

Lee Wakelin
Adien Ltd

As a child I was always interested in the world, maps and how they were created. Coming from a coal mining community with a mine that had just closed my job opportunities were limited to YTS scheme and Apprenticeships. So when I left school I applied to join the army and get a trade. I passed the aptitude test and what was offered to me was a place on a two day assessment at the Army Apprentices College at Chepstow to study for an apprenticeship as a Cartographer. After the two days I was told that I might be better suited as a surveyor engineer and was asked if I would like to take up a two year apprenticeship which I accepted.

I spent two years at Chepstow along with all the military training I was also introduced to for the first time to land surveying. I really enjoyed my time there learning all the basics of surveying from levelling to setting out using theodolites and hand booking all the readings. This was a good experience a great practice for solving problems in the future. I spent a further three years in the army carrying out small scale setting out and levelling projects around the U.K.

After leaving the army I struggled to get a job as a surveyor while living in the south of England and it was only when I moved back to Yorkshire that an opportunity arose for me to return to the industry I enjoyed with Adien.

I have now been working for Adien who are a utility detection and 3D mapping company based in Doncaster for almost five years. Over the last five years I have grown in confidence and knowledge and have moved up from trainee land surveyor to lead surveyor. I also spent a year on site leading a team and tracing the underground utilities myself as well as surveying the results in at the end. I have worked on all of Adien's large scale projects these include Edinburgh Tram Project, Sheffield Inner ring Road project and the Cavendish Dock regeneration Project in Barrow. I have also carried out many smaller scale projects all over the U.K. Although the majority of Adien's work in the UK I have been heavily involved in Projects in Gibraltar and Kuwait. I was asked to lead a team of three men to locate and map the whole sea water cooling system within a large petrochemicals plant on the outskirts of Kuwait city.

As Lead Surveyor at Adien I work very closely with the survey manager to ensure the client gets the survey they want to the right specification. I go out on site on all the major projects that we undertake and ensure that the control networks are set up correctly. I do the majority of the GPS work that is required by the clients and carry out all the post processing within Adien. I help and train all our junior surveyors in learning new skills and adding to their experience.

When I am not on site I spend the other fifty percent of my time processing and editing other peoples work. Because of my experiences I am also part of a small team that checks our finished drawings against any information the clients have provided us with in regards to what utilities they think are in the area. And perform a QA off all our processes and procedures.

As a surveyor I get the opportunity to work all over the U.K and am very rarely in the same place twice. I enjoy the different challenges that I can face from day to day as no two sites are the same. Every site although may have the same features the views and sights are constantly changing. Although I do spend a lot of time in the office I can't wait to get back out on site whatever the weather day or night.

I spend a lot of time speaking to and liaising with clients both on site and in the office and enjoy meeting new people. I find it very rewarding to see all my hard work on site being turned into a hard copy drawing sent to the client,

I have recently completed the TSA introduction to surveying course on which I gain the grade of distinction along with the ICES prize for best assignment. This course I believe is ideal for anyone joining the industry and just starting out it gives a great insight into many different disciplines within the surveying industry.