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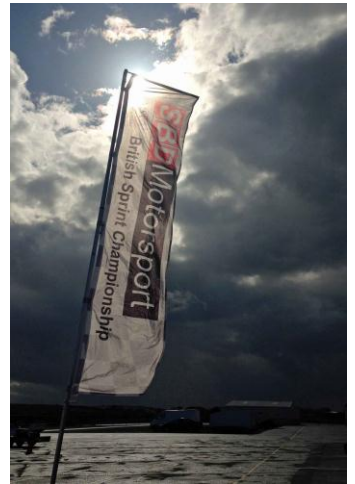
2014 Final event report, British Sprint Championship rounds at Kirkistown and Anglesey

Kirkistown, Northern Ireland

The anniversary of last years new engine disaster – when I started it without the oil pump connected. I was hoping for a better result and a crack at the 2 litre record this time round.

After a lot of travelling the day before, the day started dry, but bad weather was always on the cards according to the radar I was running in the trailer. Times came down during practice and timed runs, and in the absence of Mark and Craig, I was fastest 2 litre car but behind 5 V8s. Time to pull my finger out and give the big guns a run for their money. Then on perfect timing the rain arrived and the wets came out! Brilliant – bring it on!

After first of the two run offs, some near offs, launch and traction control kicking in quite a bit, I was now 3rd, with British championship leader Colin on a 103.5, Terry posting a 108.68 (after flying in from London in the morning!) and me on a 109.2. It was drying, but not enough for slicks, so everything to play for again on the final run of the day. The run is on YouTube, just click [here](#). I managed to set the fastest time with just one remaining runner – Colin, despite wishing him a harmless spin (sorry Colin!) he stayed on and took top spot, with me bagging 12 points for 2nd. Beer time and result!



The forecast for the following day was not good – and as the rain started during the night, I was hopeful for a repeat points haul. However, it rained and rained and the circuit was rather wet and the prospect of the meeting running did not look promising. As we drove round in a 4x4 discovery, the bow waves came over the roof on the bigger puddles. Around midday it stopped for a bit, some drainage pits had been dug and a circuit review/decision was scheduled for 1pm.

But then it started heavier again, the lakes returned and the meeting was abandoned. Time to pack up and get to the hotel – no mad dash for the 7pm ferry was planned this year. So a good evening with Mike, good food and a Monday 6am start saw me home in Nottingham by tea time!



Anglesey – Club meeting

Due to almost 2 months before the season final round, I decided to do a club event at Anglesey, which would give me practice and a fun weekend. I only got an entry to the Sunday only, but it was the better day as I love the international layout.

A few of the British regulars also had the same idea for a practice session! After first timed run I was sitting 3rd overall, so decided to make my last attempt with the best tyres on, - it may have been only a fun event, but you cannot get rid of the competitive streak!

So to the line, wait for green light, bring the revs up to 6,000, engage launch control, drop clutch, control the drift and you reach 60mph around 3 seconds later – normally, but something felt strange, but I went to about 100mph before the first corner, braked, turned in then tried to accelerate – nothing, I thought I was in neutral, but no, it was game over.



As it turned out, this was a good time for the drive shaft to snap! Otherwise it would have been in the important event in a months' time!

Anglesey British Sprint Finale

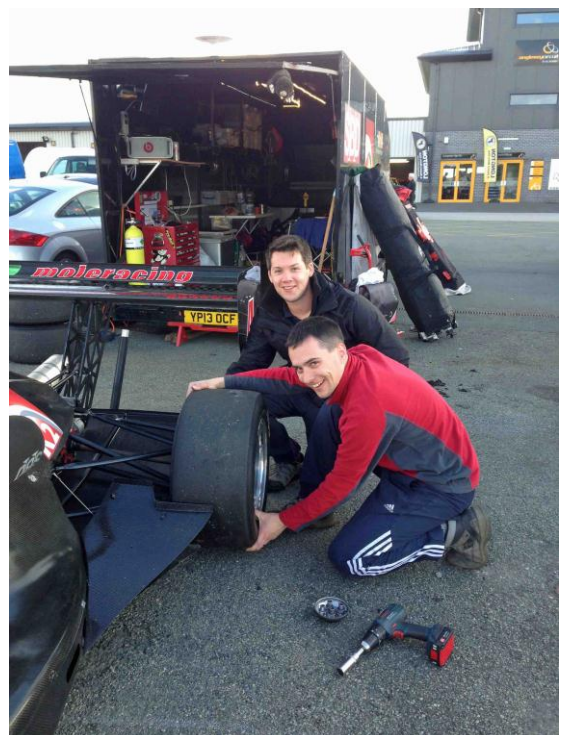
I used my original formula ford drive shaft to attempt to get me through the last weekend of 2014 – new ones being ordered for 2015. It was important to get a result, as I could have been pushed back to 9th if others did really well.



