

RAF Sportswomen Top of Their Game

RAF SPORTSWOMEN TOP OF THEIR GAMES

Wales-based RAF servicewomen are competing at the top levels in a range of sports, either representing the Service, civilian teams and even their countries.

SAC Sian Williams, 26, serves as a Logistics Mover at MOD St Athan. For the majority of the time, however, she trains and plays for the senior women's Welsh international rugby team and RAF Women's Rugby. She has 25 caps for Wales and is currently training for Women's Rugby World Cup in 2017, a tournament she has fond memories of.



"The highlight of my career so far has definitely been playing against New Zealand in the 2013 World Cup," said Sian. "It was a privilege to represent Wales and play against the best."

SAC Catherine Sharples, 43, is a reservist with Number 614 (County of Glamorgan) Squadron, where she serves as a photographer. She plays for Newport County's women's football team and is a regular goalscorer. She has played football for over twenty years and credits the RAF with helping to keep her fit enough to play alongside colleagues less than half her age. She said:

"One of the reasons I became a reservist is the military's emphasis on fitness. I was already fit when I joined, scoring light blue on the fitness test, but over two years of service now see me regularly achieve dark blue scores, which has only helped my speed and endurance on the pitch."



LAC Olivia Blok, 27, is a civil engineer in civilian life but serves in personnel support in the RAF Reserves. She has been a triathlon and duathlon competitor for the past four years and puts in between 10-15 hours a week training in swimming, cycling and running. She enjoys the emphasis that the RAF puts on fitness and competition and hopes to represent the Service in the near future.



"That's definitely something I'm working towards if the opportunity is there," said Olivia. "I was honoured to represent the United Kingdom in my

age group at the European Duathlon Championships in 2014 and it would be great to do so for the RAF or UK again.”

Finally, Kate Gale, 24, is a reservist soon to become a regular as she is about to start Initial Officer Training. She plays for Cardiff City women’s basketball and after seeing a poster for RAF ladies team, she signed up and hasn’t looked back. In the course of a year, she has made fast friends and has been selected to play for the RAF at the inter-services tournament in May.



“I’ve always taken my fitness and sports seriously as a reservist,” said Kate. “But playing competitive basketball for the RAF has taken my motivation to another level. The training days can be long and intense but are all the more enjoyable for it, and in a funny way will help prepare me for officer training. I’m really looking forward to continuing RAF basketball as a regular.”

Images by SAC Cathy Sharples

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[Speech: Celebrating International Women’s Day in Tanzania](#)

On behalf of British High Commission (BHC), Department for International Development (DFID) and British Council, I would like to welcome you all to this event to mark the celebration of International Women’s Day that is celebrated every 8 March each year.

It is a pleasure to be here this morning and I’d like to thank everyone for their contributions to making the event such a success. Particular thanks to Inspector Komba for her inspirational speech and to the wonderful MUDA Dance Group. You are a hard act to follow!

International Women’s Day is an important day in my calendar.

Across the globe, women are constantly achieving new firsts: running multinational corporations, becoming heads of state, even exploring space.

And yet, although the equal rights of women are enshrined in international law, no country in the world has achieved gender equality.

This is not only morally wrong; it obstructs achievement of a more secure and prosperous world.

Addressing inequality is not a “nice to have”, or an “add on” to our core work; it is firmly in all our collective interests.

Empowering women and girls improves peace and stability, good governance, economic growth and reduces poverty.

Gender equality is at the heart of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development: which is why we are seeking a Planet 50-50 by 2030.

I am really proud that the UK's Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, recently pledged to make UK foreign policy consciously and consistently deliver for women and girls.

He has also appointed our first ever Special Envoy for Gender Equality. She will help drive and install gender equality and women's issues in our foreign policy.

As you know this year's theme for IWD is Gender Equality in the Work Place. This is an issue which definitely needs attention. The World Economic Forum estimates that the gender Pay Gap won't close until 2186. This is too long wait!

With this in mind, I am proud to be the THIRD consecutive female British High Commissioner to represent the UK in Tanzania. There are now around 50 female British Ambassadors and High Commissioners around the world, 14 of us based in Africa. In Britain we have a woman Prime Minister and a female head of state in Her Majesty the Queen.

And we have more women in work and more women-led businesses than ever before. And we've more than doubled women's representation on the boards of our biggest companies since 2011.

But there is still more to do.

Tanzania too has made good progress in addressing gender inequality. Important policy and legal reforms are helping to empower women and girls. These include the commitment to universal education and commitments to tackle violence against women and girls

But despite the achievements, the majority of women in Tanzania, just as in many countries, still face inequality. They have longer working hours, and receive less education than men. Women find it more difficult than men to access resources such as land and finance. And, unfortunately, violence against women and girls also still remains a big issue.

