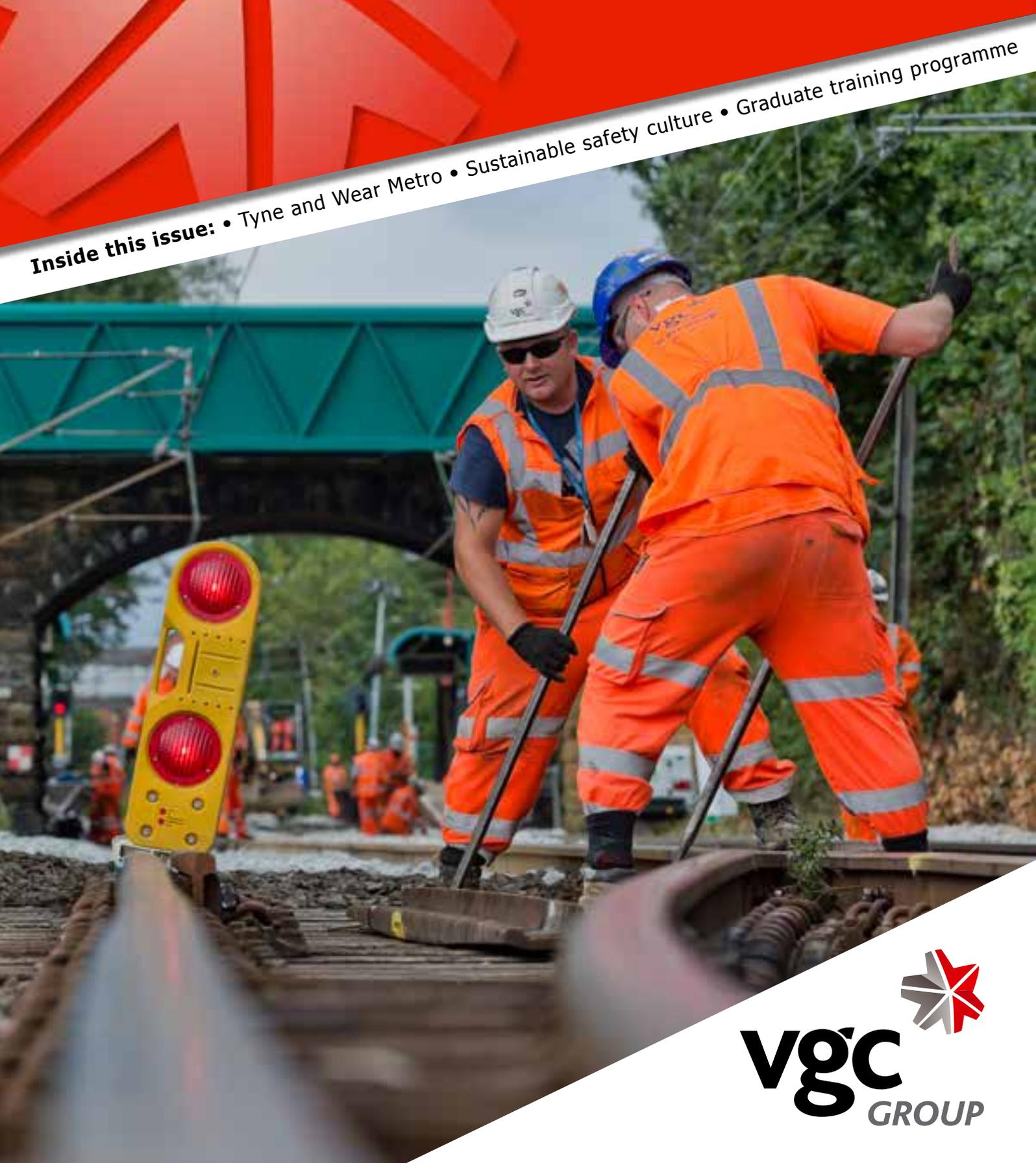


Issue ten – winter 2016

Outperformance

People, projects and services for the construction industry

Inside this issue: • Tyne and Wear Metro • Sustainable safety culture • Graduate training programme





VGC's strong links with Tyne and Wear contribute to successful Metro upgrade

The upgrade of the Tyne and Wear Metro with Nexus is one of the high profile projects on which VGC is currently engaged.

