

KMF competition inspires young engineers

An evening of inspiration, fun and prize giving was the culmination of the inaugural KMF Young Engineer of the Year Award. The project inspired more than 1000 secondary school children from Stoke on Trent to view manufacturing in a new light.

The challenge, sent out to local schoolchildren, was to design a clock. KMF would supply the mechanism and provide some classroom support, but the concept had to be the childrens' own work.

Managing director Gareth Higgins said, "We had 18 schools take up the project, with over 1700 mechanisms being distributed. The design brief gave the children pretty much free range to come up with a design, with only a few constraints, including the consideration of the commercial viability of the finished product. An incentive was that the finalists would have their designs put on sale in a local clock shop."

From a shortlist of 100, 14 finalists were selected. The finalists, along with parents, teachers and a wide range of customers

and KMF suppliers attended the prize giving ceremony at Stoke City's Britannia Stadium where the awards were presented by the Gadget Show's Jason Bradbury. The 10 runners up each received an i-pod with the two winners receiving an i-pad and other prizes.

Ben Walker of Ormiston Horizon Academy, the winner in the under 14 category, is a self-confessed 'techno geek' and was the only student to design a fully functioning 24 hour clock. His design was put on a 'soak' test over the Christmas holidays and, as he fully expected, it worked perfectly well. He used CAD skills to create the design and the project provided new challenges to which he could apply his knowledge.

In the under 16 group Cameron Forrest of Madeley High School was inspired by his love of music, both playing and listening. It was while doing the latter that his 'Eureka moment' came to him as he sat at home listening to music through his Beats headphones.