



moleracing

THE TEW GROUP

2013 event report, (2nd of 3) British Sprint Championship rounds at Snetterton, Pembrey, Anglesey & Kirkistown

I think these last four rounds has been the most eventful and expensive in the last 10 years!

Snetterton, Norfolk

After the technical problems during the first test and 4 events, it was great to have a weekend where it all came together at Snetterton in May. I was hoping for rain, and 3rd overall in the first damp practice shows the car has great pace when conditions are slippery, but a dry weekend was in store.

Practice saw the retirement of Mike Musson, when his 750bhp machine went off on the inside of 'Palmer's' #3, somehow the apex kerb had caused the car to spin, and then the front wing dug in, and despite avoiding the barriers, the front wing had almost come off and was damaged beyond fixing at the circuit. Early bath for Mike again.



After the first timed runs, qualifying for the top 12 looked comfortable with an 85.29 in 6th but despite trimming another 1/2 second off on the second timed run, I just scrapped in 11th with a high 84. Time for best tyres, loud music and get ready for some serious scaring and fun on this 135mph circuit.

The Hamilton bend #5 - a reasonably tight 45° - according to the logger was taken at a minimum of 93mph from a 120mph approach. Not much room if it went wrong, and this was the focus of pushing hard on the run off. I felt the first of the 2 runs had gone well but was disappointed with an 85.08 having bettered this in qualify.

On the start queue for the second run, I gave myself a serious talking too. The weather was great, we had an evening in the paddock and beers and food were lined up. "*you are not going to have this, unless you earn it*". So I went all out, did indeed scare myself and was well chuffed to miss the 83's altogether and post an 82.48 to leave me 6th. Beer time!

While everyone packed up, sorted cars out and problems, we enjoyed the music and watched and had a good evening. Poor old Scott had caught fire again - he had an incident at Lydden, and this time had an emergency evacuation at a Marshall post - bad hip burns, a car that was in a right state meant he gingerly drove home - he wasn't sure if he'd be out again this year.



Martin enjoying a morning coffee

The following day - Martin shown here on the left, and I were a little jaded, but soon got back into the swing of a repeat day. Gary Thomas, repaired the wing he damaged in the run off and qualification was relatively easy in 6th. Bill Gouldthorpe was better today and the medical centre let him run. Despite me giving him 26 years, the 76 year old was .02secs faster in practice. He went off twice in his timed runs to miss the cut though. Steve and the SBD team had a few fuelling issues and a broken front wing, but progressively improved the car. Both days were won by Colin Calder with a new lap record of 77.27 - that's what 725bhp can give you! This made his 1200mile round trip worth it!

A new PB of 83.08, 6th place and a good haul of points saw a rise to 5th overall in the British Championship.

Pembrey, South Wales



This hope of a wet event does not seem to be materialising as the day dawned to a great sunrise (pic by Gary Thomas - I wasn't up at 5.30!). Pembrey is a great place in the sunshine and many a person left the weekend with a burnt bit somewhere.

Saturday practice saw the early demise of the immaculate V6 Duratec of Jim Belt with an unplanned viewing portal in the block and the loss of all oil. This and a few other delays meant that the Saturday run off was held on the Sunday!

I improved during the day - but was shy of my PB from last year. In attempting to change to the best tyres for the top 12 run off, we had a wheel nut seize on the new studs. This meant that the wheel wouldn't come off, but we could only secure it

with 3 nuts. I decided to risk running but I was lucky to get away with what happened next. After completing the first lap - topping 136mph and taking bends around 95mph, the vibration seemed worse than normal. At the hairpin, I glanced down and saw the front wheel wobbling violently and about to fall off, so I stopped. On further investigation, all 4 wheels were very loose - I forgot to tighten them up after undoing all of them ready to change the wheels. Phew - got away with it. A run to the paddock, and commandeering a bicycle to get a socket allowed me to tighten up and get a tow back. And get ready to put in a time good enough for 9th and live for another day!

Sunday was thankfully more uneventful, with an eventual PB and another 9th place to leave me 7th in the championship.



photo of Pembrey paddock by Abbie Smith

Anglesey, North Wales

Another hot sunny weekend at a great circuit. Times in the 2 practice runs and the two timed runs were not inside the PB of last year, but with another of my 'in crash helmet talking to', I improved by 2 seconds on the first run off run and jumped from 12th to 7th, however this was not to last.

