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## School's prize engineers

By Euan Shepherd  
Published: 01 July, 2008

BANFF Academy pupils have picked up awards in two prestigious competitions for young engineers.

At the recent Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) celebration of engineering awards in Glasgow, Banff Academy were voted Young Engineers Club of the Year.

The Academy also grabbed two awards at last month's Shell Greenpower Challenge event held at the Grampian Transport Museum in Alford.

Sixth year students Ross Borland, Colin Wood and Joe McKinnon along with fourth year Euen George represented Banff at the 60-school SCDI competition at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Glasgow on Thursday, June 12.

They demonstrated their Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and "Rampaging Chariot" battle robot and also spoke about their electric car "Original BART" to a panel of judges at the event.

Despite some strong competition, the boys impressed the moderators to claim the trophy for best club and with it £750 and tickets to the Science Centre.

Speaking after the event, technology teacher David Pirie said: "The boys were judged on their technical knowledge and engineering ability.

"Seemingly it was a landslide decision. The judges we're blown away with what they'd done.

"The lads are over the moon, but they have put in a lot of effort and hard work.

"It's been a thrill to be involved with the kids, and to get this far is just amazing."

He also praised all the boys who had been involved in the young engineers club at the school.

The team will now represent Scotland at the Young British Engineers competition in March and have also been invited to the SCDI's gala dinner in Glasgow in November, where they will present their work to over 700 members of the business community.

Could you design, build and race your own electric car? That was the question posed to a group of enterprising young engineers from schools across Northern Scotland who were taking part in the first ever Scottish heats of the Shell Greenpower Challenge.

And the students of Banff Academy proved that they could do just that, finishing among the winners at the event at the Grampian Transport Museum in Alford.

Both Banff teams were successful on the day. Their "Original BART" vehicle finished second overall in the main race event and the newer "BART", which was built out of an old bathtub, scooped top prize for best use of recycled materials.

"Original BART" held the race lead several times before narrowly losing out to winners Alford Academy by just 22 seconds at the end of the four-hour race.

"BART" was a little less successful in the race. An overheated engine cost it a great deal of time, although it did pass several cars as it climbed back up the race order.



Shell Representative Jim Niven meets Banff Academy pupils (from left) Joe McKinnon, Ewen Gregor, Paul Lange, Matthew Smith, Ross Paterson and Chris George (seated) as they show off their hand-built electric car "Original BART" at the Shell Greenpower Challenge heats in Alford. Banff finished second overall in the race event and now go on to the national finals at Goodwood, West Sussex.

A combined team from Banff will now join Alford at the Greenpower National Final at Goodwood, West Sussex, in October.

Technology teacher at Banff Academy, Edwin Flett, told the Journal: "It was a great day and a good time was had by all. The kids did really well.

"They're through to Goodwood now and they're all very excited about it.

"We'll still need a fair bit of practice before then, though."

Mr Fleet added that the team were keen to secure sponsorship ahead of their trip to the south coast.

He also admitted that he was not looking forward to the difficult task of dropping members in order to merge the teams.

Jim Niven, stakeholder manager of competition sponsors Shell, said: "We are delighted to support this event to encourage kids to take an interest in engineering and technology.

"It gives them an invaluable opportunity to experience these subjects hands on, while also gaining



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skills in teamwork, business, design and marketing.

"On top of this the whole process of planning, building and racing the cars is great fun for them."

Greenpower is a national project which has been running since 1999 and is designed to promote and encourage young people to develop an interest in and understanding of engineering and technology.

The project is divided into separate 'Formulae' to suit different age groups and to allow continuity from primary right through to secondary six. Each stage builds on the skills gained in the previous Formula.

Students are encouraged to run their project as a racing team focusing not just on the engineering challenge but also to consider the marketing, sponsorship and business aspects involved.

It is now hoped that it will become an annual event and that more schools and clubs will take up the challenge.

The other schools taking part this year were Banchory Academy, Bankhead Academy, Cordyce School, Dollar Academy, Forfar Academy and Thurso High School.

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