

South Yorkshire's largest STEM event celebrates 15th anniversary

10 months ago



South Yorkshire's largest STEM careers showcase '[Get up to Speed with STEM](#)' marked its 15th anniversary by extending to a two-day event and hosting a special evening celebration.

Over 6,000 young people, educators and industry professionals took part in this year's event, which was held at Magna Science Adventure in Rotherham (19TH/20TH March).

The event started off with a Business Breakfast bringing together industry leaders to discuss the STEM skills gap, with speakers including Master Cutler Phillip Rodrigo, Richard Caborn, President of the Work Wise Foundation, Professor Ben Morgan, interim CEO of the AMRC and Sheffield's own aspiring future F1 champion Rowan Campbell-Pilling streamed in live from the Zandvoort Circuit in The Netherlands. The Work-wise Foundation's CEO, John Barber, reflected on 15 years of Get up to Speed, which has grown rapidly over the years and has now offered experiences to over 50,000 young people.

Master Cutler Phillip Rodrigo discussed skills development and said: "There is still a need to signpost young people into industry and to where and how they can gain the right skills training that they need. Manufacturing is experiencing a skills shortage and it is what we as South Yorkshire businesses can do to introduce young people to our industries that will make the difference in developing a skilled workforce for the future."

Professor Ben Morgan, Interim CEO of the AMRC (Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre), provided a glimpse into the future of STEM skills development and shared: "Technology is moving faster than ever before, particularly with the use of Artificial Intelligence. Traditional manufacturing skills will continue to be highly valued but we'll see these combined with new technologies and a focus on sustainable

manufacturing.”

The highly anticipated Get up to Speed event offered a hands-on experience with around 100 exhibitors providing a real-life insight into the world of STEM careers. Activities throughout the two-day event included metal casting with United Cast Bar, drone football, learning about the workings of a McLaren car, taking part in TaskMaster challenges, designing their own inventions with Kids Invent

Stuff, exploring nuclear fusion with the UK Atomic Energy Authority and having a go at Virtual Welding with the AMRC Training Centre.

The first day was dedicated to secondary school students and the second day welcomed primary school students and SEND young people.

John Barber, CEO of the Word-Wise Foundation said: “This has been an iconic Get up to Speed event! For a couple of years, we’ve had requests to extend it to a two-day event and it has been fantastic to offer both primary, secondary and SEND pupils their own dedicated times to experience Get up to Speed and get as much out of it as possible. We’ve had a fantastic response from both teachers and pupils and we would like to thank all the businesses and organisations involved in putting on such amazing and interactive activities which really have brought STEM careers to life.”

John Barber adds: “We’ve had former pupils from the early days of Get up to Speed coming back to exhibit here now they have a career with a local manufacturing business. It is incredible to think that their ambitions may have been sparked at GUTS and now they are showing the next generation just what their future could look like!”

Secondary Students also had the opportunity to explore the Big Melt Magna and fire, air and earth attractions at Magna Science Adventure Centre, which vividly showcases the region’s rich steel heritage.

A primary school teacher shared their thoughts and said: “I think the event is a fantastic way to get pupils thinking about their career options. I love that there is such a diverse range of companies and that the event was over two days, so primary pupils attended during quieter times.”

A secondary teacher also added: “I found this year’s event highly practical, allowing students to be involved with the different stalls, which was amazing! The changes to the outside areas helped reduce crowding and provided more activities for students to do”.

The event concluded with a spectacular Big 15 celebration evening, which brought together many people who have supported Get up to Speed over the last 15 years in an evening of entertainment at Magna.

Hosted by Alex Gardner from Smile Business Support, the celebration featured a two-course meal, fantastic live music from Dave Perkins, mesmerising magic from Andrew Dean, entertainers from Gullivers Valley Theme Park and interactive activities including virtual flight simulator with Skills Street, large scale race track and Drone Challenges with Iprosurv. A special recognition award was

also presented to The Rt Hon Richard Caborn who has been a great supporter, advocate and President of The Work-wise Foundation since its creation 15 years ago.

Since being established in 2011, Get up to Speed has introduced more than 50,000 young people and

educators to the exciting world of STEM, helping to bridge the skills gap and inspire the next generation of innovators.

The event provided businesses with a unique platform to connect directly with future talent, showcase their innovations and contribute to closing the STEM skills gap. While students and young people explored future careers in STEM and exciting innovations from STEM leaders.

Get up to Speed, organised by the Work-Wise Foundation, is made possible thanks to the support of sponsors, including AESSEAL, CBE+, Sheffield Forgemasters, Stream7 and The Worshipful Company of Ironmongers as Gold Sponsors, alongside DragonflyPR, Hydra Creative, Forged Solutions Group, The IET, The UK Atomic Energy Authority and Rowan Campbell-Pilling F4 Driver as Silver Sponsors and a host of Bronze Sponsors including AMG Chrome, Ametek Land, Esh Construction, Vulcan to the Sky Trust, The Royal Navy, Element Materials Technology, Withers & Rogers LLP, Made in Sheffield and The UoS AMRC Training Centre. For more details go to <https://www.getuptospeed.org.uk/>