TXM is the lead contractor for the renewal scheme, which started in 2009 and will last until 2021. The current phase 2 programme is expected to cost around £90 million. VGC is supplying TXM with trades and labour resources including foremen, machine controllers, plant and machine operatives and yard gangs.

One challenging element of our role is providing the workforce for blockades. Typically over 100 skilled people a day are required for each blockade, to provide round-the-clock staffing. When you consider that a blockade can last from 54 hours to 16 days, the demands on the people involved in resourcing and delivering the labour force are self-evident.

"Our well established presence in the area means that we have an extensive network of local skilled workers. Most are currently working for us or have worked for us on previous projects. This local and specialist knowledge allows us to respond quickly to the project's requirements," says Tommy Hunter, VGC's operations manager for the north east. "This means we can access the right people with the right competencies and experience to meet client requirements, even at short notice."

Our long-term involvement with the Nexus renewal project is another important consideration when it comes to performing on-site. "Our clients appreciate our experience, and because we understand their business, we're able to plan ahead. Our people work closely with their planners, so we can anticipate when and where there may be gaps in personnel availability and can respond in plenty of time," adds Tommy.

It takes experience and judgement to assess accurately what people are needed to ensure that the client's requirements are fulfilled, and to plan logistics, site inductions and health and safety inspections.

The Metro project is another powerful example of how our policy of supporting local communities by using local labour resources wherever possible brings rewards for all concerned.

Managing director Laurence Mckidd commented, "Being from Newcastle, I am particularly pleased to be associated with the Nexus project. VGC has strong links with Newcastle: many of our staff and senior managers are from the Tyneside area, and that is invaluable on a project like this."



Dave Chubb (supervisor) and Anthony Iley (VGC labour manager)

Metro – vital part of Newcastle region’s infrastructure

Originally opened in 1980, the Metro serves Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, South Tyneside, North Tyneside and Sunderland. It carries 41 million passengers a year.

Now that the Metro is over 30 years old, it is in need of significant upgrade and renewal so Nexus (Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive) is investing £385 million over the next decade in new track and technology, smarter stations and refurbished trains.

The programme involves a major overhaul of the railway from Tynemouth through Newcastle city centre to Gateshead. The modernisation work includes replacement of track and track beds and renewal of drainage, particularly in stations. Overhead power lines and signalling and communication systems are being upgraded. A total of 45 stations will be refurbished involving improved accessibility for passengers with disabilities, enhanced security, and better lighting and signage.



BBMV health and safety supplier forum award

We are proud to have won an important health and safety award from BBMV on the Crossrail Whitechapel station project C512.

Paul Whyte, BBMV’s health and safety manager, presented the Health and Safety supplier forum trophy to Chris Ryan, VGC’s operations director, at the senior management forum.

Chris thanked the VGC workforce saying: “This is a credit to your hard work, and your focus on safety and performance.”



Chris Ryan (left) and Paul Whyte (right)

Nick Wells, labour manager, said: “This award is for the whole team, especially our committed and reliable workforce who deliver the programme of work efficiently and safely, week after week.”



Transport for London Beacon award

Transport for London presented VGC with a Beacon award in acknowledgement of our commitment to good practice in site management on the London Underground Farringdon signalling equipment room project.

Chris Hobden, programme delivery manager for London Underground, presented the award to VGC’s Donal McCarthy, site manager, at a ceremony on 26 July.

