

PRESS RELEASE

Students' paper planes launched From the Edge of Space

Beckington, 3 July 2012: On 28 June a team of students, aged 7 to 11, from Bailey's Court School in Bristol, assisted by space engineers from SEA (a Cohort plc company), successfully released one hundred unique 'paper space planes' from the stratosphere; the edge of space.

The project was undertaken to encourage young people to consider careers in engineering. Each plane was designed, tested and decorated individually by the high-flying team of students. The planes were lifted inside a giant helium balloon that protected them from the weather. The balloon, carrying a payload of cameras and a GPS tracker, was launched by the students from SEA's Beckington Castle site near Frome.

The launch was a tremendous success. The balloon rose rapidly to a height of 20km (60,000ft) where it burst and released the flock of paper space planes. This was captured on video by one of the on-board cameras. The camera module then parachuted back to earth and landed over 70 miles away in Oxfordshire. A team from SEA were quickly able to locate and retrieve the module later in the day.

The project was part of a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) Ambassador programme extending over two months where students were tasked by SEA engineers to think about the best design of the balloon, planes, parachutes and tail fins for the payload. The students learnt a lot about the real world of engineering. Over the course of four sessions designs were tried and tested, and pupils learnt about rockets, space shuttles and the atmosphere.

The 'paper space planes' were released over Wiltshire and are expected to travel hundreds of kilometres, perhaps even as far as Eastern Europe. Each plane has instructions printed on it to contact the school and report its landing place so that the students can compile a map.

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Notes to Editors:

- A video clip of the event can be viewed here (link valid for 12 days):
<https://rcpt.yousendit.com/1585756043/eb964fc9afc540852142e8768789532e>
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About SEA

The company, which was founded in 1988, provides engineering and software design services to Government agencies, industrial prime contractors and academia. We employ high-calibre staff and place our emphasis on quality of service, innovation, flexibility and a creative approach to problem solving. The company has offices in Beckington (Somerset) and Bristol and employs circa 230 people. SEA was acquired by Cohort plc in 2007.

SEA