



## 2013 Final event report British Sprint Championship rounds at Knockhill, Brands Hatch & Anglesey

### Knockhill, Scotland

An incident packed weekend north of the border! If you recall, I had made a rather expensive error with the new race engine in Ireland when I started it without connecting the oil pump drive belt. After an exhausting weekend, it came out, went back to SBD and they repaired my mistake in exchange for some laying down of the plastic! The freshly repaired engine - with new bearings, crank, con rod and some minor parts was now installed and had been checked many times and run up in the garage. Oil pressure was a concern as it was too high, but the plan was to bring this down during the weekend. I also now had an in-helmet audible warning system from SBD and had altered the steering wheel warning system to only show lights if there was low oil pressure.

I hadn't driven the great little circuit - that still hosts British Touring Car rounds - since 2006. It is well worth the goomile round trip and this year we drove clockwise Saturday and anticlockwise Sunday. To add to the variety - it was dry on one day and lashing down the next! I was ably helped by Jony and Chris all weekend. They have helped on several occasions and I trust them to turn the car round, checking all elements and hand it over to me for the next 140mph blast - thanks guys!



The Saturday clockwise circuit got steadily better, as the engine retuned itself each run with the lambda sensor making adjustments to the 3D fuel map. I got confidence in the car and qualified in 10th for the run off but did spend around 2 hours during the day trying to file the oil pressure adjusting screw away so I could unwind it further and reduce the high oil pressure. There was incoming cloud forecast, and we debated wets or slicks, but decided to risk the new slicks and it led to a 1 second improvement over my qualifying time leaving me 7th. On the second run I approached the line with the engine at 75 degs - being paranoid about everything to do with protecting this investment that had made a serious dent in my retirement fund!. Glyn was on the track and spun, and decided to drive slowly round to collect a point, I did not know when I was going to be released and the temperature kept rising and rising and was around 105 when I left the line and I hoped it would cool while running. As I was about 3/4 round on the 1st lap, then engine warning beeper was repeatedly screeching away in my ear. Oil pressure panic, but the dash was reading 80psi, so OK, no lights were on, but the noise would not go away and could not be ignored. I realised this was an engine over temperature warning, so despite this being the do or die best run of the day for points, I chose to kill the engine and coast to cool the thing down. I was then recovered by pick up truck, and by this time drizzle had started which ruined any chance of good times from the other drivers behind me - sorry, but I couldn't afford the risk.



Heather Calder was the star of the run and she became the first female to win a round of the British championship since 1970! Seen here coming over for a celebration beer from the mole fridge, with Chris in the foreground working away on the tyres!

Sunday was raining most of the day until the run off when the slicks came out and I finished 9th. However the drama was at the start of the day when in the rain, I had the trailer door slightly lower than the normal setting, and I had my hood covering my forward vision and could only see the ground, I ran/walked fast into the trailer and bounced off it, splitting my head. Gary saw this and jumped into the trailer getting a towel while I gathered myself on the floor and someone else ran to scrutineering to get an official who called the medical and an ambulance was at the trailer in around 45 seconds!



They said I should go to hospital and get it stitched, but I said I had practice in 30 minutes so can I have a thin dressing so I can get a crash helmet on please!

It stopped bleeding my midday and no headaches or anything so I decided to ignore the 'go to A&E' suggestion at the end of the meeting as I had a long drive south. A change to a smaller dressing the next day left me looking respectable for a customer meeting in Liverpool!

Bill had a moment in the wet, and rearranged his OMS, but 2 hours later after attention from most of the paddock, he was back in action



## Brands Hatch

The 6 weeks between the Scottish Knockhill rounds and this fantastic venue down south seemed an eternity, and I've decided that this sprinting must be akin to a drug addiction - as I was desperately needing a fix again!

Collecting Martin on the way south to assist for the day, and arriving at the circuit late afternoon meant we were well prepared by the time we had walked the course and offloaded into the garage the night before.

The previous weekend Mike Musson had kindly let me drive on his 'full monty' motion simulator to get to know the circuit again, I got my crashes out of the way on this and had a successful, incident free weekend. As someone who can get car sick, even while driving my tow car on a windy road, I am never going to make it on a simulator and 12 minutes was all I could manage - but even watching Mike here was useful.



I was rudely awakened by the ever youthful Bill the following morning after his 5am start. We prepared the car and we raring to go for the 2.5 lap run that constituted practice. I had won the event the year before when it wasn't a British round, so I was hoping this prior knowledge would stand me well, and 6th fastest was a good start.

All the British championship racing car runners were here with the exception of the Calder's, as Heather was on the oil rigs and Colin had won the championship at the last meeting.

It looked like rain was coming in so we had one laptop tracking the weather radar and the other for data logging and remapping.