This design and build project at Farringdon station involved the refurbishment of the signalling equipment room (SER). It is part of the SER framework, managed by LU’s Four Lines Modernisation (4LM) team, which is refurbishing or rebuilding equipment rooms at almost 50 locations.



Jacques Kriel, VGC Rail Projects director, said: “Thank you to everyone at VGC who has contributed to this achievement, which recognises a significant amount of planning and hard work from all. Everyone working at Farringdon, including our sub-contractors, should be very proud.”

Transport for London gives the Beacon award to contractors who consistently demonstrate a commitment to improving and maintaining high standards of health and safety.

Above: The presentation at Farringdon station.

From left to right:

Jack Ambler, LU construction manager
 Carlos Orozco, LU project assistant manager
 Chris Hobden, LU programme delivery manager
 Mark Boulton, VGC document controller
 Sean Thompson, VGC project engineer
 Donal McCarthy, VGC site manager
 Jacques Kriel, VGC Rail Projects director
 John Hannan, VGC HSQE director



Building a sustainable safety culture the VGC way

Continually improving safety remains a priority for us and our clients. VGC is determined to be at the forefront of best practice in safety, both internally and through supporting clients' initiatives on-site.

Our behaviour-based approach continues to encourage people to engage with our safety culture. Richard Wheeler, VGC's HSQE manager, stresses, "We work closely with our clients to align our people with their systems and procedures. Not only do we provide a skilled workforce that is competent and committed to safety, we also supply professional safety management input. This includes training sessions and resources which we share freely to help make everyone safer."

Half-hour, 'bite-sized' sessions

Over recent months Richard has delivered coaching and high impact, 'bite-sized' briefings on a wide variety of topics, not only to VGC's own people, but to the project workforce as a whole. Areas covered include mental health, environmental awareness, buried services and sustainability.

The sessions have been developed in response to client requests, often around particular site-specific risks, and incorporate material from the Supply Chain Sustainability School, of which VGC is a gold status partner.

BE SAFE WITH vgc

Safety statistics

Hours worked over last 12 months	2,711,193
Days since last RIDDOR reportable accident	123
Hours worked since last reportable accident	1,022,088
12 month RIDDOR AFR*	0.15

As of 31 October 2016. *Accidents per 100,000 hours worked

Spreading the safe manual handling message

Good manual handling practice is an important factor in reducing workplace injuries. Richard Wheeler has delivered 'train the trainer' sessions to site staff who have expressed an interest in delivering our manual handling programme.

These new trainers have access to all the materials to deliver briefings. They share their expertise in the course of their work and have increased confidence to encourage colleagues to undertake manual handling more safely.



Richard delivered key influencer training to new safety champions in Manchester (top) and London (middle) during September. Earlier this year we held a refresher day for our key influencers (bottom) that included role-playing and coaching skills sessions. The day allowed our key influencers to get together to compare notes and discuss their work.

Major projects where Richard has recently delivered briefings include the M25 junction improvement project for Balfour Beatty Skanska JV, the A21 dualling project for Balfour Beatty, and CVU's framework contract for Transport for London. Others are planned for Costain Skanska at Bond Street Crossrail station and Ferrovial at London Heathrow airport.

Investment in training

Our team of workforce safety champions, the key influencers, continue to play a fundamental part in our safety strategy. Key influencers, drawn from our workforce, are the eyes, ears and voices on site who help to ensure that the highest safety standards are followed every day, everywhere. With more and more projects to cover, as well as internal promotions (see p6), investment in training new groups of key influencers has brought the total to 40.

We are also expanding our behavioural safety influence through a programme of supervisor training. Richard says, "Our labour managers, especially those who have been key influencers, will lead the way. The training will refresh their existing skills and also give them the opportunity to help shape the way we update the campaign going forward."

Planned approach brings results

The supervisor training initiative is another example of our strategically planned approach to safety across both VGC and our clients' business. "Our focus is not on just one-off activities; rather we take a more holistic approach to support all aspects of safety in our business", Richard continues.

