

EXCLUSIVE:

INTERVIEW WITH AN "ENGINEER"

One of the highlights of the BMF Show this year was the chance to interview Jethro, the Chief Design Engineer of the new Honda RC52 featured on the front cover of this issue.

Editor

Jethro, I would like to say thank you on behalf of all our members for the opportunity to talk about what must be one of the most unique ideas to have emanated from the Honda stable in the last three decades.

Jethro

Yes, I have to apologise for the secrecy, but for a project of this type, Dorset seemed the ideal place to keep things under wraps.

Editor

The vehicle is truly a unique concept, what was the design remit and thinking behind it?

Jethro

At heart, the bike is essentially a hill-climber. It struck us that there were a significant number of people who spent money travelling to various events and paying entry fees, only to have their enjoyment of the competition limited to a brief 60 seconds or so. In response to this, we have produced a machine which can extend the run times to more than double the previous norm, providing far greater value for money, and hence enjoyment.

Editor

Concepts of this nature usually involve using the latest technological advances; does the RC52 follow this trend?

Jethro

In a word, yes. The exhaust system is manufactured from a secret new hybrid material currently known only by its manufacturing reference S.C.R.A.P. In addition, whilst the engine capacity is 500cc, we have built in a system which automatically reduces the capacity to 250cc at the lower rev ranges. The system is so new, we are still optimising the settings, and sometimes, only 250cc is available at the higher rev ranges as well.

Editor

I appreciate the secrecy behind such matters, but now that the project is nearing completion, what results are available from the track & dyno testing which has been undertaken?

Jethro

As you say, such matters are confidential, and dyno testing in particular has been hampered by the settings on the "cylinder cut out system". However, in terms of both top speed and power output, the official answer is "enough". Track testing has generally been consistent, except on those occasions when we don't come last.

Editor

I have heard a rumour that the project has encountered financial difficulties, and a sponsor is being sought, is there any truth in this?

Jethro

Yes, we had hoped to keep it quiet, but the situation is not that serious. Sponsorship to the tune of a tenner and half a dozen bottles of Old Speckled Hen will see us back on track.



Caught on camera!!
The two HOC representatives in the BMF cavalcade. The RC52, and this year's winner of the HOC BMF Committee's concours d'elegance

My thanks to Jethro for being a good sport, and giving us all a giggle. Ed