



Interview with Greg Evans, Director of Nuclear at Centrica, April 2011

Have you heard of the YGN and all the activities we do?

I have. I became aware of the YGN when I was Site Director at Wylfa Power Station. I was asked if I would sponsor a visit, tour and presentations explaining what we were all about.

It was a great day and I have been hooked ever since.



How did you get involved in the nuclear industry?

I joined the US Navy when I was 17. I took a couple of aptitude tests and some psychological profiling and was told I was perfect for the submarine service.

When selecting my three preferred job roles I selected Nuclear cause it sounded beyond what I thought I was capable of.

I was really good at the technical stuff but found the people aspects of submarines absolutely fascinating.

Simple as that.

What is your current role and how does it make an impact on industry?

I am Director of Nuclear for Centrica Energy. I head up a small team of people who manage Centrica's interest in our joint venture with EDF.

In terms of industry impact, it is a huge role. Having acquired a 20% stake in BE's existing fleet as well as New Build going forward, the team and I are at the forefront of the UK nuclear industry

How do you see the nuclear industry changing over the next 10 years and where do you see the biggest growth area for new recruits?

My son is 7 and my Daughter 5 so 10 years is my personal horizon and one I consider often. For me the biggest growth area will remain managers and leaders with the requisite technical competencies achieved through real experience.

I encourage my kids to focus on the basics; never quit, crave learning and be part of a team. With those core attributes you can teach anybody to do just about anything.

There is, of course, a big place for engineers and specialists but I am not one of those. I am an operator at heart.

What impact, if any, do you see the new build programme having on the decommissioning programme?

I don't think much, at all, actually. The companies in these markets are developing real capabilities around the decommissioning challenges around the world as I write. I think the bigger effect comes from the construction industry and the need to build out £200bn pounds of energy infrastructure over the next 40 years.





The UK is now increasing the programme for research and development- how do you think we can develop to become an international centre for excellence in this area?

Isn't this an area where the UK has natural strength and experience? To me the issue is one of support. The 21st century challenge is to find ways to fund a complete overhaul of the world's infrastructure to meet a new world order. The logical first step is to fund some smart, committed people to think differently about the issues we face.

What does your company do to encourage an educational programme in schools?

Centrica is huge. British Gas, Centrica Energy and Direct Energy. We are very active in the recruitment and development of graduates, apprentices and technicians right across the energy spectrum.

How would you convince a student or graduate to join your area of expertise?

Do I have too? Convince, I mean! I am surrounded by young people who just get it. Energy is as exciting a field as you will find. Every time I talk to a group of youngsters I am amazed by the depth of knowledge they possess on the issues.

Where I think we could do better is in attracting young women, at an early age, into our industry. I think we are (and perceived to be) a male dominated industry.

We should fix that.

What do you think is the best advice you can give a younger member of the industry?

Prepare your solid foundations. Broaden the scope of your system, plant and industry knowledge. Continue to learn and manage your attitude and behaviours.

It's easy to tell who cares and who doesn't.

Are all your younger staff members of the YGN?

Yes, as well as the old ones! Can't we lose the young bit...I think it excludes good mentors.

How can the YGN support you in the future?

Ask questions and help to create an industry that is open and transparent.

Events in Japan remind us how we are perceived, as an industry, and it is down to all of us to help address the public's valid concerns.

How can you support the YGN in the future?

You never know!

