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eRoadRacing Championship – Le Mans Round

Fozzy's View

I'm thinking about the arguments for and against and the resistance to the advent of electric racing motorcycles and I'm struggling to understand why there is any resistance. My ride on the Zero last week has really flipped my racing head another way up...



Many of the key arguments have more often than not been; Expense, range, complexity and the really big one "they're not as fast". The experience I had last week showed me that those arguments are being eroded and people are starting to fear the encroachment of these machines towards the domain of the petrol bikes...But why? I've been forced to ask myself why I love motorbikes and why I love racing, something most of us take for granted. "We're doing it aren't we? We must love it". Motorbikes are petrol powered, we must love petrol. Motorbikes are noisy, we must love noise. Motorbikes are smelly we must love the smell....I do..I do love these things but there are some things that stand above these for me, things that are much higher priorities, at least in the world of racing motorbikes...The race, the power, the speed. If these priorities are attended to I really don't care how the bike is powered, how noisy or how smelly it is. What I'm caring most about is how easily it helps me get past the bike in front of me and how much closer it gets me to being the first one past the chequered flag. All within the realm of fair competition of course.



Take tuning for example; With existing combustion engine powered motorbikes you need to take the engine apart, modify it, put it back together, test it then feedback the results into a repetition cycle of the process. To most people that would involve a £2k bill from your engine tuner every time. With an electric motor driven motorcycle, given the right controller, you can (potentially) modify power characteristics on the fly...An electric motor is already capable





of giving you too much power...the limiting factor is how much you give it and how you allow it to give it to you... all with a dial or a lap-top...something already used to control fuelling on some petrol powered bikes, but the point is you can do in a session what would take a season with a petrol engine..



And they're simple.. I always thought there was an array of fantastical feats of wiring and electronics prowess which was probably the case with the early prototypes but all the major components are commercially available as 'black boxes'. Motor, controller, batteries...that's it, to make it even easier you can now buy pretty well sorted whole bikes straight from the showroom. As soon as Asia start manufacturing these and shelling them out like peas, (and they will,

they've told me) you'll be able to pick them up for the cost of a mountain bike...

A few reading this will probably be all too familiar with the budget required to set up a Superbike spec racebike... If you took that budget and used it to build a prototype electric bike you would have a faster and more powerful motorcycle...for the first time this year a prototype electric motorcycle beat petrol powered bikes on the same playing field at Pikes Peak, a major world class event...That's a pretty major milestone..

What about noise? Noise is a good thing right? We all love the sound of multi-cylinder petrol engines screaming a symphonic cacophony to the worshiping onlookers... Well, I know I do, what about the other good folks of this crowded island? We may not like it but there is growing pressure from the wider community to curb this wonderful thing...Mallory Park, Castle Coombe, Croft... all historic racing locations citing noise as one of the pressure points putting them under pressure for closure. At all UK circuits now we're tested for excessive noise before we're allowed anywhere near a circuit...Imagine the faces of the protagonists when we take that particular gust from their sails...

Some of the above points already suggest to me that we're already past Genesis and looking at an incredibly strong future for racing motorbikes we're well into the next phase of racing's evolution and I'm getting really excited about where it's going....Imagine urban race complexes with low socio-economic catchment (council estates to you and me!) providing the next world dominating British racers. Ok maybe I've overstepped an imaginary mark, a little farfetched perhaps but possible...sometime in the future. Low cost, low noise, massive fun, who wouldn't want some of that? Racing wouldn't have to be





the preserve of the wealthy, or at least those that are obsessive enough to sell all that they own to be a part of it.

So far I've managed to avoid the elephant in the room, the green credentials and that's mainly because I don't think it's a very strong argument...Ok, in terms of burning finite reserves of precious hydrocarbons there are benefits to be had but in-turn the production of motors, controllers and particularly batteries they are not going to provide an ecological answer, yet. They might however provide a stepping stone...if a more sustainable way of providing electrons to these motors can be found then it'll provide a way to continue racing these marvels of engineering and creation...combustion engines wont we already know this. Some aren't yet ready to admit it but eventually, kicking and screaming, they will and they'll need something else to race, they are after all racers..



Yours Sincerely,

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