60 Seconds with ... Zoe Garstang



Zoe Garstang ARAeS is an Airworthiness Engineer at BAE Systems. She previously undertook an Advanced Engineering Apprenticeship with the company before joining the Airworthiness team in March 2020.

Zoe is also the lead for SCSC Safety Futures Initiative (SFI) looking to develop the next generation of safety engineers and works closely with the SCSC Steering Group to develop the club's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

What first attracted you to working in the field of System Safety?

For me, the opportunity and awareness of System Safety came along (ironically) by accident. If it had not been for my apprenticeship Skills Coach, who encouraged me to try a placement in Airworthiness, I would probably not have gained the same appreciation for it. Whilst in Airworthiness, my placement manager mentioned the SCSC and asked if I would be interested in getting involved – and here I am!

What aspect of your career are you most proud of?

Up to now, I think this would be completing my apprenticeship. When I joined BAE Systems in 2016, I had been so torn between the apprenticeship or continuing onto college and university. I sometimes wondered if I was 'missing out' on something by going down a different route to my school friends. But that couldn't have been further from the truth. I was incredibly fortunate that my apprenticeship became so much more than just a day job.

How have you enjoyed leading the Safety Futures Initiative?

I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I've been able to pull on my experience in other volunteering roles whilst developing the SFI, and I've learnt a lot about the SCSC and its members along the way. It's great to see the club being so supportive of the initiative and I hope it can develop into a useful network for the next generation of Safety Professionals.

What future changes would you like to see in the field of System Safety?

The biggest change I would like to see is less technical but more to do with the interest and engagement with the next generation; not only ensuring we retain upcoming safety engineers, but also encouraging others to explore System Safety from a much earlier stage than they may currently be exposed to it.

What's your most favourite quote or motto?

My favourite quote comes from a film called **"**We Bought A Zoo**":**

> "Sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage … And I promise you, something great will come of it".

I can be my own worst enemy when it comes to overthinking things at times, so it's often a case of plucking up the courage to take the first step.

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?

Perhaps not one of the safest sports, but I have always wanted to learn to play ice or roller hockey. I've skated in both forms since I was young, but never taken it any further. Maybe I need 20 seconds of insane courage!

Sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage!

If you could be any fictional character, who would you choose?

I would really like to have the analytical skills of Sherlock Holmes. I learn a lot by observing others, but the way he can observe and deduce a situation is something else.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

An engineer I met on a work experience day, who ended up igniting my interest in engineering, always emphasised the idea of **"**building a 3D/spherical knowledge bank**"**; the idea being to go beyond your specialism, department, business function etc. and learn about how it all interconnects and builds. Ultimately, try to get as rounded an understanding about something as possible.

Which work of art or fiction inspired you the most when you were growing up?

I always loved Michael Morpurgo's books growing up, particularly *Born To Run*. The message of giving someone (people or animals) a chance and just taking the first step to building trust with them, and where that can lead, really stuck with me. It's also ironic to mention it now, as I've just adopted an ex-racing greyhound!