"We are keen to continue to promote good, safe behaviour. As well as Outperformance recognition for good safety actions, our 'See it, share it' monthly prize draw rewards people who identify good practice or areas that could do with improvement."

Be Safe by Choice with VGC continues to improve close call and near miss reporting: each report gives us the chance to improve what we do, to make things safer for everyone. Our numerous awards and commendations (right) demonstrate the effectiveness of VGC's long-term cultural approach.

awards and commendations



Some of the compliments and thanks received by our 'outperformers'.



The north Deeside Connah's Quay sub-station Electrical Alliance Central (EAC) project won the Best Project award and the 100% Safe award in the ALLstar 2016 awards for Morgan Sindall. The project is part of the National Grid substation upgrade. Thanks and congratulations to Brian McAleese (competent person, steelfixer chargehand and VGC key influencer), Alistair Brown (groundworker, steelfixer) and Steven Morley (groundworks, concreter finisher), who have been on the project since it began five years ago.



TfL senior management emailed after a visit to our site on New Kent Rd, where we were delivering a project to improve pedestrian access and footways for CVU (Colas Volker AECOM): "In the many years I've been in the industry I don't think I've come across a better site – well done to all involved."



Bereket Kidane received a Costain Skanska Environment award in June for correcting a waste disposal mistake on site at Crossrail Bond Street station.



Costain MD Darren James presented William (Bill) Braiden with the SHE Performance of the Month award. Bill spearheaded the improvements made at Chadwell Heath compound, and had the idea of reusing timber from the bridge deck at Gidea Park to make a new bench and flower beds. He also came up with an idea to help prevent hand injuries that will soon be launched across the project.



Network Rail, Siemens, Morgan Sindall, Costain, HS2, Ferrovial Agroman, TfL. Clients have sent too many appreciative emails for us to list them all. Network Rail, Siemens, Morgan Sindall, Costain, HS2, Ferrovial Agroman and TfL have emailed to thank Andy Burges, Jaskaran Singh, Antonio Jesus, Austen Harrison Snr, Austen Harrison Jnr, Michael Oates, Drew Harrison, Steve Foster, Mervyn Smith, Josh Connolly, Mick Clarey, Carl Dent, Graham Walker, Darren Oxley, Colin Southam, Les Molyneux, John Perry, Jamie Wilkinson, Mark Williams, Steve Baxter, Jason O`Keefe, David Cotterell, Daniel Leonard, Paul Farmer, Daniel Almond, Reece Skingley, Steve Hodges, Michelle Jones, James Piercy, Edgar Castano and Maria Spiridon.



Outperformance awards:

Thank you to Michelle Jones, Wayne Pleasant, Nicki Mason, Donal McCarthy, Alice Dupree,

Peter Wrigglesworth, Alex Dalton, Mick McCarthy, John Waite, Robert McAllum, Heath McQueen, Andrew Johnson, Georghe Ardenleanu, Ben Johnson, Tony Trevaskis, Petru Ardeleanu, Daniel Maciucu, Andy McWalter, Michael Cooper, Malcolm Redhead, Jomoke Ajayi, Fiona Dowling, Kim McGinty, Pat Duggan, Lavdrim Hafuzi, Lee Hubjak, Karim Elaoui, Naomi Wakefield, Guillaume Grimbeek, Laura Kenneally, Zena Wigram, Mark Owen, Michael Elwood, Eparama Laca, Nick Wells, Ian Keen, Richard Lorkin, Alex Kennedy, Ian Hendry, Tim Robinson, Jason Yadao, Josh Cormack, James Byrne, Eddie Long, Dennis Pollard, Josh Cormack, Lee Pierce and Shane Jupp.

careers



Graduate training programme

VGC recently recruited two more graduate civil engineers to join our rapidly growing business.

Samuel Yick and Tahir Akhtar (pictured above) started work in September 2016.

