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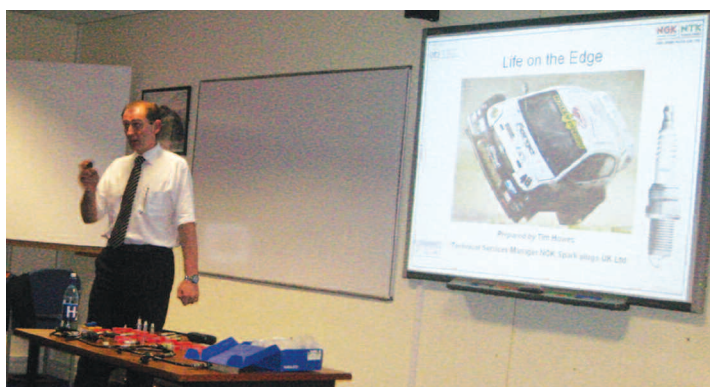
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NGK TECHNICAL

The changing face of spark plug technology over the years has been highlighted by NGK Spark Plugs (UK) Ltd during a technical presentation to members of the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI).

NGK Spark Plugs (UK) Ltd Technical Services Manager Tim Howes explained how the company met the challenge of dealing with the requirements of its motor industry customers and the world of motor sport.

The event – held at the renowned Northbrook College Sussex at Shoreham by Sea – saw him explain how the design of spark plugs has developed over the years to meet the ever-changing needs of vehicle manufacturers.



NGK Spark Plugs (UK) Ltd Technical Services Manager Tim Howes addresses IMI members at Northbrook College

NGK has been developing spark plug technology since the 1930s and is known as the world's number one spark plug manufacturer.

During his talk, entitled Life on the Edge, Tim Howes said spark plug technology has seen some rapid developments in recent years. Driven by the demanding requirements of today's vehicle manufacturers, technology has been moving ever faster to ensure that every new engine is fitted with precisely the right plug.

Today's new European-market cars have to meet ever more severe emission limits while, at the same time, the VMs continue to worry about fuel consumption. An engine design team, therefore, has to work very closely with a spark plug manufacturer from the earliest stage of development.

PRESS RELEASE



He said: "Spark plugs are in some respects a simple product, but have to deal with very demanding conditions and exacting requirements. They have a dramatic effect on a vehicle's performance and vehicle manufacturers are becoming ever more demanding on what they require for each bespoke model."

IMI members were shown a range of spark plugs used on a variety of vehicles with differing demands, from plugs used in every-day road cars, through to racing cars and motor bikes.

Tim Howes also told members of NGK's motor sport sponsorship activities which include the supply of spark plugs for the all new Ford Fiesta RS World Rally Car, Ford's official entry in the FIA World Rally Championship.

Douglas Wragg, Chairman of the IMI's Sussex Member Association, who arranged the technical evening, said: "It was a fascinating presentation, absolutely terrific. I was unaware of the enormous range of spark plugs that are available and their varying characteristics."

IMI member Steve Randall said: "It was really eye-opening to learn how spark plug technology has changed over the years and how there are so many plugs that are specific to a vehicle manufacturer's individual requirements."

The IMI Sussex branch regularly holds technical presentations at Northbrook College and also sponsors annual awards for the top male and female students, named after long-standing former local officials Brian Parnall and Jean Garnade.

Northbrook College provides a wide range of motor engineering and motor sport courses as well as Aeronautical and Aerospace Engineering courses.

Full-time automotive courses include Foundation Degrees in Motorsport Engineering, Mechanical/Manufacturing Engineering and an HND/Foundation Degree in Electrical/Electronic Engineering.

While part-time courses include Higher National Certificate in Electrical/Electronic Engineering, Higher National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering and IMI Level 4 Diploma Automotive Master Technician.

Many students progress to universities where they complete an Honours Degree before moving on to employment in industry. Students from motor vehicle programmes often progress to vehicle design with major manufacturers or into the world of motor sport.

PRESS RELEASE

While engineering graduates typically move into employment in their industry as designers, project engineers, production and operations managers, research and development engineers or as sales/technical representatives.

Simon Bates, Lecturer in Motor Vehicle Studies, said: "We currently have around 340 students on automotive courses at the college, around 10 percent of whom are female.

The facilities at Northbrook are ideal as we have plenty of workshop space to enable them to work on a variety of vehicles as well as having classroom tuition.

"Students will often attend the technical presentations organised by the IMI and to have presentations by companies such as NGK only benefits the college."

For more information visit www.ngkntk.co.uk

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