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moleracing 2021 – late season update *“Still going better than expected!”*

The last update was around the halfway point of the season, and it had gone unexpectedly well, taking several outright wins and the lead of the British Sprint Championship and British Sprint Leaders Championship. Well, after 26 rounds, despite missing 4 rounds in Northern Ireland, I am still surprised to say that position is maintained as we head into the final 6 rounds.

Knockhill, Scotland

After Lydden, with a disappointing 7th and 3rd place in the run offs after setting fastest time overall in qualifying, we had just 5 days to get from the south coast of England to Fife, north of Edinburgh.

I had planned to arrive around lunchtime on the Friday and take part in the Friday evening practice session to get a small advantage, but mid afternoon I got a phone call that the session had been cancelled due to lack of runners. So just had an easy afternoon, emptied the trailer and contents to the pitlane garages, washed the van and went for a run of the track when the daytime action had finished – here captured by Jane Louden

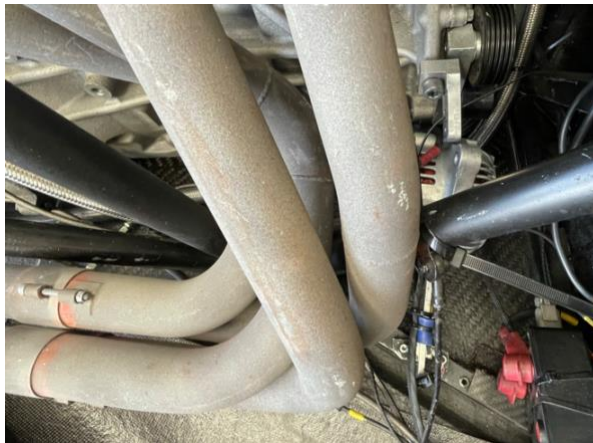


Photos by Jane Louden

With my current position in the overall championship, I’m trying to ‘up my game’ in terms of car and driver preparation, so didn’t even have a beer the night before!

There were 13 runners that had made the long trip, including 4 more powerful racing cars than mine, but strangely not some of the rivals for the title, Matt and Steve in their shared Dallara. John Graham, last years championship winner arrived and left again after finding a wishbone had broken on his race car in the trailer during the journey up from Cumbria!

The first and only practice run was fine and I took the fastest time spot – but no points for practice! The calm preparation all went to pot at the start of the qualifying run. A clattery noise from behind me could be heard when I fired up, yet it was fine when I came off the track 30 mins earlier? I had about 8 mins before I would lose my chance to qualify for run off 1. Engine cover, side cover and nose cover off. The bolt holding the alternator had snapped and the alternator was loose. Oil pump belt off, alternator belt off, heavy duty cable ties lashing the alternator to the chassis and then everything put back. I made it with a few minutes to spare and did the run on a total loss voltage basis, and despite a voltage warning late in the run, I finished about 3rd fastest to qualify. However, with what happened next, I needn't have bothered!!



I fully repaired the temporary fix and got things back to normal. Then turned my attention to preparing the car for the runoff 1. This always involves, fuel, check over, best tyres fitted and check tyre pressures, datalogging, video analysis and finally make a run plan.

So, I did all of that in a relaxed fashion and made my way to the start line. The launch was wild with the car bucking and oscillating but it sort of settled until I accelerated again and it was all over the track, so I concluded something had broken or was loose and parked up on the grass, forfeiting any score in the interests of safety.

When I got out to investigate, I couldn't believe what a stupid mistake I had made. On just the left hand side of the car, I had put the front wheel on the rear and the rear on the front. With the wheels being different diameters, it was effectively rocking on the diagonal!



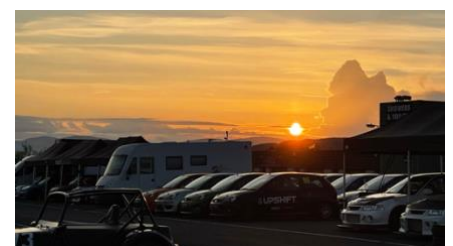
Numpty of the day award. I made some visual indicators on the tyres that could be viewed when in the car to remind what a stupid mistake I'd made.



The 1st run off was won by Terry Holmes in the big V8 Tegra Lola, seen here with BSC organiser Pete Howgate and co driver Graham Porret.



