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New Holland apprentices showcase their skills by building and racing gravity-powered tractor in Red Bull Soapbox Race

A team of apprentices from New Holland's manufacturing plant in Basildon took on the challenge of the [Red Bull Soapbox Race](#) – with the factory's first ever gravity-powered tractor.

The skilled trainees, aged 18-19, designed and built the vehicle themselves before racing it on live TV at the wild international downhill competition held in front of 20,000 people at Alexandra Palace in London on Sunday July 14th.

The four-strong team – named 'The X Tractor' – was made up of second year apprentices: team captain Amy Tilbury and driver Billy Braybrook plus James Webb and Kyle Walker.

They raised almost £1,000 for St Luke's hospice in Basildon and also a cause close to the New Holland factory team's heart: an employee's child who needs prosthetic limbs after suffering meningitis.

Before they even got to the race track, however, they had to secure one of just 50 starting places – which they won with a promise of a unique design, added to by a home-made 'Pimp My Ride' video.

The vehicle took 10 weeks to construct and was finished off with a New Holland stylish Maserati blue paint job, white wheels, chrome-effect exhausts and a Union Flag hood.

The winner on the day was judged not just on how quickly they finished the course but also the creativity and showmanship of both their vehicle and a 20 second performance on the starting line.

The X Tractor team missed out on a top 10 place but made a spectacular contribution to the race, navigating obstacles until a heavy landing bent an axle, although they still managed to complete the course.

Team captain Amy Tilbury said: "We had a great day. This was a real opportunity for us to really show off the engineering skills we have learned on our New Holland apprenticeship and have some fun at the same time.

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“We got to grips with project management, design, problem solving and working as a team to produce a fantastic little racing cart that showed off the New Holland style and pedigree!”

Tony Hamilton, Focused Improvement Pillar Leader & Senior Quality Engineer at New Holland’s tractor factory, was the team’s project manager and he said: “We’re very proud of our very first gravity-powered racing team!

“The weekend was amazing, and the atmosphere was electric. They all threw themselves into this project and demonstrated the dedication and talent that marks them out as New Holland trainees.”

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