



Imagineering Clubs – Review of 2004

1. Clubs growth

- a) Twelve months ago the number of schools with running Imagineering Clubs was about 60, out of a total of 100 on our contact list. This was less than had been anticipated at the beginning of the school year. But it just takes time to bring together the three ingredients, namely:
 - interested school, children and teacher
 - engineers (normally 2) to be tutors leading the Club
 - money to pay for the packs of model kits
- b) The position now is that there are 80 running Clubs. The total school contact list is 140. Amongst those not running yet the range is from ready to start to preliminary interest.
- c) The most growth has taken place in Coventry/Warwickshire where the increase has been from 16 to 27, but new areas have been opened up as well in Scotland, around Reading and starting in Northants.

2. Tutors

The number of engineer tutors active in running Clubs has increased from about 100 to 150. A number of tutors (about 25) have withdrawn mainly because of work demands or moving. It has been possible to replace some but not all of these. Overall about half of the tutors are retired engineers with the others coming from the whole spectrum from apprentices on.

The Imagineering Foundation was formed by a group of engineers so the concept of a network growing as new tutors join is a natural process. We are keen that all tutors feel they are members of the Foundation as they are indeed its central asset. This means facilitating initial learning and ongoing communications in which the new website (see below) will play a vital part.

3. Recruitment

- a) Recruiting more people to be tutors is the key factor in enabling more young people to benefit from the experience of Clubs so it is always an item on our agendas. Two formal methods have been used this year, firstly a mailshot to IMechE and IEE members in Birmingham/Solihull and Worcester/Hereford with the help of the Institutions and SETPoint Mercia.

Secondly by inviting interested people as well as signed-on new tutors to Induction sessions in companies. A total of 14 sessions were run during the year.

However probably the most effective forms of recruitment are networking by existing tutors, companies or schools – so please keep talking and enthusing about Imagineering.

- b) Corporates

New organisations coming on board to support Imagineering Club tutors last year were:

LuK (UK)
Denso
Foster Wheeler, Reading
Weir Pumps, Glasgow
Cummins Engine, Daventry

These joined those already providing support:

Land Rover	Goodrich Engine Controls
Jaguar	RAF Cosford
National Grid Transco	Birmingham International Airport
Rolls Royce	Birmingham City Technical College
MIRA	Sandvik
Astra Zeneca	TRW Conekt
Sandvik	Blanc Aerospace

This growing corporate interest in participating in the Imagineering venture is a most valuable industry endorsement and asset, and very much appreciated by the schools.

c) Schools

Generally we have a backlog of schools wanting Clubs for which we are trying to locate tutors, currently 20 at least. Occasionally we have tutors joining and looking for schools in a particular area. Our first contact in such cases is to go via the local SETPoint or LEA. If that is not fruitful we may try direct approaches.

4. Website

Our new website www.imagineeringweb.co.uk has been primarily made possible by the hard work of Martin Evans as webmaster together with financial support from his company, National Grid Transco. Compared to the old site the aims are to allow non-specialist editing of content and provide an interactive Forum for tutors.

As a Club tutor himself Martin is close to our needs and issues. For example the Forum has section headings related to the model projects so that people can catch up or contribute to the latest changes or issues.

If you have not already done so please visit, register and let us know what you think.

5. Models and Kits

The **Junior Engineering** suite of models and kits has continued largely unchanged from last year. After the uncertainties of dealing with the prison workshops in 2002 our new main supplier has achieved a reliable supply of boxes to schools in good time for the start of each term.

Jocelyn Bengier has started at Evesham College as part-time administrator taking over from Tracey Calcutt who has moved on to a new job in a different area of school activities. Jos and David Yates co-ordinate the links with the suppliers in conjunction with the Tool and Kit Committee which meets every 4 – 6 weeks. There is also a Clubs Management Committee that meets at similar intervals.

Although we enjoy the informal and opportunistic character of Imagineering, we have recognised that with growth and wider geographical spread comes the need for better systems. We have gradually been developing drawings for kit components, a quality system, production scheduling and document controls. At the same time being dependent on volunteer effort we want to keep these as simple as possible.

6. Series 2 Models

From early on, having experienced the fun of a year of Junior Engineering children have asked 'Can we continue next year ?' In mid 2003 a group of tutors and engineers from Coventry University and SETPoint Coventry & Warwickshire set out to develop a second year of Club activities based on similar principles, namely individual assembly of working models from kits. In order to preserve 'make and take' we aimed to keep a comparable cost profile to Junior Engineering.

We also wanted to cater for early secondary school interest. The result was a series of 5 initial models – an electric car, electronic traffic lights, windmill generator, hydraulic arm and wire-guided robot. These are now being piloted at Higham Lane and Bluecoats Coventry secondary schools.

We have decided to call these **Inter-Engineering** to indicate progress from Junior Engineering, although in practice most of the children taking part have not been in a Club before.

7. Prospects

We have good relationships with many other organisations in the educational field and assist each other in informal ways. However apart from the specific corporate support indicated above, and ofcourse schools and teacher hosts, the growth of Imagineering Clubs so far has been largely due to our own efforts.

Gradually as the reputation grows other organisations are approaching us for collaboration. Already this year we have had a very positive discussion with Cadbury about Clubs and other aspects of Imagineering.

Some see us as kit suppliers. We are willing to provide termly packs of kits but aim use this as a basis for drawing in local engineers to support the Clubs. We have strong hopes that these various discussions will bear fruit during the year giving more power to wider Imagineering expansion.