So, that is why I am proud that my government is putting women and girls at the centre of our development efforts both here in Tanzania and around the

world.

And I also want to do my bit personally. The theme for this year's International Women's Day is Gender Equality in the Work Place. One of the challenges that women face is that they don't know where to go for advice and support about their careers. I've been fortunate to have found two excellent mentors, who have supported me to get to where I am today.

So, I'm announcing today that I am offering to mentor one young Tanzanian woman (under 25 years of age) for a 6 month period, every 6 months. She will have the opportunity to shadow me for a day and have monthly meetings over the 6 month period. Details of how to apply are on the UK in Tanzania website.

The UK believes girls and women everywhere should have voice, choice and control over their own lives. And unlocking the potential of half the world's population is in everyone's interest.

So here's to a future that belongs to all of us, where gender will no longer be a barrier to success. Happy International Women's Day to you all! Let's #Be Bold for Change together.

[Company fined after worker's foot was exposed to machinery](#)

A company that produces and supplies wood shavings for use as horse bedding has been fined after a worker suffered a serious foot injury at its site in Andover, Hampshire.

Basingstoke Magistrates' Court heard that Bedmax Limited failed to protect its employee from dangerous parts of machinery. On 26 October 2015 Philip Evers was operating the log deck, which is part of a machine that shreds trees, when his foot slipped and became lodged in a gap exposing him to the wheels of the machine which conveyed the logs. The severity of the injuries to his toes meant his big toe was cut back several times, his other four were fractured and eventually reconstructive surgery was required.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that a panel that would have prevented access had been removed and not replaced where the employee was working.

Bedmax Limited, whose office is in Belford, Northumberland, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The court heard on 8 March 2017 that the company was fined £17,293.60 and ordered to pay costs of £623.60.

Speaking after the judge passed sentence, HSE Inspector Andrew Johnson said: "Bedmax fell below the expected standard. The necessary panel that would have prevented the incident was missing, rendering the man vulnerable as soon as he took to his task. This was a fundamental and basic health and safety failing which should have been easily avoided."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. www.hse.gov.uk^{[1][1]} ^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ ^{[2][2]} ^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]

[Press release: No profit for waste couple](#)

The operator and the landowner of an illegal waste site in an Essex village have been ordered to pay a total of £66,493

Chelmsford Magistrates' Court heard that 14,700 tonnes of inert waste was stored on land behind a residential address known as Gean Tree in Great Horkesley north of Colchester 'grossly' breaching a waste exemption and planning rules.

George Nicholas James Dench pleaded guilty to running the illegal site and failing to comply with an enforcement notice to remove the waste. He was ordered to pay a total of £32,895 in fines and costs by Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on Monday (6 Mar).

Annette Ismay Williams, who owned the land pleaded guilty to allowing the illegal waste site to run and to failing to clear the land under an enforcement notice and has to pay a total of £33,598 fines and costs.

Mrs Miriam Tordoff, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court the waste had been deposited there over 2.5 years.

Williams lives at the address with her partner and their son George Dench who sought out companies to dump the waste there. He was paid £64,704.

Mrs Tordoff said only certain relatively low risk activities can be covered by an exemption which sets out conditions that must be met at all times.

These include not risking human health nor the environment, not causing a nuisance with noise or odours and not adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.

The exemption registered by Williams allowed the use of certain types of inert waste in construction and the limit for waste soils and stones was 1,000 tonnes in any 3 years. That target was reached in the first month.

A further exemption allowed the treatment of up to 5,000 tonnes of waste in any 3 years, providing it was also used on the same site and only stored for a year.

Dench told investigating officers he had brought the soils to the site to repair the bank of a lake there. Williams said she just did the admin work. Both said they did not know how many tonnes the exemption allowed for.

Dench said he had not taken in the soils for financial gain as he was now bankrupt and he had not taken in any more since.

Mrs Tordoff told magistrates that Environment Agency officers had advised and written to the 2 saying the site needed to be cleared and operated properly.

Between September 2012 and March 2015 the Agency received 34 complaints about activities at the site.

After the hearing Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said:

We advised the defendants several times against accepting any more soils at the site but they continued to take it.

The site is in a village close to other homes and operations there affected people living nearby.

Councillor Simon Walsh, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, said:

This case is an example to show landowners that risk taking is not acceptable, whether it is a risk that concerns human health or the environment.

Owning a piece of land means accepting a responsibility to the surrounding area and all that resides there, be it business, homes or wildlife.

Notes for Editors:

Breakdown of costs and fines:

Dench: EA offence – fined £14,353 plus £8,103 (a share of the full costs)

ECC offence – fined £9,568 plus £750 costs

Williams: EA offence – fined £14,775 plus £8,103 (a share of the full costs)

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[Press release: No profit for waste couple](#)

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