, said: “The Women’s Engineering Society is delighted that this award goes to Lucy Ackland, who has already done an enormous amount to engage and inspire the next generation of female engineers. We are looking forward to working with Lucy this year to do even more for young people, and crucially their parents, in changing stereotypes of the engineering sector and especially of the apprenticeship route into engineering. Congratulations Lucy.”

Chris Pockett, Renishaw’s Head of Communications, said: “We are very proud of what Lucy has already achieved during her engineering career with Renishaw and her tireless work, often in her own time, to promote STEM-based careers to young people. The WES Prize is fantastic national recognition of this work and we know that she will continue to be a great ambassador for the engineering sector over the coming years.”

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