



A senior SembCorp Utilities UK manager has won the UK's top award for women in manufacturing.

Jane Atkinson, Assistant Vice President Operations and Maintenance, was presented with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) 'First Women Award' in the category of manufacturing at a glittering ceremony attended by 500 people in London on June 12th.

Jane, 35, who is in charge of operations at the SembCorp-owned Wilton Power Station and who will have a similar role at the soon to be operational £60 million Wilton 10 biomass power station, was delighted to lift the title at the awards – widely viewed as the 'Oscars' of British industry.

She said: "I'm absolutely thrilled to have won such a prestigious award. It is a great honour for me and the business."

Jane, who is in charge of 161 predominantly male staff in the SembCorp Utilities business, beat off the challenge of hundreds of other women in key manufacturing roles throughout the UK to win the award.

Her achievement was praised by Paul Gavens, Executive Vice President and Managing Director of SembCorp Utilities UK.

He said: "This is an absolutely fantastic success for Jane and a well deserved recognition of her achievements. It is also a great reflection on our business.

"There are many opportunities for young people with technical skills in our industry today and manufacturing could do with more people like Jane. Hopefully her success will encourage more young women to follow her example."

Sarah Green, North East Regional Director of the CBI, said: "Jane is a tremendous role model to any young woman considering a career in manufacturing industry.

"She is an inspiration and a genuine trailblazer in what is still a largely male dominated profession, proving that there are absolutely no barriers to success to women with the ambition to make it to the top."

Jane has enjoyed a meteoric rise to success in her career so far.

She was the first woman in the world to be in charge of the cast house of a blast furnace during a 14-year career in British Steel and Corus and also worked for the company in a senior role in the United States before joining SembCorp in November 2004.

At the moment, a key part of her role is as part of the team helping to commission Wilton 10 – which will become the UK's first totally wood-fired renewable energy power station when it begins commercial operations later in the summer.

The station will generate 30 MW of electricity – enough to power around 30,000 homes – using wood as its fuel source. By doing so it will create new markets for certain types of wood – particularly recycled wood - and save around 200,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions compared to a conventional fossil fuel station – the equivalent of taking around 67,000 cars off Britain's roads a year.

Sarah Brown, wife of the Prime Minister designate Gordon Brown, is patron of the Real Business/CBI First Women Awards and attended the event at the Marriott Hotel in Grosvenor Square, London.