Jaguar and Land Rover came together as an organisation in 2002. It employs around 21,000 employees of which 337 are finance staff located at various sites in Warwickshire, Solihull, Coventry and Liverpool. The responsibilities of the finance function range from financial accounting through to financial analysts in product development, manufacturing and marketing, and, sales and service. There are also finance staff based in a registered charity – the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust whose home is the Heritage Motor Centre.

Many of the cars in the collection are already stars of the large and small screen and pictured here is one of eight Jaguar XKRS used by the villainous, Zao in the 2002 Bond movie, Die Another Day.

Although the fierce weapons array is now disarmed the car keeps its Ford 5-litre V8 engine producing 400 bhp.

‘The CIMA qualification provides the breadth of theoretical and practical knowledge Jaguar Land Rover requires to produce Business Consultants that add real value to the business. The unique blend of business management, management accounting and financial management skills acquired by our CIMA students is just not available with any other accounting qualification.’

David Smith, Chief Financial Officer, Jaguar Land Rover

Jaguar Land Rover won ‘Employer of the Year (more than 500 employees)’ at the CIMA and Financial Management Awards 2004.

Ian Carroll, Rebecca Wagstaff, Lynwen Bassett, Matt Becker
Lynwen Bassett

Having been in the graduate scheme for over three years, Lynwen has now completed all the written components of the qualification and, once her Practical Experience log has been submitted and assessed, she becomes an Associate of the Institute. She drives a Rover 25 but would like a Land Rover Discovery 3.

Why CIMA: the range of experiences across the business world, development of management skills and understanding other functions, international recognition of the qualification.

An accountant or not an accountant: I don’t see myself as an accountant but more of a finance analyst.

Percentage of time ‘number-crunching’: about 30 or 40 per cent of my time is spent on pure figures work, but in itself this doesn’t resolve issues.

Best thing about the job: the people I work with from a variety of backgrounds and different cultures.

Any community work: I helped re-lay a school playground and gave Year 11 students hints on interviewing.

What about the future: I like the motor industry and hope to take on further managerial responsibility in due course.

In one sentence: CIMA gives me an open-mind to the opportunities that are available throughout many different finance functions.

Rebecca Wagstaff

With CIMA’s Managerial level exams under her belt, Rebecca now starts the final uphill struggle towards the strategy papers that make up the final four exams. But even as a Hull graduate with a first in Economics and Accounting, she’s under no illusion that she’s got to keep the pressure on if she wants to get the coveted letters after her name.

Having graduated at 21 and now living in Birmingham, her current role involves profit consolidation for the sales and marketing functions. ‘I hardly do any straight number-crunching at the moment. Most of the time is spent interacting between different parts of the business.’

She feels well supported by Jaguar Land Rover as she continues her studies but is looking forward to being free of the books.

The common perception of accountants is not justified although, she admits, it depends on the company. And another employee who wouldn’t say no to a staff-discounted Aston Martin DB9.

Rebecca believes CIMA will give her a host of options for future career progression both in and out finance. ‘I don’t feel I’m limited with CIMA. Although the roles will always have a finance element, it doesn’t mean I have to stay solely in finance functions.’

Ian Carroll

ian graduated from Nottingham University in 2000 with an engineering degree. After spending 18 months working in events management in Hong Kong, Ian returned to the UK and entered the graduate programme at Jaguar Land Rover. He drives a VW Golf although aspires to the Aston Martin DB9.

Best thing about the job: the interaction with management, the ability to influence other people’s perception of the numbers and the forward-looking planning element.

Perception of accountants: most people I talk to understand that CIMA is more about management than pure finance.

CIMA’s contribution to career: the qualification travels well, it can help me develop project management skills further and also offers opportunities in sales, marketing and leadership roles.

In one sentence: CIMA offers a structure to approach new financial projects – it injects the entrepreneurial spirit back into finance.

CIMA member: Matthew Becker

As an accounting graduate from Manchester University, by the time the job market was calling, Matt had already come to the conclusion that he wasn’t going to be a professional footballer after all. An avid supporter of Preston North End it was a life of refereeing the numbers and not the match that laid in store. And now, a fully-fledged Associate, he has no regrets at choosing accountancy in business over audit, ‘the stuff I liked at university was all about strategy and management and how a business can improve its internal processes to increase the profit margin. I could do all the financial accounting but not for the next 50 years. I prefer the idea of committing to one company instead of auditing dozens.’

Matthew feels CIMA has given him a greater understanding of the business world and helped him develop his people skills which, in his current role as a pricing and revenue analyst, are key as he works across different sections of the business. ‘The Organisational Management’ paper gave me a massive grounding on how a business actually operates and works together. I’m trusted now to make decisions where I can actually see the consequences. He quickly adds, which is hopefully creating more value and helping Jaguar Land Rover get the most out of the resources available.

Matt is quite sure the public perception of accountants is changing although he calls himself a ‘financial analyst’ more than an ‘accountant’. His role is about putting numbers into a form that non-finance stakeholders can understand and work with, ‘a kind of fiscal interpreter.’ Of course, it’s easier working with products that you’re actually interested in because you want to see them succeed and the business go in the right direction.

A current owner of a Ford Focus he would gladly trade it in for an Aston Martin DB9 or Vanquish (ed. There seems to be a pattern here!) but that is a few years off. Matt is the CIMA Student Rep. for Jaguar Land Rover whose responsibility it is to organise the social events when there are new passed finalists. As part of this role, he organised a trip to Crete for two CIMA qualifieds and two CIMA part qualifieds last year: four CIMA accountants larking it in the Greek islands – no bean counters on that trip!

He has also recently been elected as Branch Secretary of Birmingham and so is already reaching the echelons of his professional body. He would very much like to develop his finance career at Jaguar Land Rover and CIMA has given him the confidence to always ask questions and have new ideas: ‘it isn’t just a finance qualification, but gives the knowledge to offer the best in business advice and support.’