The drive shaft however was weak compared to what I snapped last time out so I had to be really gentle. I drew a line down the length of the shaft to monitor any twist.

Chris and Jonny came down from the North East to run the car for me all weekend and did a fantastic job – thanks guys. We were due to get the remains of Hurricane coming over the country. The forecast was for 80mm of rain over the weekend and serious storm force winds.

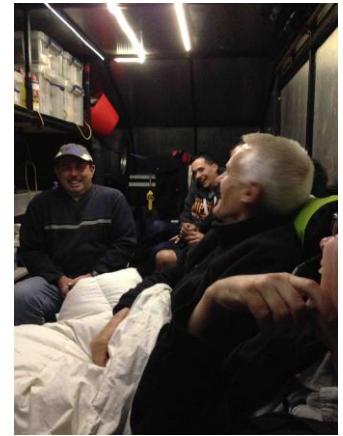
The trailer was rocking violently during Friday evening, so tents were out of the question. Chris and Jonny slept in the trailer and I slept in the back of the Merc!



No Colin and Heather this weekend as they had wrapped up the British Championship top 2 slots, so good points on the card for all the remaining entrants.

A single lap of the national circuit was on the cards for Saturday. Very gentle on all starts was required as I had no more drive shafts! I eventually finished 5th, slightly slower than last year time – my first non PB of the season.

However the big drive shaft story of the day was on Mark and Craig's Reynard – this snapped cleanly in the centre after the first timed run. Even more annoying considering Mark and Craig qualified 1st and 2nd fastest overall. So they drilled out a socket from the toolbox and set off on a round tour of Anglesey looking for a friendly welder! Amazingly, they were back, rebuilt and made the run off in time. Craig took a very slow, "let's see if this hangs together" lap, then Mark put a time in that went under the class record I had set last year. Second run, Craig let loose with all the beans, and beat Marks time to claim his first Top 12 run off – Great result and well deserved.



A good evening was had by all – and yes maybe too many beers were consumed, but the mole trailer became the social centre as 10 of us crammed in watching F1 qualifying from Suzuka and having a good laugh.

Sunday saw the international circuit configuration, and more gentle starts in case my driveshaft let go. If it did, it had the potential to cause a big accident as the shaft flailing around at 140mph and pitching you off the track didn't bear thinking about.



Marks welded repair finally failed in practice, so it was season over from them, but Mark had achieved his objective of 3rd overall and Craig very happy in 4th. I was playing it gentle, with rain on and off meant I qualified 4th with an 85secs behind Terry Homes in top spot then Steve Broughton and John Graham. For the first run off, I started reasonably gently and got around OK, chopping 2.5 secs off my time but had now dropped to 5th

So last run of the year, can't finish 5th can I. Let's go for it. Big rev launch (but no launch control), spinning away from the line, committed corner entry speed, no mistakes, braking on the limit for the uphill, 140mph approach corner of Rocket, both understeer and oversteer on most bends, lots of exit kerb use and I

stopped the clocks at 80.79 to move to 2nd. Well chuffed and 6th in championship secured. (Onboard video by clicking [here](#)).



Analysing the mark on the driveshaft it had twisted a full 90 degrees down its length over the weekend. We were lucky.

Next season will see a very significant step forward, as I have a brand new gearbox from Hewland to replace the current 4 speed manual H pattern LD200 I am using. I'm the first customer outside the Carl Haas team in America to have the JL gearbox, so we shall have 5 speed, fully sequential, paddle shift control next year and to cap it, full fly by wire motor actuated new throttle bodies, so with a better 'box, more power, new driveshafts and new brakes – watch this space for 2015!

Steve



All car photos by Neil Lambert

2 Litre Class 2014		
Mark Smith,	SBD Reynard	438
Craig Sampson,	SBD Reynard FVL	418
Steve Miles,	Van Diemen RF96mm13	417
Steve Broughton,	SBD Dallara F3 RB01	402
Matt Hillam,	Reynard FVL	382
Martin Webb,	Dallara F399	368
Tony Jarvis,	Dallara F397	362
Chris Bennett,	Van Diemen	236
Grahame Harden,	Dallara F399	161
Simon Keen	Dallara F399	134
Scott Pillinger,	DSP SBD	45
Nick Algar,	Force	0

British Sprint Championship 2014 Final Top 12		
Colin Calder	3.5 Gould NME GR55	110
Heather Calder	3.5 Gould NME GR55	101
Mark Smith	2.0 SBD Reynard	93
Craig Sampson	SBD Reynard	88
Terry Holmes	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	85
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm13	77
John Graham	2.8 Gould GR55	72
Steve Broughton	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	53
Graham Porrett	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	47
Matt Hillam	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	43
Mike Musson	4.0 Pilbeam Judd	38
Jim Belt	3.0 Juno Jaguar	33

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