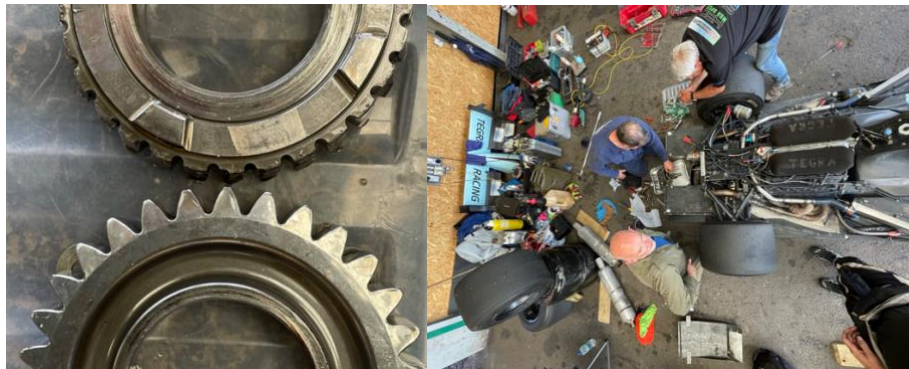
The second qualifying was a relaxed affair and in the runoff I pushed Terry very hard, we both said afterwards we nearly both came off the track, but after a 90 second run he stopped the clocks 0.13 secs quicker than me, so 2nd place and 24 points is acceptable. A couple of beers – no more, and then some tyres to clean and a track walk, food and bed!



The following day we ran clockwise. And despite nothing changing overnight it felt like a totally different circuit. I was determined to make up for yesterdays dropped scoring opportunity and qualified 0.5 secs behind Terry. But pleased to say when it came to the important runoff that awards points I managed to sneak ahead by only 0.44secs, to take the 25 points.

Qualifying 2 was a safe affair with several of the Ecoboosts getting ahead, but again, it's only qualifying. I then had a 3 hour wait as we were billed as the 'final showdown of the day' for the public. For the first time this season I felt nervous with the waiting and after the physical car preparation, I started to pack up the garage back to the trailer just to give me something to take my mind off it!

The Tegra team had the now customary gearbox issue and it had to come out, pretty fast and get rebuilt. You can see here the two gears, one with teeth and the other that should have had teeth!



So all fired up I launched and the sequence of corners went well, taking most apexes as best as I could, I had some "oh S&*t' I've overdone the entry speed on that", type corners, but at the end of the day, I'd taken the fastest spot from Terry again by 0.27secs, but better than that, I went inside the 2 litre class record to bag a bonus point and maximum days points. So, as you can imagine, many beers were consumed that evening before my drive home on Monday! *Photos below by John Stewart*



Pete made a mess but no real damage of his powerful Ecoboost by putting in the gravel, just like Simon Bainbridge the previous day! Much stone clearing was in evidence in the Scottish paddock!



A fortnight later I should have been in Northern Ireland, but my wife had to have urgent surgery so I withdrew, yes some things are more important than racing cars!

The 4 run offs in Kirkistown were shared nicely between Graham Porret – who took his first ever pair of wins and also Pete Goulding breaking his duck by 0.01secs ahead of Graham Blackwell who also took a win and a bonus taking his score to 417 points. But overall that still left me leading the British Championship going into Blyton weekend with 425 points. However Matt Hillam and Steve Broughton are on the charge piling in every score they make.

In preparation for the weekend I went testing on the Wednesday before. This is a facility that is open to everyone, but as I said earlier, at this stage of the game, I'm pulling out all the stops. New brakes were bedded in, and due to my limitations of motion sickness, Martin Pickles willingly stepped in the drivers seat to perform the task and I had a few practice laps.

He enjoyed the experience, but we didn't manage to get the pad material transferred adequately and so the following day I reverted to the last uncracked set of discs and gave the car a check over

Blyton Park

I do enjoy this venue and the Eastern layout especially. And after the first run off I was pleased with the run and thought it would be good enough for a top 3 place, only to be told the clocks had failed and I had to go out again. It was now drizzling! Great! Everyone else had had dry runs. Pete was also affected and took his run straight away and suffered slightly in the damp, I took my time refueling and got back in the car to buy myself 5 'drying' minutes. This worked and with still warm tyres I took the run off maximum points with a time of 61.88.



The brand new tyres were now swapped back to practice set, and qualifying went OK for the final run off of the day. Steve & Matt had been improving but still in the mid 61-62 second bracket all day. As Matt crossed the line he was very excited to put a 60.94 – especially as this gained a bonus point for breaking the class record. However only 1 point per class per day is awarded to whoever holds the record at the end of the day and Matt wasn't pleased when I crossed the line 0.02s quicker on a 60.92! Further indignation for Matt as Pete beat us both by 0.04s so Matt only took 23 points and Pete the win.

I however did break my no beers rule to celebrate a good day!

