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moleracing 2018 season - first report

Winter Upgrades

During the last event in 2017, I was pulling a large G loading though one of the bends at Anglesey and the consequences of something breaking would not be good – so my winter upgrade was focused on safety modifications. I changed every rod end and spherical bearing in the car, plus put on a new set of brake discs and meticulously checked everything. Another significant change was to move to a more modern tyre manufacturer and after 20 years on Avon's, I am trying Michelin slicks for 2018.



This necessitated a complete new set up on the car which was undertaken by a professional race team, Triple M Motorsport, as well as a driver coaching/set up/test session before the first event.

I am very pleased to announce a new major sponsor for this season, LAC Conveyors and Automation. A Nottingham based engineering company where myself and other significant employees from my previous company have all moved to and have created a custom built machine specialist automation division to complement the existing excellent UK leading conveyor company. Have a look at the sponsors websites by clicking any of the logos above.



The day before the first event I took the car down to Telsonic in Poole and got it out in the car park. MD David Norton bravely got in the car, but due to the tight space, the damp conditions etc we didn't think it wise to attempt a launch!

The Swiss owners of this multinational company who specialise in ultrasonic welding even liked the display in reception I'm told!



Castle Combe

So a swift trip north from Poole to Wiltshire saw us make camp for the first event of the year. A wet practice run showed some promising pace, 3rd fastest but unfortunately it dried out and I went backwards after that.

Trying to carry speed into the chicane, the rear end wasn't as well planted as I eventually made it and I spun backwards at circa 100mph – no damage, just spun off track. So, I had to qualify on the final run of the session to ensure some run off points and made it a second in class and qualified 5th.

I was well and truly beaten in the run off however. By both Matt Hillam and Steve Broughton in my 2 litre class, driving the heavily revised Dallara, extolling the virtues of the hardwork John Hansell of Carbonfibre.com had done for them by added new high down force tunnels and floor. Steve beat me by 3 secs and also Matt sneaked ahead of me. But we were all impressed by the 700bhp Audi of Simon Bainbridge who squeezed ahead of even Matt!



Photo credit: Ian Lloyd-Graham



Photo credit: Kim Broughton

Up front, reigning British Sprint Champion Heather beat her (now slimmer) Dad in the run off and set a new outright record and also recorded the fastest ever flying lap of Combe. Colin fell off the track and damaged the undertray in his second run attempt to keep up with his daughter!

Bill Gouldthorpe started his motorsport season well – now in his 80 'cough' something year, he was at SBD late the previous evening as they got his new engine finally built, installed and running and made it home for midnight. Up early the next day, he won his 1600cc racing car class, beating 3 considerable younger drivers in the process.



Photo credit: Ian Lloyd-Graham

Rockingham Motor Speedway

A frantic load up and a 2 ½ hour drive north, saw a packed hotel car park – and I was grateful for the friendly Shell garage that let me leave my car and trailer overnight – yes it was hotel time for me for a change! With the clocks going back, the equivalent of a 5:15am alarm was still a shock though!

Off load, track walk, sign on, scrutineering and all ready to go again by 9am The initial runs were very damp, and I had a spin on the exit of the hairpin, so subsequently softened the rear antiroll bar. This helped on the next practice, but times were still off the lap record that I currently hold of 63.79. After discussion with Triple M Motorsport – who set the car up and advised the winter changes, I put the rear roll bar back to where it was and stiffened the front bar – now the car felt better and with the track drying all the time, I was down from 69 to 67 secs on the first of the two timed runs and just in the overall lead.

There were 3 fast cars that had more power than me – the two ecoboost formula Fords of Pete Goulding and Graham Blackwell, plus the monster Audi replica of Simon who beat me the previous day. They were all pulling max speeds much higher than my 139mph, but overall, I was quickest still – the bends are where the most important speed is carried not the straights!



For the final run I left the settings as they were and attacked the course harder. Despite losing a lot of time by braking too early for the hairpin – I went another 2 seconds faster to take the overall win with a 65.73– so the weekend finished well – even if I have had a sore neck due to the G loadings in that last bend. Video here <https://youtu.be/Ci1rB4Uwk4U>

Croft this Monday for a round of the British Championship – it’s forecast wet, so let’s hope so!

Steve

British Sprint Championship 2018 – After round 1		
Heather Calder	3.5 Gould55 Nicholson McLaren	13
Colin Calder	3.5 Gould55 Nicholson McLaren	12
Simon Bainbridge	2.5 SBR Chrono V8 TT	10
John Graham	3.5 Gould55B Nicholson McLaren	10
Steve Broughton,	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	9
Matt Hillam	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	7
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm17	6
Chris Jones	1.0 Force TA	5
Pete Goulding	1.6T Mygale FF200	4
Grahame Harden	1.0 Jedi	3
Graham Blackwell	1.6T Mygale VVTi	2
Chris Bennett	1.0 Force TA	1

2 Litre Class 2018 after round 1		
Steve Broughton,	SBD Dallara F3 RB01	47
Steve Miles,	Van Diemen RF96mm17	46
Matt Hillam,	SBD Dallara F3 RB01	44
Nick Algar,	DJ Firehawk	
Glynn Sketchley	Force PT	

Telsonic – www.telsonic.com
LAC – www.lacconveyors.co.uk
K2 - www.k2consultancy.com
SBD www.sbdmotorsport.co.uk

www.moleracing.com