

MIA GREENER RACING CONFERENCE



January's MIA Cleaner Racing Conference at the NEC began with a speech by Lord Drayson, the Minister of State for Science and Innovation. He challenged the motorsport industry to set an example with cleaner racing, claiming that all road cars will have to be zero-emission by 2050 to prevent global warming. He suggested that diversified economies are essential in a post credit-crunch world and urged the motorsport industry to work with automotive companies, a theme that was revisited throughout the conference without great optimism.

Opportunities for commercial growth were perceived to be outside of motor racing itself and not without challenge. Adrian Moore of Xtrac argued that in motorsport deadlines (i.e races) are set in stone which demands a flexible and innovative workforce, whereas in the automotive industry deadlines can become flexible and there is a more rigid and structured work ethic. Dr Steven Maggs of Warwick Manufacturing Group pointed out that the automotive industry works under far greater restrictions.

The conference focused on the opportunities provided by low carbon vehicles rather than the necessity of them. It was agreed that the future was not large capacity internal combustion engines, but the disagreements came when discussing where exactly the future lay. There was a consensus that investment in any single technology was a commercial risk and governing bodies should therefore dictate which way they want green technologies in racing to develop.

Azhar Hussain, Founder of TTxGP, an electric bike series marketed as 'the world's first zero emission race' spoke passionately about his vision for electric racing. Ulrich Baretzky of Audi made the valid point that although the TTxGP bikes themselves may be emission free, the production process is not. Audi itself is pushing the 'world engine' concept,

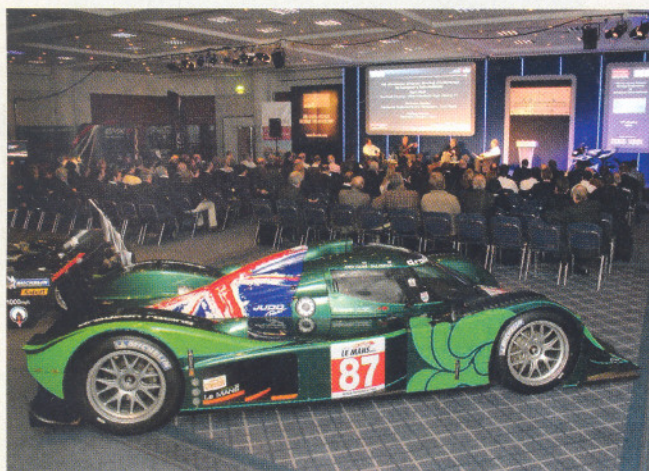


“ although the TTxGP bikes themselves may be emission free, the production process is not ”

AUDI'S ULRICH BARETZKY



Don Taylor (Progressive Automotive X-Prize USA), Graham Stoker (FIA Deputy President for Sport), Lord Drayson (Minister of State for Science and Innovation) and Chris Aylett (CEO, MIA) discuss the impact of governance on 'Green Racing' opportunities



Drayson Racing Lola LMP1 on display at the Cleaner Racing Conference

'which they hope will introduce a single engine architecture for motorsport. The world engine will be a small capacity unit, 2-Litre in its largest form, and turbocharged if necessary.

Somewhere between the 'world engine' and the electric TTxGP bike sits hybrid technology. There was no-one present to espouse the cause of electric hybrid technology, which has been the most successful type of hybrid in road cars and motorsport so far. It is mass produced in the Toyota Prius and powered wins in F1 for McLaren and Ferrari, and an ALMS podium for the Zytek Q10 system. Flywheel hybrid technology was represented by Ian Foley of Williams Hybrid Power and Jon Hilton of Flybrid Systems. Although flywheel-based systems have yet to prove themselves in motorsport, they have found application in the automotive world, with both companies using the technology they developed for F1 in roadgoing vehicles. In fact, these systems could yet prove to be the most relevant technology to pass from Formula 1 to road cars in decades. Although flywheel hybrids are not currently permitted in Formula 1, neither company would be present without the initial decision by the FIA to allow KERS in F1. The fact the systems have not raced to date is irrelevant. They are a fine example, as Lord Drayson requested, of motorsport as the inspiration and road cars the beneficiary.

Christopher Foster