Martin had taken a break from mid week testing duties and was my mechanic for the weekend. Earning his keep with much tyre swapping and keeping me sorted. I did nearly literally strangle him however when I drove off with the mains oil heater still connected to the car. It was at the point the 10m extension cable was fully taught being ripped out of either trailer or car that the plug whipped out and left large red abrasion marks on his neck. Sorry!



Maybe those beers did affect my morning performance as Matt stormed to a win the following morning on the outer circuit first run off. Pete came second and did remarkably well considering his new wishbones hadn't arrived in time. He fitted a borrowed wishbone, set up with string, and used another wishbone squared up by hammer and blocks of wood in Northern Ireland!

After being off the pace in all 4 runs so far, I consulted Alan of Triple M Motorsport– who I owe all my form to since October 2019 following the car share at Anglesey. Three top tips later, I put this to good effect and posted my best time of the day and was in the lead of all the runners bar Matt. Now we anxiously watched as he took his run after Steve had warmed the tyres up for him in the shared SBD works car. We watched the times come in live off the phone - First split he gained 2 tenths on me, second split, 4 tenths, then 8 tenths – so I was resigned to second place and we waited for the clocks to stop as he crossed the finish. WOW – I won by 6 hundredths as Matt threw it away at Bunga Bunga carrying too much entry speed which affected the final long sector.

So, as you can see from the table, we have 6 rounds to go, starting at Anglesey this weekend. Matt needs to win every one of these or break records to overtake me. He is 149 points behind and there are 153 up for the taking, so the championship title is not impossible for either of us, but no counting of chickens before they are hatched, its not over until its over!



Myself lining up for the run off with Matt behind being pushed by Steve. Photo by Ian Stevens



Sparks flying from the titanium skid plates under braking – 2.5G longitudinally. Photo by Kim Broughton

British Sprint Championship 2021 to date		
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm2020	445
Pete Goulding	1.6T Mygale FF200	467
Graham Blackwell	1.6T Mygale VVTi	481
Robert Tonge	1.4 Force TA	368
John Louden	1.1 Force HC	359
Simon Bainbridge	4.2 Chrono V8 TT	357
Mark Anson	1.0 Jedi Mk 6	348
Simon Wallis	1.0 OMS 3000M	346
Matt Hillam	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	296
Steve Broughton	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	256
Tony Beesley	1.0 Jedi Mk 4	236
Graham Porrett	3.5 Lola TeGra T 90 Judd	225
Terry Holmes	3.5 Lola TeGra T 90 Judd	216
Graham Harden	1.3 Radical	211
John Graham	3.5 Gould55B Nicholson McLaren	197
Carole Torkington	1.5 OMS CF08	191
Stephen Mallet	1.3 Radical PR6	98
Richard Mallett	1.3 Radical PR6	80
Chris Fulke-Greville	1.5 TBA Turner	80
Zoe Kingham	1.6 T SBD Westfield SeiW	45
Nick Houston	1.1 Jedi/OMS TBA	27
Chris Bennett	1.0 Force TA	23
Chris Jones	1.0 Force TA	19
Nick Algar,	1.3T DJ Firehawk	
Steve Brown	1.3T JKS Superbusa	
Dave Cutcliff	1.3T Van Diemen DC93M	
Nicholas Scott	1.6 Force TA	
Paul Tinsley	2.0 Dallara F397	
Christopher Price	1.0 Force	
Stewart Robb	5.0 Pilbeam MP88-GV5-1	

Events 2021 – Schedule & Results			Top 12 Run
Date	Venue	Overall	Offs
11 April	Curborough	1 st / 85	-
17 April	Goodwood	1 st / 90**	-
15 May	Blyton Eastern	1 st / 120**	1 st & 1 st
15 May	Blyton Outer	1 st / 120**	1 st & 1 st
5 June	Pembrey	2 nd / 100	2 nd & 1 st
6 June	Pembrey	1 st / 100**	1 st & 1 st
26 June	Snetterton	2 nd / 100**	2 nd & 2 nd
27 June	Snetterton	2 nd / 100**	2 nd & 2 nd
10 July	Llandow	1 st / 105**	-
17 July	Lydden	1 st / 90**	7 th & 3 rd
24 July	Knockhill, Scot.	2 nd / 20	DNF & 2 nd
25 July	Knockhill, Scot.	1 st / 20**^	1 st & 1 st
25 Sept	Blyton Park	2 nd / 95^	1 st & 2 nd
26 Sept	Blyton Park	3 rd / 95	1 st & 3 rd
2 Oct	Anglesey		
3 Oct	Anglesey		
23 Oct	Castle Combe		

^Denotes new 2 litre racing car national record set
** Denotes new personal best

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