# University team spurs on land speed record attempt

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The Bluebird electric powered car

An attempt to beat a UK land speed record this weekend is being fuelled by the expertise of electrical engineers at the University of Bristol.

Professor Phil Mellor and a team of PhD Electrical Engineering students will be heading to Pendine Sands in South Wales to see for themselves whether the Bluebird electric car is up to speed.

Bluebird Electric set the current UK Electric Land Speed Record of 137mph in 2000 and it's hoping to achieve speeds of 150mph this weekend.

Behind the wheel will be Don Wales, who is a descendant of the Campbell family which has amassed over 30 speed records on both land and water over the last 100 years since the first Bluebird race car was

built in 1911.

Don's grandfather was legendary driver Sir Malcolm Campbell who broke the world land speed record on nine occasions between 1924 and 1935, three times at Pendine Sands.

Work on the latest Bluebird began in the spring when Professor Mellor joined forces with the project's Technical Director Dr Tim Allen, who is Director of Tirius Ltd - a UK-based electrical and electronic vehicle engineering design consultancy.

Professor Mellor, who was involved in the record-breaking Bluebird project in 2000 when he was working at Sheffield University, is supporting the project with a team of postgraduate students from his Electrical Energy Management Group in Bristol University's Department of Electrical Engineering.

He said: "It's very exciting to be at this stage, where a vehicle we've worked on has the potential to break the UK Electric Land Speed Record.

"The team from Bristol have done a superb job in installing the vehicle electric power train and batteries in a very short timescale.

"We are looking forward to the weekend to demonstrate the UK is at the forefront of low carbon vehicle engineering, in particular to highlight the importance of Electrical Engineering in such projects"

A trial run at Filton on Tuesday night went well, with Bluebird surpassing speeds of 100mph.

Dr Allen, who was driving for the Filton 'shakedown' test, said: "Bluebird performed faultlessly and the drive train worked very well.

“These tests weren’t to establish outright speed but the acceleration was very good. Conditions at Pendine are very different to a tarmac airfield but we’re confident in her capabilities.”

The Bluebird team is using this weekend’s trials to not only break the UK record, but also to test the technology behind the car. The longer term aim is to build a completely new electric vehicle capable of beating the World Land Speed Record for a wheel-driven vehicle fitted with compact, advanced electric power train technologies.

The record currently stands at 307mph, which was set by the Buckeye Bullet 2.5 team last year.

## Further information:

Don Wales and Bluebird Electric are grateful to the MSA and RAC, plus their sponsors Castrol, Aggreko, Ford, Goodyear, Dura, Phase Vision, Bluestone, Southern Springs, Dickies, and Honour Motorsport whose support and services have been invaluable throughout.

Sir Malcolm Campbell broke the speed record nine times in various Bluebird cars powered by both Napier and Rolls Royce engines. His records set at Pendine Sands were:

- 25 September 1924 – 146.16 mph
- 21 July 1925 – 150.766mph
- 4 February 1927 – 174.88mph.

He achieved 301.12mph in 1935 on the Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah. His son, Donald, continued the record breaking tradition and broke the

400mph barrier in a turbine powered Bluebird.

Don Wales holds a World Land Speed Record, two American National Records and eight UK records.

In addition to the record attempt, Bluebird Electric will be raising awareness for their chosen charities: Help for Heroes, Wessex Heartbeat and The Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals.

The progress of Don Wales and the Bluebird Racing Team will be updated on their website.

Provided by University of Bristol

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