

Seventh Institution of Mechanical Engineers (West Cumbria) Annual Dinner

The ovation said it all. Richard Noble OBE had just completed a mesmerising explanation of the engineering adventure that is Bloodhound SSC, winning a strong, heartfelt response from the privileged attendees to IMechE West Cumbria's 7th Annual Dinner.



From his earliest recollection of John Cobb's Crusader that set a 5 year old Noble on a lifelong quest for ultimate speed, Richard fully confirmed his web site description: 'challenger, entrepreneur, record breaker and motivational speaker', brilliantly explaining not only the engineering challenges to be overcome in designing and building a car to go faster than 1,000 mph, but also how the use of this iconic project is already inspiring a whole new generation of children, from primary key stage 1 upwards. This tied in excellently with the presence at the Dinner of several head teachers and staff members from schools across the area.

Held in the iconic Energus building, attendees to the Annual Dinner were able to view the stunning full-scale Bloodhound model on arrival.



West Cumbria Area Chairman Tom Pritt launched proceedings and explained how this event had grown and grown on the back of securing Richard and the model. The sponsors were warmly thanked, as their support had not only made this event possible, but was also being used to fund a series of educational engineering projects throughout the year. As an example, during the day, some 300 primary students had come to Energus to see and learn about Bloodhound, and to build their own balloon-powered rocket cars. Immediate feedback has been outstandingly positive.



West Cumbria Area Chairman Tom Pritt launched proceedings

Claire Jones, outgoing West Cumbria YM Chair and newly elected Chair of the international YM Board, implored all attending to support the development and the inspiration of young engineers in their companies and schools.



Claire and the West Cumbrian YMs had organised a Girls In Engineering event during the day, hosting a series of challenges, activities, case studies and advice sessions for groups of secondary school female students, led by female engineers and warmly supported by IMechE President-elect, Isobel Pollock.

Professor Rod Smith provided an engaging tale from his beloved railways before an excellent meal was efficiently served, and much networking undertaken. The audience were then invited into the lecture theatre to see Richard's presentation, which included photo-realistic 'breaking news video' type coverage of how they hope Bloodhound will succeed in breaking the 1,000 mph barrier. So realistic, in fact, that Fox News from the US contacted Richard to find out when the record had been broken...



Isobel Pollock gave a very positive report on the current state of IMechE, reporting better



finances and increasing membership, and complimenting West Cumbria on it's enthusiasm and activity levels, before George Beveridge, Deputy MD of Sellafield Ltd presented certificates to the two outstanding mechanical engineering students of the year from Lakes College, Chris Lister (HNC) and Lee Mitchell (NC).



Chris Lister (HNC) presentation



Lee Mitchell (NC) presentation

The evening was rounded off by a fine comedy turn from Jamie Sutherland, before the results of the Charity raffle were announced, with over £2,000 raised for our local charities: Cockermouth Mountain Rescue, Great North Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support - a staggeringly generous amount.

Outside, there was still light in the sky on this wonderful mid-summer's evening. Inside, Richard Noble was signing and selling Bloodhound posters till well after midnight. It had been the most splendid of evenings.

Further notes:

During the day, rocketry workshops and hands-on sessions were held to engage over 300 primary school students from Workington Junior Schools – Ashfield, Seaton and Victoria, plus Orgill Primary School, Egremont. The students were also invited to try out the Bloodhound SSC Simulator, to see the challenge of keeping the car in a straight line at 1,000 mph.

A Girls in Engineering event was also held, where students from St Benedicts, Whitehaven; Keswick School; Netherhall School, Maryport; St Josephs School, Workington and Stainburn School, Workington were presented with a series of challenges, activities, case studies and advice sessions, mentored by IMechE ambassadors and fully supported by Isobel Pollock, IMechE Deputy President. The sessions included a team challenge - building a tower, learning about how fuel cells produce power, and programming a Lego Mindstorm robot using ladder logic to compete in a challenge against each other.



St Josephs and Fuel Cell



St Josephs build a car



St Benedicts Robotics



Ashfield Juniors and Simulator





Ashfield Juniors let off Rocket Cars

The overwhelming feedback from the day was exceptional, all students and teachers were delighted to have the experience of meeting and learning about real engineering challenges.

The events could not have taken place without the generous and positive support from many local companies, including Amec, Atkins, Doosan Babcock, Energy Solutions, North West Projects, Sellafield Ltd, TIS, and Energus.



On the day following the Annual Dinner, Rod Smith, Isobel Pollock and Richard Noble were given privileged access to the THORP plant at Sellafield, to see and understand the extreme engineering required to safely handle and re-process spent nuclear fuel.

The day ended with a very special treat for President, Rod Smith, who was given a ride on the footplate on the L'aal Ratty. Rod, a railway fanatic, both professionally and personally, was



allowed to ride 'up front' on the River Esk, a superb 1923 steam locomotive, on England's first narrow gauge railway – a certain candidate for an Engineering Heritage award? (The railway, not Rod...). The ride was organised by newly-elected fellow, Dave Williams from Cumbria.



Photo Gallery