The first timed run was on practice tyres and this was a high 79, some 4 secs behind the my winning time last year. There was a deadline of when the racing had to start in the afternoon, so if the run off was cancelled, I decided to make the next timed run count as it may be a placing decider, so put on the best tyres and went for it - to record a 78.93 and 6th overall.



With all the normal days proceedings crammed into 3 hours, I was grateful of the help of my brother Tim and all my nephews and niece - Tygar, Halston (front tyre), Soda (rear tyre) and Harper J (cockpit) ( and no the Beckham's named their baby 18 months after Tim did!)

K2 MD John and his boys, Max and Wills also turned up and were helping - so it was a busy garage



After extensive study of the video, I found another 1.5 seconds over my qualifying run to move to 5th, as others also improved, but a do or die effort next time out, moved me inside the PB and 4th in the run off behind Terry Holmes in the chip Shop V8 (now with manual sequential gearbox), Mark Smith and Craig in the works SBD Reynard.

The engine ran faultless, and I have begun to stop worrying about doing something wrong to this major investment! Poor Bill got carried away twice and spun when it counted, Mike had a radiator leak in his V8 and couldn't take the run off. Glyn had a brake issue and similarly withdrew. Steve Broughton - of SBD, whilst not driving gave great service in looking after the latest software updates and remapping the engine between runs.



## Anglesey Circuit

So a few weeks later and we are at the sunny but windy beautiful circuit in Anglesey. Anything between 4th and 9th as an overall finishing position was possible and the two V8 cars of Terry Graves and Graham Porrett were the main opposition, but Saturday on a single lap of the national course was where I had to make my mark, as it is only 125mph maximum and so suited my car. The Sunday circuit was full on 165mph for the big cars and well and truly in their territory.

It turned out to be a perfect day, where every run improved on the last one by at least 0.5 secs, sometime more. My PB was 49.69 from last year and the course record set by Mark was 48.55, luckily Mark was attending a wedding and his overall 3rd position was safe.

What I thought was a quick run in first practice was only 51.85 and wondered where I could find time, but using the AIM datalogger, I worked on different areas and put a final timed run of 49.65 to qualify 3rd fastest. Best tyres on and parked 'inbuilt stay safe chattering monkey' out to improved further, but the second timed run I really threw caution to the wind, with every corner being on the verge of a crash and amazingly it gripped and survived to come home with a 48.46 inside the old record and 2nd in the run off by only 0.9 sec behind Terry Holmes.

This record and position, did result in much celebrating with the favoured beer of choice Tyskie. I had moved to 4th in the championship and now was in a defending position the following day.



The gear ratios had to be changed that evening and against Martins Pickles advice of change gears then have a beer, I decided it could easily be done the other way round.

At 9:30 I completed the task in the dark and the car was ready for the off. It was at that pointed I noticed 2 large washers and split pins in the change tray! I decided to get up early and with a minor hangover I completed the task with minutes to spare.

When we were due to go out for practice 1, I discovered that I couldn't select any gears, so there was nothing for it, but to take the box completely apart again. Aply helped by other competitors and Chris from MBE who supply the engine ECU and software, we stripped and put the gear clusters together correctly this time and managed to make the tail end of practice!





I was confident of an easy qualifying so left my best tyres for the run off, which I started from 9th overall. Due to a few cars spinning, and a 2.5 second improvement on the best tyres, I was leading the top 12 after everyone's first runs. Gary Thomas had fun with a brake disc exploding and was unable to post a time, Glyn's troubles with brake and clutch culminated in a starter motor failure and retired also.

I was knocked off top spot after the second times runs again by Terry Holmes, but 2nd place secured the 4th overall position in the 2013 British Championship

Thanks again to K2 Consultancy, TEW Engineering and SBD for assistance this season. What a busy, difficult and expensive season it has been at times, but all worked well in the end!

Steve



### British Sprint Championship 2013 Top 12

Colin Calder	3.5 Gould NME GR55	115
Terry Holmes	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	103
Mark Smith	2.0 SBD Reynard	91
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm13	78
Terry Graves	3.5 Gould GR37	75
Graham Porrett	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	70
Craig Sampson	SBD Reynard	66
Heather Calder	3.5 Gould NME GR55	66
Glyn Sketchly	1.6 Force Hyabusa	51
John Graham	Dallara F397	43
Mike Musson	4.0 Pilbeam-Judd MP88	41
Gary Thomas	1.4 Force	36

### 2 Litre Class 2013

Mark Smith	SBD Reynard	440
Steve Miles	Van Diemen RF96mm11	396
John Graham	Dallara F397	393
Martin Webb	Reynard FVL	367
Craig Sampson	SBD Reynard	366
Tony Jarvis	Reynard FVL	362
Steve Broughton	SBD OMS25	334
Phil Lynch	Dallara F399	276
John Payne	Dallara F399	229
Craig Sampson	SBD Reynard	226
Scott Pillinger	DSP SBD	123
Matt Hillam	SBD Reynard	117
Dave Cutliff	Van Diemen	56

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