

Career comeback at Fenix Signalling

Fenix Signalling has a new employee, Vanya, a black labrador. The latest addition to the team is working with document controller Kerry Hunt at the Coventry-based signalling company.

Two years ago, Kerry was working as a signal design engineer for Chase Meadow Consultants. Her role involved safety-critical work trackside, using a range of technologies including computer-aided design.

Then in June 2013, Kerry began to notice a deterioration in her sight, attributable to insulin-dependent diabetes, from which she has suffered throughout her life. Diabetes is the most common cause of vision loss and blindness in people of working age, affecting 3.9 million people in the UK alone.

With her career under threat, Kerry prepared for redundancy. However, she'd reckoned without the support of her friends, Craig Purcell at Chase Meadow Consultants and Sue Grant of Fenix Signalling.

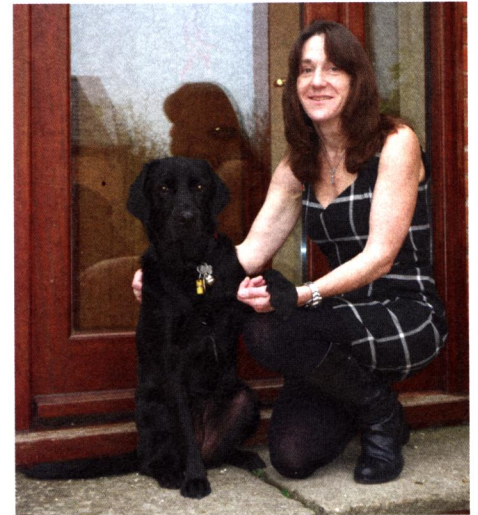
Craig bought Kerry a 32-inch screen to enable her to continue her visually-orientated job more effectively. However, her sight continued to worsen.

After a period of detailed discussion, it was jointly agreed that Kerry would be the ideal fit for the new document controller role at Fenix Signalling. The company is expanding and works in a strong growth area of the railway. The new job would use her signalling knowledge and industry experience to meet the challenges of handling and controlling safety critical documentation. Prior to joining Fenix Kerry was trained on specialist technology for audio-controlled software.

Kerry's vision became progressively worse between June 2013 and December 2014. With the help of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, the search was started to find Kerry a suitable guide dog. In March 2015, Kerry was introduced to Vanya.

'Vanya has really changed my life. I hadn't been getting out much at all. Now I am able to get out of the house - it makes a real difference,' says Kerry.

Between March and June, Kerry and Vanya developed a close relationship, which is vital between all people with visual impairments and their guide dogs. A guide dog is not always working, so owners will spend a lot of their time relaxing and playing with their guide dog, ensuring they receive the attention



which is essential for them both to bond. This in turn helps establish a high level of trust between the dog and owner when they are out working together.

Vanya became Kerry's permanent companion in June 2015, and is now a working member of the Fenix team.

It's a story with a double happy ending. Taking a break from her job at Fenix, Kerry and Shaun Pearce were married at Kenilworth Castle in September. Shaun works as an IS and comms manager at Fenix.

Three Bridges depot opens

Patrick McLoughlin, Secretary of State for Transport, has formally opened Siemens and Govia Thameslink Railway's new, purpose-built Three Bridges train depot in Crawley, West Sussex.

McLoughlin described it as a major milestone, paving the way for the new fleet of hi-tech trains, coming into service next year.

'The improvements will transform rail travel for millions of passengers,

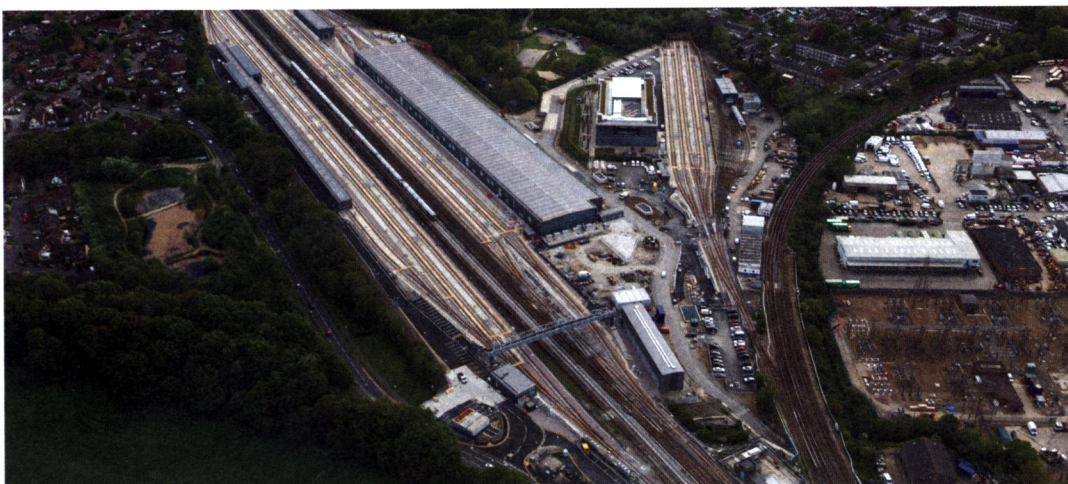
with better journeys on fantastic new Class 700 trains, improved connections and upgraded stations,' says Patrick McLoughlin.

The depot, which is already home to two new Class 700 Desiro City trains, will play a large role in stabling and maintaining the new fleet. The Three Bridges depot, along with a similar train care centre being built in Hornsey, was constructed by VolkerFitzpatrick with an investment of over £300 million by Siemens.

The depot includes an in-cab simulator to help train up drivers new to the Class 700. GTR will run the depot and Siemens will maintain the trains.

Three Bridges will have a complement of 150 rail staff.

By the end of 2018, there will be 115 new Class 700 trains in operation, providing a metro-style service of up to 24 trains per hour running across central London between Blackfriars and St Pancras.



Antwerp chess



The Railsport chess team has achieved a good third place finish in the prestigious Six Nations Railway chess tournament in Antwerp, Belgium. The tournament was won by a very strong German team.

The UK's team included Graham Bolt, Richard Cowan and Will Taylor of Network Rail, Mike Broad and John Bass - who have both retired from Network Rail, David Perrett of Arriva Trains Wales and Peter Eldridge of Abellio Greater Anglia.

Five games of chess were played in offices in the beautiful surroundings of Antwerp Station. Will Taylor had a great tournament and won the board prize for being the best player on board 3.