

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **YEOVIL COLLEGE HOSTS JUNIOR ENGINEERS COUNTY FINALS**

On Saturday 22 May 2010, Yeovil College played host to the Dorset county final of the Junior Engineers for Britain K'Nex Challenge 2010.

Teams from nine different Dorset primary and middle schools came to the College to take part in the annual competition, which aims to introduce young people to the world of engineering and technology in a fun and interesting way. The schools represented were Dorchester Middle, St Mary's Middle, Broadmayne First, Stalbridge Primary, Piddle Valley First, Milborne St Andrew First, Frome Valley First, Puddletown First and Sherborne Preparatory schools.

The 13 teams of eight to eleven year olds and one younger team of five to seven year olds had to come up with a solution for an engineering problem on the theme of Prince Arthur. The young learners had to design a tower and lift to help Merlin rescue Morgana and Prince Arthur, who were trapped on the roof of Camelot. The students then used K'NEX to build a working model.

The teams gained points for how they planned their solution, as well as their communication skills, team working and problem solving. The youngsters were also judged on whether the final model worked and met all the requirements of the challenge. Bonus points were available for using effective working gears.

The teams' efforts were judged by Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Ambassadors, who volunteer to support such events as part of a government initiative to encourage young people to have a positive attitude towards STEM subjects. The judges were Kevin Boniface of Bristol-based green energy company Sustain, Structural Engineer Ian Holloway of Gary Gabriel Associates, PhD student James Humble, who is studying at Plymouth University, and teacher Vicky Humble.

James Humble has been a STEM Ambassador for five years and is studying for a PhD in Computational Neuroscience at Plymouth University. He said *"It's good to get professionals involved in STEM events like this. It gives the students different role models that bridge the gap between school and the wider sector. The teams were all very good today and it was really difficult to choose between them because the standards were so high. The top three teams stood out because they fulfilled all the criteria, demonstrated great communication skills and their Engineering was very good overall. The winners in particular solved the problem with a very good solution."*

There were three winners. Third place was taken by James Cooke and Robert Honeybun of Dorchester Middle School as 'The Penguins'. Tom Foyle and Barnaby Barnes of St Mary's Middle School were 'Reinvented' and came second. First place was taken by Holly Townsend and Ed Chandler of St Mary's Middle School as 'Bananas R Us'. All the students who took part received certificates and a box of K'NEX to take home with them.

The event was organised by Georgina Humble of Yeovil College on behalf of Young Engineers. She said "*Today has gone exceedingly well. We've been totally amazed by the structures these young people have produced and how they creatively answered the problem, which was particularly challenging this year. We're very grateful to all the parents and carers who have supported the students and brought them here today, to the STEM Ambassadors for giving up their Saturday morning and to Yeovil College for the use of their facilities and continued support of this event.*"

The winning students will be invited to a national final at Duxford Imperial War Museum next month.

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### **Notes to Editors**

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