

Sub six seconds is the target

By GARRICK KNIGHT

Some in the speed industry are drawing comparisons between Athol Williams and Burt Munro, the world-famous Invercargill motorcyclist.

Athol, of Pokeno, together with his wife Sharon and team of mechanics and engineers, has rebuilt his Top Fuel Drag Bike in an effort to join the elite sub six-second club.

He set a NZ resident-record 6.62sec (for 400m) at last year's Winternationals in Brisbane.

But at the same track in December, the engine exploded, disintegrating the solid cast and firing parts 60m away.

Athol was unhurt, unperturbed and if anything, motivated to build the bike stronger, faster and more powerful.

The finely-tuned specimen has been the subject of 2000 man hours in the



Roger Bloor (left) and Athol Williams take all necessary precautions as they feed the highly combustible nitromethane into the fuel tank during a demo start-up of Athol's drag bike.

rebuilding process, and has reached an unbelievable near-1500hp.

"Very few people in the business have been aware of what we have been doing," says Athol.

He has gone to the lengths of sending one of his crewmen, Roger Bloor,

to live with International gurus Larry and Steve McBride, the first to break the six-second mark, in the US where he picked up experience and knowledge to bring back.

According to Athol, there is even interest from the McBrides for him to

travel to the States and race under their banner.

Athol plans on relaunching the bike at the Taupo track next weekend for testing, but will not race it in New Zealand as the strips aren't long enough to house the nitro methane-powered bike.

He plans to return to this year's Winternationals in Brisbane in June.

The nitromethane, at \$2200 per drum, is a highly combustible fuel designed for modified engines such as that of Williams' and he believes it would be a dis-service to the machine if he used anything else. "Petrol is for washing parts, alcohol is for drinking and nitro is for racing," he says.

Munro's bike was renowned as the World's Fastest Indian, and a movie made about Bert's life starred Sir Anthony Hopkins. As for Williams, he's not yet sure what his movie will be called.

Easter fun at the Port

If you're looking for something to do this weekend, it's all happening at Port Waikato during Easter. The fun kicks off on Saturday with a day of sports activities and a sand castle competition at Sunset Beach from 12 noon until 5pm.

Games of touch, volley ball, and boogie boarding will be organised, and food stalls will be set up to raise money for the Port Waikato Recreation Club.

The club will use the cash to buy sporting equipment, and to paint over tagging. On Sunday it's the Port Waikato Fishing Club's Kahawai Classic Competition, and if you manage to haul in the big one, you could win a \$1000 prize. The day starts at 6am. Tickets are available from Stevens and Jenkins and Hooked on U. The weekend wraps up on Monday with a market at Port Waikato Community Hall at 9am.

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ONE PAPER NEXT WEEK

Because of the Easter holiday, there will be only one Franklin County News published next week. This will be on Thursday April 12, and will be a combined Tuesday/Thursday paper. Classified deadline for the April 12 paper is 10am on Tuesday, April 10.

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