

SPOTLIGHT

ON DOMINIC WARRINGTON



Angela Wilkins shines a light on our very own Shawston squad via the Spotlight series, a series of informal chats with key members of staff talking candidly about their roles within the Shawston group and how they have developed. It's simple really, aim the light and watch them shine.

Today I venture down south to our High Wycombe branch to meet and chat to Dominic Warrington, our very own warehouse veteran. It's a virtual meet up, as most are these days, and I've managed to catch Dominic in between checking in our daily deliveries and allocating them to the relevant areas of the warehouse. And a true veteran Dominic is, after leaving the army – he was a musician in the marching band - and choosing to join the Shawston team, it's clear that he likes a

family environment. So, I'm all present and correct to find out what makes Dominic stand to attention at Shawston.

Background

The trombone. That's what I think about when I think about Dominic, more importantly playing the last post on his trombone for the High Wycombe branch last year on Remembrance Day. It was a really amazing moment, one that makes the

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hairs on the back of your neck stand up. Although Dominic will downplay it and focus on the one bum note he made – not that anyone else realised. And that sums up Dominic, self-deprecating, kind, gentle, hard working and a popular member of the High Wycombe team who has worked his way up through the ranks and is thoroughly enjoying the challenge of his newly appointed role of Warehouse Supervisor. With a background in the armed forces, it's clear to see the familiar routines of army life filtering through into Dominic's work life at Shawston. Originally from the Isle of Man I was eager to catch up with Dominic and discuss his time at Shawston with maybe a 5-minute chat about whether he'd ever been to a TT race...

Dominic on Shawston

It's not a magical story. I don't have a big story. I had always wanted to join the army, but I was unsure in which guise. My mum joined a local brass band, and the leader of the band was an ex-army guy, he told me all the tales about his army days which I loved to listen to, so I started to learn the trombone and when I was old enough, I enlisted. I loved being in the army, it was great fun especially being part of the band. The discipline required when learning a musical instrument pretty much aligns itself with the self-discipline required to become part of the army as a whole.

The problem was I was a little bit different, I had different ideas on what I wanted to do which no longer fitted into army life, this became an issue for some of my peers and started to take a toll on me mentally, so I began to wonder if it was time to leave. The decision was taken out of my hands and I began to await my discharge. Whilst awaiting my discharge documents I was no longer able to play in the

marching band, so I was assigned to the stores – this is where I caught the bug for warehousing. I worked in the musical instrument stores, the place where the instruments came for repair, my direct report taught me how to repair most brass instruments which is still a hobby I have to this day. He really was the best in the business, and it was also very cool to work with a guy who had Sting on speed dial!

So, I found myself out of the army and out of a job. Being a veteran, I must admit I found it increasingly difficult to find a job, I really do think there are a lot of negative connotations with the word "veteran" and found many companies didn't want to employ such a person. My Auntie posted on the High Wycombe Facebook group that I was out of work and looking for employment, the Transport Planner saw the advert and sent my Auntie a reply asking me to send an email to the Shawston High Wycombe branch, so I did and that's how it happened!

Just because I've finished my work doesn't mean there isn't work to be done, I enjoy helping out where I can.

Working out my discharge period in the army stores definitely taught me core people skills such as how to manage people and how to get the best out of the people you work with. These are skills that have been so helpful for me since my arrival at Shawston in 2018.

My first role was as a pick and packer working the late shift, 12-9pm, I started on tube and then moved onto fittings. I saw this as pretty important, basically each customer order depended on my accuracy in collating the goods and getting them ready to be

sent out in full and on time. After 3-4 months I was offered the opportunity to head up the Goods In section.

It was a big jump for me because I didn't know how to use Sage – I do now and I'm pretty good at it! It wasn't too long before opportunity presented itself once more and I decided to apply for the role of Warehouse Supervisor. I'm pleased to say I was successful! The new role carries a lot more responsibility and there is lots more to consider, but I stay late, work hard, help people and make myself available. I come in an hour early each day, I've done this since I first started at Shawston and I still do it now.

I came from the army where I was frequently told I wasn't good enough, so I came here [to Shawston] with something to prove. I am good enough and I can do the work. I feel like Graham recognised my skills and gave me a new challenge to push myself forward. I'm really enjoying it and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to move upwards.

Dominic on Share Ownership

At the time of joining Shawston I didn't know what buying into the company would mean for me, but I liked working for Shawston and I was determined to make the most of my time at the company, so as soon as I was able, I bought myself some shares and I have continued to purchase shares each dealing day. I quite like the idea of it, it's a pretty clever thing to have, people take more pride and responsibility in what they're doing. I guess it has made it easier to tell others to up their game, I'll let my team know if I think they need to step it up a gear because I'm proud of the company I work for, my company. I like being a shareholder, I think everybody should do it it's a great scheme. It gives you a true sense of ownership.

I wouldn't say it has changed my work ethic, my mindset has always been the same I came here to make a splash, an impact and that's what I've done. I don't like being stood around doing nothing, there is always a job to do.

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there isn't work to be done, I enjoy helping out where I can. If this was your company would you want people coming in and finding the shelves half empty? No, you'd go and fill them. That's the beauty of share ownership and it works leaps and bounds. Everyone going that extra step, I like it and I feel it's beneficial for me, you get what you put in.

Dominic on Mentorship

More recently I would say that Shaun [Imrie] has taken an interest in my development within the business, we have had a couple of chats and I'm really looking forward to what is on the cards for me over the next year at Shawston.

Greatest Achievement

This is a tough one. I've done a lot at Shawston. I've saved a newt from Aisle B of the warehouse – that was pretty cool. Rob [Davenport] sent me an email thanking me for all my hard work, a personal email from the CEO wow! I had a smile on my face for days after receiving that. I've even met one of our

largest suppliers, but I'd say working here is a great achievement. I've done so many things I never thought I could do. I never thought I could drive a forklift and now I can drive 3. I've achieved a lot in this place.

No Barriers

The freedom associated with working at Shawston is amazing. We are given the independence to make decisions, check products off, book products in. I work alongside Central Purchasing to plan deliveries so it's great to be able to make decisions free of red tape, it speeds up the process no end. It's a great environment to work in, we are encouraged to come up with our ideas and put them forward to our managers. After all we are the heartbeat; we're living the job day to day, so we have the ideas.

Dominic on the Future

I see Shawston as a job for life, I would love to still be here because there is a lot I'd like to do. I plan to be a Manager one day. I recently met with Shaun [Imrie] and I presented him with a 6-month, 1 year and 2-year plan, I decided to take the bull by the horns, and I can't wait to see how that pans out. The way I see it is if you don't go for it how are you ever going to know if you can get it?

It's easy to do that here, we are always encouraged to speak up without fear, so go for it why not? Knowing what's expected of you to make you better and knowing what you need to achieve to reach the next step is a sure-fire way of reaching your destination and it's easy to do this at Shawston because it feels like a big family. One Shawston, one family.♦

Shawston has so many more amazing examples of meritocracy – sponsorship of MBA's, graduate development schemes, and a strong record for internal promotion to name just a few. And the common theme is that all these people made a choice – the choice to improve, to be better, to progress, and to shine. And that's the essence of Employee Ownership. We encourage a freedom of expression rarely seen in business, we push people to be better versions of themselves, and we give them the space to make choices.

So, if you're interested in a career with Shawston, make the choice to email us your cv and a covering letter to hr@shawston.co.uk or [visit our website](#) to read more about choosing to hop on board to a new career.

