

Name: Jolyon Thompson
Job title: Senior Engineer employed by Parsons Brinckerhoff

Please give a brief summary of your job role.

I work as a tunnel ventilation engineer for an engineering consultancy, Parsons Brinckerhoff. I am currently seconded to work on the Cooling the tube programme for London Underground in the role of Innovations Manager. In this role I am responsible for the initial assessment of cooling concepts that are proposed to London Underground. I also support analysis conducted on a wide range of projects where my skills are beneficial.

Why did you choose a career in the refrigeration and air conditioning industry?

After graduating with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering I saw an advert in New Scientist for a PhD in sustainable cooling of underground railways. This appealed to me as I had a keen interest in sustainable activity and saw this as a growing industry for the future.

What qualifications do you have?

I have a MEng in Aeronautical Engineering, a PhD in sustainable cooling of underground railways and am due to complete an MBA in 2010.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

I have a varied role that allows me to investigate a large number of different engineering phenomena. This variety ensures that I can experience a very different day and respective challenges almost every time I come to work.

Can you describe a typical working day?

As mentioned above the variety makes a 'typical' day difficult to describe however it would consist of some mathematical modelling, analysis and results interpretation of a given action on the tunnel systems.

How do you see your career developing in the future?

As my career develops I hope to become more involved in the technical and engineering aspects of the industry. I would hope to reach the level of a technical specialist within my company. I would also like to extend the influence of refrigeration technology in system integration and initial design. This should lead to more efficient use of energy and technology and encourage a more sustainable utilisation of resources.

What particularly excites you about your job?

I enjoy engineering modelling and analysis and due to my role I get the opportunity to work with a wide variety of different engineering options and utilise a range of techniques. I am also one of the fortunate ones who enjoy my job that I look forward to the next challenge I have thrown at me.

What advice would you give to someone interested in a career in the refrigeration industry?

I think the best advice I could give would be something I myself was told as a young engineer. Find work that you could see yourself explaining in a pub with a smile on your face. I took this to mean enjoy the work that you are doing because this will be something you spend a large chunk of your life doing. The great thing about refrigeration is it is part of so many areas from IT centres to Formula 1, rail to buildings, you will find a part of it in something you really enjoy.

Would you recommend a career in the building services engineering sector to other young people?

I thoroughly enjoy what I do and therefore would have to say yes I would.

In your opinion what are the biggest challenges and opportunities faced by the refrigeration industry?

Energy efficiency and sustainability are probably the two main challenges facing engineering in the near future. The refrigeration industry perhaps more than most due to the increasing reliance on the industry by so many others.