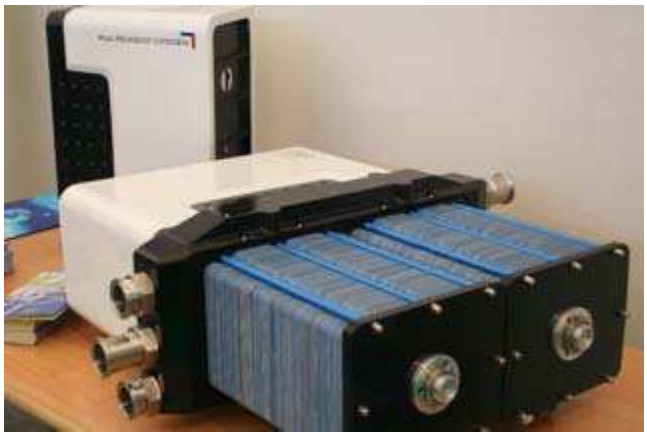
CHALLENGE BIBENDUM 2006

Report 2
9th June 2006

Today was the day for participants to look around the show, and for continued testing of the vehicles.

This year there are fewer hybrid cars, but more fuel cell cars.



A Peugeot fuel cell stack

Michelin/PSI Hy-light fuel cell car

Mercedes F-Cell

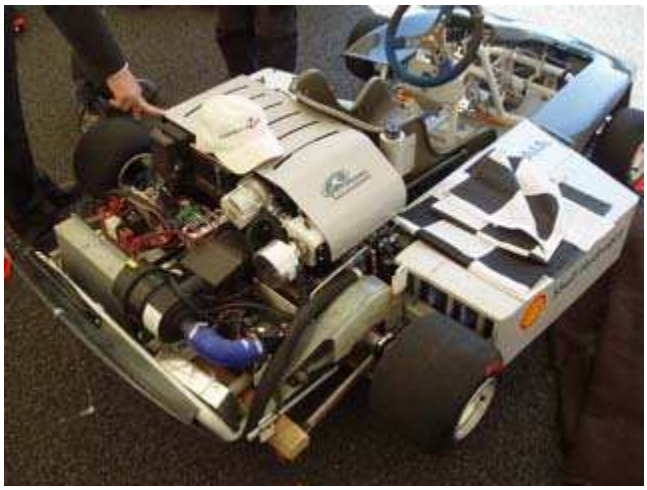
Ford fuel-cell car

Paul Frere, a Monaco based journalist for Road and Track and Car Graphic, inspects the Mercedes F-Cell

Eiso Vaandrager, one of the drivers from the 2001 Nuna team, is now working for a company called Formula Zero that is planning open-wheeled racing events for fuel-cell vehicles. The initial vehicles will be go-karts. The karts will run for about 10 minutes on a canister of hydrogen; a canister can be changed in about 15 seconds. They plan to evolve to full-size racing cars by 2015.

Eiso Vaandrager, ex-Nuna, now Events Director for Formula Zero

A Formula Zero prototype fuel-cell go-kart



The fuel cell end of a prototype Formula Zero go-kart

GM is showing a hydrogen combustion platform.

A GM hydrogen combustion platform

One of the more interesting conventional-fuelled vehicles is the Mercedes "Bionic".

Mercedes "Bionic"

There is also a wide variety of electric vehicles, from bicycles to full-size cars.

David talks to Madame Courreges

The Zooop, with a 150 kW AC Propulsion drive ...

... and matching yellow tyres

A GEM neighbourhood electric vehicle

A Matra prototype battery electric people mover

An electric chariot for posties

The Venturi Fetish

The Zooop tackles the slalom

Lucien Giol tries an electric bicycle

The Akasol Oscar prototype

In the afternoon, David Wright from CSIRO arrived. David is the head of the CSIRO Energy Transformed program.

David Fewchuk shows the stand to David Wright (CSIRO)

There is quite a large delegation from China, following the successful 2004 Challenge Bibendum held in Shanghai.

One of the many Chinese vehicles

Late in the afternoon, the participants assembled in the testing area for a ride and drive session. Peter and Theresa were first to do a lap of the CERAM test circuit in a CNG garbage truck. We then tried more conventional vehicles. The Michelin Hy-Light is a small fuel-cell prototype with active suspension. It is very fast, and has no roll or pitch during cornering and braking. It can even be programmed to lean into corners. The Oscar prototype was also fast, and has room in the back for two small passengers. The Mercedes F-Cell fuel cell car was very nice. Mercedes has produced about 60 of these vehicles. Most are being used in the USA. Range is about 160 km of city driving; refuelling takes about 3 minutes.

A CNG garbage truck

Cockpit of the Michelin/PSI Hy-Light fuel cell prototype

Oscar the prototype electric car

Mercedes F-Cell fuel cell car

After the ride and drive we dined in the Bibendum restaurant before returning to our hotel for the night. Tomorrow is the official opening, and we are expecting about 500 media.