VGC Rail Projects director Jacques Kriel said "We are delighted with how our existing graduates have developed into key players in our project teams. The investment in our staff in this way has paid dividends".

Graduate site engineer Aasim Khan is now working on VGC's civil engineering project for Costain on the Crossrail north-east spur. "We work hard, but I get a real buzz out of successfully delivering a complex section of work such as an undertrack crossing. This work is done when the railway is closed, so the planning and delivery are meticulous to ensure that the railway is opened up safely, as planned, and on time".

Led by non-executive director Bob Webb, who is a fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), VGC's graduate training programme was approved by ICE in 2015.

Our commitment to developing people and to sustainability in our industry has been recognised by numerous awards, including a Crossrail award for maximising employment opportunities.

For more information, see www.vgcgroup.co.uk/awards



George Toogood, a pupil at Nower Hill high school, and university engineering student George Marling enjoyed summer placements with us.

George Marling is in his third year at the University of Leeds, studying civil and structural engineering.

"During my time with VGC I was involved with multiple departments and was given a variety of responsibilities. This has greatly enhanced my engineering knowledge of rail projects and how the construction industry functions."

A life-long career

To help everyone at VGC to reach their full potential, we make substantial investments in training, which supports our policy of promoting internally, which in turn supports succession planning.

Directors Chris Ryan, Graham Piggott and John Hannan have all risen through the ranks at VGC. More recently, we have promoted several people from site roles to the new position of labour manager, meeting client needs and supporting the teams on site.

Donatas Jausicas joined VGC in 2007 as a shuttering carpenter on the East London line, rising to formwork supervisor on Blackfriars and Farringdon Crossrail. He became a key influencer and gained his CIOB level 3 and 4 qualifications. He is now a labour manager on Crossrail, and in November he will graduate with a CIOB Diploma in Construction Site Management.

Fellow labour manager Dan Parkinson joined VGC in February 2012, as a groundworks foreman at Crossrail Whitechapel. After promotions to section foreman and key influencer, Dan's new role as labour manager focuses on Track Partnership and London Underground works.

Tommy Hunter has been promoted to operations manager for north east Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear. Tommy joined VGC in 2003 as a trackman, becoming a contract supervisor in March 2011. Colleague Anthony Iley has been with VGC for five years, and was recently promoted from COSS and foreman on the Nexus Tyne and Wear Metro project to labour manager for the north east and Yorkshire.



Congratulations

Bobby Hayre, one of our previous graduate engineers, has been accepted as an engineering technician member of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

He can now use the letters Eng Tech (MICE) after his name.

Bobby's certificate will be presented at a ceremony in February 2017.

profile



Heena Chatrath, senior recruitment consultant

Heena Chatrath – daily interaction with professional colleagues makes a crucial difference

The competitive market for qualified, experienced professional and technical staff in the construction and engineering industries poses a challenge for recruitment.

VGC Personnel, however, responds speedily to requests for relevant candidate shortlists. The secret, as senior recruitment consultant Heena Chatrath explains, lies in the way VGC is structured.

"Because the VGC Group manages construction and rail engineering projects across the country, as well as providing skilled trades and labour, we have numerous colleagues with current technical knowledge and experience.

"They keep us up-to-date with what's happening in their own sectors and the industry as a whole," she says. "And some candidates who don't trust agencies will talk to us, because we're part of an engineering company."

While daily involvement with relevant industries is an important factor in VGC's responsiveness, another is the team's experience. Heena, for example, has been involved in talent acquisition for over a decade.

"Speed is of the essence for the vacancies that we're asked to fill," Heena adds. "We are very focused on accessing the right candidates to fulfil our clients' briefs within their timeframes."

Heena graduated from Delhi University with a degree in commerce and went on to obtain a post-graduate diploma in marketing, before gravitating to recruitment as a career.

"I thoroughly enjoy my job," she says. "The family values of the company were an important factor in my decision to join VGC originally, and my experience has been that VGC takes good care of its employees."



