



NEWS RELEASE

Bright sparks take electric cars to the fast lane

25 June 2008

Institution of Mechanical Engineers and Greenpower Somerset heats Saturday 5 July

Next Saturday, 12 schools will be racing their electric-powered cars designed and built from scratch at the Haynes International Motor Museum, Sparkford, Somerset. The youngsters will be competing in the IMechE Greenpower school electric car races.

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.

The day begins at 11am as the schools bring the cars they have designed and built or customised to compete in the heats using standard motors and batteries. (Schools taking part are listed below).

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

John Ling, IMechE Transport programme manager 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."

By getting pupils hooked on engineering while they're still at school the Institution hopes that it will inspire the next generation to develop solutions.

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 thrilling final endurance race around the Goodwood track lasts for four hours, testing student's design and driving capabilities to their highest. With almost 100 finalists last year this year's teams will be looking to secure their place on the grid. Teams featuring this year include 'The Flying Pig' from Danesfield Middle School, Taunton; 'Flying Fox' Bishop Fox's School, Taunton; and 'Wheel Nuts' from Chilton Trinity School, Bridgwater.

Team manager, Tim Earle Marsh from Ansford Community School, Castle Cary, said: "Our big push this year is a focus on the environment and that's reflected in the car. All the power is being generated by the students through pedal power, and by wind power. The kids have been involved in the manufacturing and design of the car.

"Everything is accounted for environmentally and made from renewable. Materials like wood skinned in cotton, and the back of the car is made from willow."

IMechE Greenpower Somerset Schools:

Danesfield Middle School, Taunton;
West Somerset Community College, Minehead;
Whitstone Community School, Shepton Mallet;
Bishop Fox's School, Taunton;
King Arthur's Community School, Wincanton;
Stanchester School, Stoke Sub Hamdon;
Selwood Middle School, Frome;
Ansford Community School, Castle Cary;
Minehead Middle School, Minehead;
Chilton Trinity School, Bridgwater;
Buckler's Mead Community School, Yeovil;
Kings of Wessex Community School, Cheddar;
Southgate Motors, Yeovil.



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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