

PRESS RELEASE



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DATE OF ISSUE: THURSDAY 28TH MAY 2009

STUDENTS DESIGN HELICOPTER DISABLED ACCESS

A team of four Yeovil College students have successfully completed a project to design a way of giving disabled access to Lynx Helicopters during Naval open days.

Working with 702 Naval Air Squadron of RNAS Yeovilton, Laura Kittredge (19) of Shaftesbury, Andrea Hartland (17) of Yeovil, Declan Lash (18) of Yeovil and Kieron Stephens (17) of Yeovil spent 7 months, including school holidays, designing and testing ideas for accessing the helicopters, which are built by AgustaWestland in Yeovil.

The project was part of the Engineering Education Scheme (EES) run by the Engineering Development Trust, a charity dedicated to encouraging young people to fulfil their potential through careers in science, engineering and technology.

The Yeovil College students worked closely with 702 Naval Air Squadron, attending regular meetings with them to discuss and analyse the scenario. The students also went to a three-day residential workshop at the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol. The team explored a variety of possible solutions, such as hydraulic or electric lifts, and box, sliding and standing ramps. They tested each possibility before coming up with a final design.

To complete the project, the students gave a presentation in Bristol, where they explained their work and unveiled their successful ramp design. They were interviewed by a panel of expert assessors representing the EES, organisers of the event, before receiving certificates of achievement.

Student Declan Lash, who is studying for a BTEC National Diploma in Engineering, said *"We were told that the presentation was one of the best the panel had seen and set a high benchmark for next year. It was a bit scary when we got face-to-face with the panel, but it was nice to know we did well and great to get the feedback."*

A Level student Laura Kittredge said *"We volunteered for this project and it was a really good experience. It was great to get out of the classroom for the UWE residential and see more of what life is like working on Engineering designs. We were really enthusiastic about the design and it was great to gain the Engineering experience. We really enjoyed working with RNAS Yeovilton. They were all very happy to help and we gained a lot from the experience."*

The students worked closely with Deputy Air Engineer Officer Lt. Alice Williams-Allden of 702 Naval Air Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton. She said *"I really enjoyed working with the students and it was good to have a fresh pair of eyes to solve an Engineering problem. They came up with some great ideas. The Scheme is a fantastic*

opportunity for the Royal Navy at Yeovilton to integrate with the local community and for the students to see exactly what we do here.”

Science and Engineering Lecturer Neil Gorton supported the students throughout the project. He said *“This is the first year that Yeovil College students have taken part in the Engineering Education Scheme, so we were very pleased with the outcome. It has been valuable experience for all the students involved as they had to take on new skills, such as project management and researching, and deal with some of the realistic problems which face working engineers over the course of a project. I was very pleased that the students rose to the challenge and, through hard work, gained this nationally recognised award. We are very grateful to 702 Squadron and the Royal Navy, who were very enthusiastic and supportive throughout the project.”*

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Notes to Editors

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