Investment in fleet brings health and safety benefits

Over the past year we have invested £260,000 in new vehicles that have brought significant benefits in health and safety.

Conscious of the need to minimise our impact on the environment, we ensure that our vehicles are current and fitted with up-to-date technology. All 162 vehicles in the VGC and Cole Hire fleet are under five years old.

In 2015, we installed the 'In-car cleverness' system in all our vehicles to monitor driver behaviour and reduce fuel use. This has improved people's driving and reduced fuel consumption.

Every new driver receives an induction and information pack with guidance on safe and efficient driving. Plans are under way to develop driver training - including an online course that will cover vehicle knowledge and hazard perception.

"Our investment in drivers and vehicles has already produced consistent results," says Mike Buckingham, director of Cole Hire. "Not only has there been a reduction in accidents with a consequent drop in claims, we have also seen worthwhile fuel savings."



Alice (left) and Theresa with the results of her cut

Charity update

Our total raised to date for blood cancer charity Bloodwise comes to nearly £12,700.

The sum was boosted by £1,720 raised during 'charity week' in September. Activities during the week included International Food day (with tasty treats including a very popular lamb curry meal deal), a raffle, and a staff karaoke competition at the LNER club in Sudbury.

Theresa Harrington raised a remarkable £711 in sponsorship to have 12 inches cut off her hair. Alice Dupree, our rail sentinel coordinator and a trained hairdresser, did the deed at lunchtime, watched by supportive colleagues. The hair has been sent to the Little Princess Trust, who make free wigs for children with cancer.

News in brief

VGC Group is included in the London Stock Exchange report '1000 Companies to Inspire Britain'.



This report identifies the UK's fastest-growing and most dynamic small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Companies

included in the list have all outperformed their sector peers in terms of revenue, growth, employee numbers and other selection criteria.

VGC a finalist in Construction Investing in Talent awards



We are finalists in the 'Best Place to Work' and 'Best Retention Strategy' categories. This award scheme is delivered by Construction News and New Civil Engineer to highlight best practice

in attracting and retaining talent within construction and engineering.

Artificial badger sett at Crossrail Anglia

A badger sett was discovered on a remote Crossrail Anglia site in Shenfield, where we were doing drainage works for principal contractor Costain. Site engineer Aasim Khan and the team worked with environmental company RSK to create an artificial sett, and the badgers have now moved into their new home.



Get involved – we'd love to hear from you



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Follow us on LinkedIn (VGC Group)

If you'd like to receive **Outperformance** newsletter by email, please sign up at www.vgcgroup.co.uk/newsletters

VGC is an official partner of London Irish for the 2016/17 season



As an official partner of the club our logo appears on the club's playing shorts for all Greene King IPA Championship and British and Irish Cup fixtures.

Bob Casey, chief executive of London Irish, said: "We are delighted to have secured this important partnership with the VGC Group. It is a key player across prestigious infrastructure projects in this country and has recognised the values and ambition we have as a club."

Network Rail STAR award for Crossrail Anglia team



Fenton Newport, Network Rail programme manager for Crossrail Anglia, presented the Network Rail STAR award to our team during the project's July safety 'Step up' meeting. The STAR programme recognises and rewards sites, work groups or compounds

that meet and exceed high levels of health, safety and environmental risk control. "I am really proud of the hard work and commitment of the whole team," said Jacques Kriel, director of VGC Rail Projects. "Special thanks go to Mike Condon, project manager, Rob Barnard, construction manager, and the site teams working under Shane Jupp, Mihai Gligor and Lee Brookstein."

And finally...



Terry the tortoise, who went missing in early July from his home in west Hull, was rescued from the nearby railway track by VGC rail delivery deputy supervisor Alan Axon. Alan's photo of Terry, posted on VGC's Facebook page, was recognised by owner Tracy's son, and Alan delivered Terry back to her the following weekend.

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