



NEWS RELEASE

Next generation of engineers race toward electric futures

16 July 2008

Institution of Mechanical Engineers and Greenpower North East heat Wednesday 16 July

Future engineers from 15 school teams are meeting today to race their electric-powered cars, designed and built from scratch, at the Croft Circuit, Dalton On Tees, Darlington. As transport technology advances to cut carbon dioxide emissions, the children will be taking to the track in their own creations capable of travelling 300 miles on four charges of their electric batteries – costing a mere £2!

The youngsters from across Northumbria, Co. Durham and North Yorkshire will be competing in the IMechE Greenpower school electric car races, where teams of up to 12 children aged 11 - 16, including six drivers and six pit crew, are hoping to cover the greatest distance over four hours, beginning at 1pm, using their battery-powered vehicles as they vie for a place at the final, to be held at the famous Goodwood circuit in October.

Teams from the North East will also be joined by select entrants from across the north of England, including top challengers Sandbach High School in Cheshire. The all-girl team are set to take the heat by storm and have been preparing hard for their battle in the North East. Their team leader, Alan Beardmore said: “The race is planned very carefully – battery changes and pit stops all organised and practised by the girls. Every person knows what they are doing. This is our fifth or sixth year, so all that experience has gone into building better cars.”

IMechE Greenpower is a new partnership established to offer schools an exciting insight into sustainable transport and careers in engineering as they design, build and race their own eco-race cars.

John Ling, IMechE Transport programme manager, hopes the competition will get pupils hooked on engineering. He said: “Building and racing an electric car is not only an exciting way for young people to gain an insight into engineering, but it also makes them aware of the energy issues that we all face.”

As part of the partnership, the IMechE is working with its members acting as ‘mentors’ to assist pupils in the event and pass on their expertise. The next step up for schools entering the event is the IMechE’s hugely successful Formula Student event which is Europe’s largest student motorsport event.

Barry Shears, who founded Greenpower in 1999, said: "IMechE Greenpower inspires young people to take up engineering by designing, building and then racing full-scale electric cars. The teams will experience a wide range of challenges giving them a solid introduction to the exciting variety available from a career in engineering."

The final will take place at Goodwood on October 19.



The Challenger: Sandbach High School's entrant

Confirmed IMechE Greenpower North East Heat Schools entrants:

Duchess High School, Northumbria;
Grangefield School, Stockton-on-Tees;
Samuel King School, Cumbria;
Ripon Grammar School, Ripon, North Yorkshire;
King James' School, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire;
Sandbach High School, Cheshire
St Leonards College, Co. Durham;
Settle College, Settle, North Yorkshire.

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- The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) is one of the world's leading engineering institutions. Established in 1847 it has some of the world's greatest engineers in its history books. It currently has around 80,000 members in 120 countries representing mechanical engineers working in groundbreaking areas such as automotive, rail, aerospace, medical, power and construction industries to name a few. Visit www.imeche.org or contact the press office on media@imeche.org or call 0207 304 6888 for more information.
- Greenpower is a company dedicated to promoting engineering and technology as careers to pupils throughout their school life, through an exciting hands-on project to design, build and race an electric racing car. For more information visit www.greenpower.co.uk