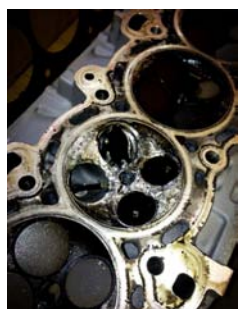


photo by Neil Lambert

The phrase 'highs and lows' of motorsport is certainly demonstrated in a short space of time. The 2nd run off went to plan until the 3rd corner, when the engine went 'flat' and lost all power so I drove back slowly. In the paddock, we saw we had lost a lot of water, but when the air filter was removed, there were two valves and a lot of shrapnel and debris. The engine was wrecked.

I spent the following day removing as much as I could and pondering the future.....

3 days later, the engine was back at SBD and we considered the options. On the basis that life is for living today, and what's the point of saving for a rainy day, I decided it had definitely been raining! SBD's Craig did a great job and 10 days (and after everyone's various bills, the best part of £10k) later I had a 300bhp 2 litre immaculate new Duratec engine in the boot ready to put in for Ireland!



Kirkistown, Northern Ireland

We had arranged with the Kirkistown circuit owner to use the circuit to run the new engine in on the Friday evening. This went well and the engine seemed to have plenty of potential. We then drained the running in oil, and got the last drop out by removing the oil pump drive belt, an electric drill to drive the belt to turn the pump. Brakes were bled with the help of Glyn and all was well and the car was put to bed, with anticipation and excitement of tomorrow.



After a good night sleep, the car was fired up the following morning, but the engine died after 20 seconds? Strange, restarted OK, then died again. After some phone support from Steve Broughton, we had it running smooth and OK. By this stage it had been idling for 4-5 mins. It was at this point I looked down and to my absolute horror, I had not put on the oil pump drive belt, so the engine had been running with no oil pressure whatsoever.

After much swearing at myself, thinking I had wrecked the whole engine due to this stupid mistake, I confessed to Steve and Craig and non running and return of the engine was the only option. Time to start stripping again.....

To offset the cost of getting to Ireland, Bill kindly let me drive his car. This is a Hyabusa 1600 OMS with 250 bhp and weighs around 350kgs. After a gentle run to get used to the paddle gear changes, I was pleased to take 3rd in the run off behind the two V8s of Colin and Mike. Sunday was not as good with a 7th, but still a good points haul weekend which has move me to equal 5th with Graham Porrett.



Another hectic week and the engine was back at Surbiton 3 days later for a strip. Damage was limited to a new crank, conrod, bolts, followers and full strip and rebuild and again great service and turnaround. This was a very expensive mistake!

So with a few days to go to the next round in Knockhill, Scotland, then engine is being installed with around 1 day to spare and we are looking forward to heading north of the border where I will be helped this weekend by Chris and Jonny and hoping for a wet weekend at last!

Steve

**British Sprint Championship 2013
Top 12 after round 2 of 15**

Colin Calder	3.5 Gould NME GR55	103
Terry Holmes	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	94
Mark Smith	2.0 SBD Reynard	80
Terry Graves	3.5 Gould GR37	57
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm11	56
Graham Porrett	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	56
Heather Calder	3.5 Gould NME GR55	43
Glyn Sketchly	1.6 Force Hyabusa	42
Craig Sampson	SBD Reynard	38
Stewart Robb	4.0 Pilbeam-Judd MP88	36
John Graham	Dallara F397	28
Mike Musson	4.0 Pilbeam-Judd MP88	27

& 22 other competitors

Remaining Events 2013

27 July	Knockhill - BSC	Scotland
28 July	Knockhill- BSC	Scotland
22 September	Brands Hatch	Kent
6 October	Anglesey	N Wales
7 October	Anglesey	N Wales
12 October	Curborough	Midlands

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2 Litre Class 2013

Mark Smith	SBD Reynard	386
Steve Broughton	SBD OMS25	334
Steve Miles	Van Diemen RF96mm11	293
Phil Lynch	Dallara F399	276
Martin Webb	Reynard FVL	272
John Graham	Dallara F397	262
Tony Jarvis	Reynard FVL	261
John Payne	Dallara F399	229
Craig Sampson	SBD Reynard	226
Scott Pillinger	DSP SBD	123
John Graham	Dallara F397	262
Matt Hillam	SBD Reynard	117
Dave Cutliff	Van Diemen	55