

Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Devon and Cornwall Area Committee

NEWS RELEASE

17 February 2015

ENGINEERING THE FUTURE: A CALL TO ARMS FOR SOUTH WEST ENGINEERS

The importance of Engineering to the South West economy is underestimated. Few people realise that the region is home to some great powerhouses of industry.

In Exeter and Newton Abbot, gas turbine blades for jet engines are manufactured by Alcoa Howmet and Centrax. In Honiton, SupaCAT supplies the UK Armed Forces with all-terrain vehicles. In Plymouth, nuclear-powered submarines are refuelled by Babcock and market-leading medical equipment is produced by Becton Dickinson. In Bideford, advanced composite components are developed by Anglo-Krempel, and in Yeovil, AgustaWestland is at the forefront of helicopter manufacturing. It doesn't stop there; the list of leading engineering companies - big and small - is impressive in its length and diversity.

Engineering is even found where you might least expect it: in Blagdon, Yeo Valley employs a team of engineers at its yoghurt production facility; and in Tiverton, engineering is at the heart of Heathcoat Fabrics' high performance textiles business.

To raise the profile of this major industry, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) is launching a new branch of its Devon and Cornwall Area committee in Exeter. The committee seeks to bring together aspiring, developing, and experienced engineers, and members of the general public to promote the benefits and achievements of the engineering profession.

Our new committee will be launched on 11 March. To mark the occasion, we have organised an event that charts the development of the most complicated piece of engineering equipment on the planet: the nuclear-powered submarine.

We hope that this will capture people's imagination and inspire them to support the activities of the IMechE by joining our committee. This FREE event is open to the general public and is particularly relevant to our Area because Devonport submarine maintenance base is just a few miles away in Plymouth.

The newly formed Exeter branch will organise a wide portfolio of events and activities, most of which will be open to the general public and free to attend. These will include evening lectures for general interest; technical visits to local engineering firms; social and professional networking events; engineering competitions; and mentoring opportunities for local students and professional engineers.

In addition, the committee will engage with local schools to support the teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and offer careers advice to young students.

By forming a new committee in Exeter, we want to help people to realise the importance of engineering to the local economy and celebrate the achievements of local engineering firms:

"We want to show the rest of the UK that Devon and Cornwall is not just about cream teas and pasties and show local people that cutting-edge engineering happens right here on their doorstep"

Will Newby, Devon and Cornwall Area Chairman

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Launch Event Details

Venue: Exeter Phoenix, Bradninch Place, Gandy Street, Exeter, EX4 3LS
Date: 11 March 2015
Time: 18:30 - 21:00 (doors open at 18:00)
Price: FREE and open to the general public
To book: nearyou.imeche.org/hunterkillers
Contact: Will Newby (DevCornYMChair@imechenetwork.org)

HUNTER KILLERS: FROM HITLER'S FALL TO PUTIN'S RISE

Iain Ballantyne, author of the factual Cold War thriller 'Hunter Killers', looks at how the post-WW2 face-off beneath the waves required both sides to initially adapt Nazi submarine technology. He also explains how a white-hot submarine arms race drove them to enter a dangerous game of nuclear cat-and-mouse where a single mistake could have spelled catastrophe. Finally, he will discuss how a resurgent Russia is once more sending its submarines out to confront the West and a new undersea rivalry is simultaneously springing up in the Asia-Pacific. <http://iainballantyne.com/>

Mike Homer, Managing Director of Submarines for Babcock International explains how the world's most complicated machines are maintained at HMNB Devonport in Plymouth and how the safe operation of a nuclear licensed site within 200 metres of the general population presents some unique challenges.

Retired Royal Navy submarine captain, Commander Rob Forsyth will answer questions about his experiences on board Britain's nuclear-powered boats. He was a Teacher of the prestigious 'Perisher' submarine command course and he brought HMS Sceptre from build into service. Upon leaving the Navy, he became a Director of Westland Group plc. http://www.deddington.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/8959/RobForsyth.pdf

Afterwards, there will be an opportunity to enjoy a drink with the speakers, do a spot of casual networking, and find out more about the IMechE in Devon and Cornwall.

The event is FREE and open to the general public. To register, go to:
nearyou.imeche.org/hunterkillers

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE)

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) is one of the fastest growing professional engineering institutions. Headquartered in London, but with operations around the world, the Institution has over 110,000 members in more than 140 countries, working at the heart of the most important and dynamic industries.

With a 160-year heritage supporting us and Her Majesty the Queen as our patron, today's Institution is a forward-looking, campaigning organisation. By working with leading companies, universities and think tanks, we create and share knowledge to provide government, businesses and the public with fresh thinking and authoritative guidance on all aspects of mechanical engineering.

We truly believe we can improve the world through engineering. So the Institution finds and nurtures new talent, helping engineers build their careers and take on the challenges that, when solved, will make a difference to all of us.

In the UK, engineering has achieved great successes, but in a quiet way. We're looking to shout about the achievements of our members and the industry, taking a positive, inspiring message into schools and out into the media. By being independent of both government and business, and avoiding strategic relationships with single-issue bodies or pressure groups, we can deliver genuinely impartial advice in a passionately committed manner.

www.imeche.org

Institution Manifesto 2015

In April, the Devon and Cornwall Area committee will be lobbying local parliamentary candidates to pledge their support for the future of UK manufacturing.

For more information, contact Will Newby (Committee Chairman)
devcornymchair@imechenetwork.org

<http://www.imeche.org/knowledge/policy/manifesto-2015>