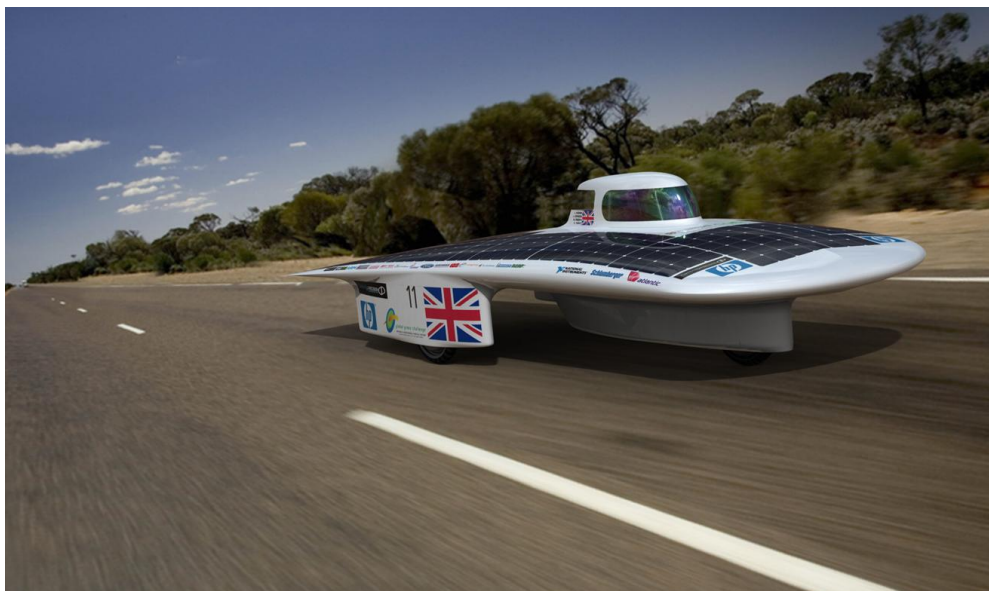


Monday, July 6th, 2009.

Solar Car Unveiled by Jenson Button at Goodwood

Cambridge University Eco Racing's entry to the Global Green Challenge 2009 launched by F1 star



Cambridge University Eco Racing's new solar racing car showcases cutting-edge environmentally-friendly technology, applicable to the next generation of electric vehicles. (Image produced by Lovegrove Studio.)

A solar-powered racing car that cruises at 60mph using the same power as a hairdryer created by students at Cambridge University was unveiled yesterday by Jenson Button at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Previously codenamed "Bethany", but launched under its official name, "Endeavour", the car is being touted as Britain's brightest hope for the Global Green Challenge – a gruelling 3,000km race straight across the Australian Outback this autumn. It is one of Cambridge's 2009 projects marking its 800th anniversary, and is student team Cambridge University Eco Racing (CUER)'s first ever entry into the race.

Named after the famous ship with which Captain Cook sailed from England to Australia, the car's power comes entirely from solar energy captured by a 6m² covering of high-efficiency silicon cells. Underneath this solar "skin", however, the car is essentially an ultra-efficient electric vehicle, which designers say could provide a model for other forms of green transportation.

At the launch, Button, the current F1 World Championship leader, commented, "There's some very impressive technology in this racing car. It may be a world away from an F1 car in terms of power, but to get a car to drive at 60mph using two horsepower takes cutting-edge engineering."

Anthony Law, the team manager of CUER who discussed the car with Button Sunday afternoon in the Goodwood FOS-Tech Pavilion, said, "At a time when the automotive industry is being forced to look at a low-carbon future, our vehicle demonstrates the enormous potential of energy-efficient electric vehicle technologies."

“Transportation currently accounts for about 35% of the UK’s energy use, so this is obviously an area in which we can have a big impact on climate change.”

Using computer simulation software, the car’s aerodynamics, rolling resistance, weight and electrical efficiency have all been optimised to minimise its energy requirements. It is also fitted with an energy-efficient hub motor, a control system to provide battery management and an electric braking system which generates energy.

It weighs just 170kg and its creators estimate that it requires up to fifty times less power than a normal petrol-fuelled vehicle.

CUER has already designed the UK’s first and only road-legal solar-powered car, which was driven from Land’s End to John O’Groats last year. The new vehicle will be road-tested extensively in the coming months before being shipped to Australia for October’s race from Darwin to Adelaide.

Its creators hope that the innovations in Endeavour’s design will enable it to put in the best ever performance by a UK-manufactured vehicle, even though the team will be up against university and corporate teams that boast seven-figure budgets, dwarfing the students’ own self-raised corporate funds of about £250,000.

Four student drivers will pilot the vehicle across the Outback, working in four-hour shifts to cope with the intense heat. During the race, however, the drivers will only have to steer the car and stay alert, as it is fitted with an advanced cruise control system which will automatically adjust its speed according to road conditions and weather forecasts.

Some seventy-five students from across the University have been involved in designing or building the vehicle, supported by a network of corporate sponsors, including HP and Cambridge Precision, academics and specialist advisors.

The initiative is also one of more than forty supported by the 2009 Fund, which has been set up to aid a wide range of University projects in honour of Cambridge’s 800th anniversary.

CUER sponsorship packages are still available at all levels for the Global Green Challenge. Interested parties should visit www.cuer.co.uk/sponsorship or Email sponsorship@cuer.co.uk to find out more. Individuals interested in supporting the project can join the Friends of CUER scheme at www.cuer.co.uk/donate

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For more information, please contact: Tom Kirk, Communications Office, University of Cambridge, Tel: +44 (0)1223 332300, mobile +44 (0)7917 535815, Email: tdk25@admin.cam.ac.uk or Robert James at Arthur Leone PR on 0207 637 2994, robert@arthurleone.com

Interviews with members of the CUER team can be arranged on request, via the Office of Communications, University of Cambridge, as above.

Images of the vehicle are also available.

Notes for editors:

1. Founded in 2007, Cambridge University Eco-Racing (CUER) has become a complete business and technical enterprise of around seventy-five students in just two years and is supported by a network of corporate sponsors, academics and specialist advisors. CUER aims to promote and develop sustainable technologies and to showcase the UK on the world stage of technological activity. In June 2008 CUER drove its prototype vehicle, 'Affinity', from Lands End to John O'Groats. This was the first time that such a journey had been undertaken and Affinity remains the only solar car to have driven legally on UK roads. For more information visit www.cuer.co.uk

2. Current CUER sponsors include: Cambridge Precision and HP.

3. The Global Green Challenge is a biennial competition in which solar-powered cars race from Darwin to Adelaide, a journey of around 3,000km. The 2009 competition will take place on October 25th to 31st. For more information, visit www.globalgreenchallenge.com.au