

Full Steam Ahead

On Tuesday 16th June a team of year9 students, consisting of Sam Bate, Sam Boyall, Lizzie Colenso, Josh Reddish and Megan Swift took part in the prestigious iRail2015 event at the historic Roundhouse in Derby. The event was designed to fit in with Derby's historic association with the rail industry, by looking back at what's come before and the innovations that made today's railways possible, but also looking to the future. The 12 schools from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire were split into two strands, one looking at the railway infrastructure and one at rolling stock.

Our team was given the task of designing how railway carriages might be improved to make train travel quicker and more comfortable in the future which would be presented to a Dragon's Den style panel of judges comprising of railway industry professionals.

After been given the challenge, we visited Network Rail's East Midlands Control Centre, based in Derby followed by a visit to the Bombardier Transportation factory to see how they are manufacturing the new London Underground trains. These visits provided a close up view of the railway industry and were not only interesting, but also gave the students a chance to quiz industry experts to gain as much information as possible to help with the presentation.

Once back at the Roundhouse the team set about designing their carriages of the future and planning the presentation. They soon came up with a series of great ideas, which they felt sure would impress the judges, and before they knew it, it was time for the presentations to begin. There were over 100 students from all over Derbyshire taking part in the event, and the standard of competition was really high. Team Flamsteed presented their ideas, and despite some team members not being used to public speaking, the presentation was well scripted, slick and included some excellent ideas which were both creative and innovative.

The team did a superb job, and provided some excellent in-depth answers to the very demanding questioning from a panel of industry experts. The judging panel had no hesitation in voting the JFCS presentation and innovative ideas as the best, and they were awarded their trophy as "strand" winners.

As winners of the Rolling Stock challenge, the JFCS team went head-to-head against the winners of the safety challenge winners. Once again they did another superb presentation, impressing industry experts with their enthusiasm and creativity. Unfortunately JFCS narrowly missed out on winning the overall event, but came a very close and creditable second.

I was extremely proud of their performance and the team was another great example of the excellent creative thinking and resourcefulness of JFCS students.