



moleracing

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TripleM

moleracing 2019 season - first report

Winter Upgrades

A winter check over of every square mm of the car in an attempt to get more reliability was the focus of the winter work. The intake assembly was sent back to SBD and Jenvey for an upgrade, plus new injectors. Also, the shock absorbers were the biggest expense, with a full strip and rebuild and we found that not one shock absorber was the same, and the two closest ones were on different axles!

A new set up philosophy in terms of lower rear and overall ride height and trying to obtain more rear grip meant new push rods were required.

The final major change this year is a tyre change again. I took a gamble on Michelins last year and these proved to be quick – for two runs – but then needed an hour of heat gun cleaning to get smooth again. There simply wasn't enough time in the day, even with two sets of tyres to have a good tyre for the timed runs and the run off. During the season Pirelli finally made the size I wanted 8" and 10" wide in the F1 compounds. Thanks to the team sponsors, we enter the 2019 season with a set of Ultra Softs, Super Softs and Full wets.



I took the car to SBD in Surbiton for an update of the software and fine tune of the maps and all was working well at the end of the day ready for a trip to Blyton circuit a few days later.

After an immaculate clean check and winter rebuild, I was not pleased that the car was absolutely covered in mud after the initial shakedown and driver coaching at Blyton, as it was very wet and I had quite a few spins on the wet tyres and inters that I was running.



Before and After!

But I left there exhausted and I gained in knowledge and confidence for the first event in 10 day's time.

Castle Combe

This circuit of 3.3 miles with its long straights, favours the powerful cars. Looking down the entry list I was the 11th most powerful, so to finish the day 4th in the British Championship was a good start to the season. It was not without dramas and difficulties however for almost every runner.

Despite all my preparation, I suffered from some start up issues, but not enough to miss any runs. My only real issue was overheating and on the final run of the day, perhaps due to leaving the line too hot, I got 'overtemp' warnings in my ear and all over the dash, so I decided to switch off at the start of the second lap around the 140mph point with the engine at 112 degs C. It just wasn't worth a blown engine.

Steve from SBD took the win and broke the 2 litre record as well, his co driver Matt followed him and then the ecoboost of Pete Goulding pipped me by a few tenths for the last podium spot.



Many drivers left for home with a lot of damage to repair in time for the next round in 2 weeks time. Stewart Robb, in a V10 5 litre Pilbeam had a rear wing failure at 180 mph, the resulting multiple spins were dramatic but he managed to drive back to the paddock with no more damage. Heather Calder had a spectacular failure of the rear suspension rocker at the same high speed point as shown below – again nothing hit in the recovery. Jeff Wiltshire's 450bhp was of no use with a bent push rod which was another victim of the high speed and the bumps! And finally, the Tegra Lola was retired with low oil pressure.



With a final time some 2.5 secs faster than 2018, the set up, winter expenditure and new tyres seemed to be doing the business and all was well in the world – then came the next round to put a dampener on that!

Anglesey Weekend

The Welsh weekend started exceptionally well, with a close practice time on the National circuit very close to my PB. Others had had a busy repair time, with all out again apart from 4 V8 drivers of the Calder's and Terry and Grahams Lola.

On timed run one, I equalled my PB set some 3 years ago and by Timed run 2 I beat it to qualify 5th fastest for the run off. My fellow 2 litre runners were setting some storming times and beating records with Matt in the SBD car setting 'Fastest Time of Day' - FTD.

We had some starting issues during the day, but generally it always ran when asked. So over lunch the car was meticulously checked, tyres swapped left to right to even out the duty cycle, pressures set, fuelled etc and I had a plan where to find the extra second I needed.

So as cars started leaving for the line, I started the car to warm up – well attempted to anyway! It didn't want to know, and with SBD who supply the engine getting ready in their own car to go to the run off, Steve could only offer limited suggestions and no faults could be found to rectify and make it to the start. So I found myself watching the run off drinking a consolation beer and scoring no points!

The problem was quickly traced to a wrong value in the ECU software and it fired up a dream afterwards and ran faultlessly for the rest of the weekend!



John Graham in the V8 came though to take the run off win but very good times and new records and points from my fellow 2 litre competitors.

So, day 2, and the International circuit, I'd purchased a higher 5th gear to ensure I wasn't bouncing off the rev limiter on the main straight at 145mph and this worked great. The day went as the previous and set a new personal best in timed runs and qualified 5th fastest. Same lunchtime immaculate preparation and getting ready for the run off to salvage some points from the weekend. All the cars in the top 12 gradually left the line and then there were just 4 of us left in the holding area to go. I was called forward by the Clerk of the Course, the startline marshals set the car at the correct spot. Launch mode engaged, revs to 6000, start light turned green, dropped the clutch, and the car stuttered forward with a loud bang. I'd snapped the driveshaft!! "Oh bother"or words to that effect!

So a pointless & expensive weekend. New driveshafts are being manufactured and I shall have to hope the emergency spares last the meeting at MIRA in May.



Photo credit: Mark Little

MIRA

I entered this club event this weekend just gone, to get some sneaky practice before the British Championship goes there later in the year and a thoroughly enjoyable day was had and some useful lessons learned.

With no British runners attending the target was FTD, but I'd settle for PB and did so making it 5 from 5 events in 2019!

There are no photos or video from MIRA as it is an Automotive test facility well away from prying cameras and there were several camouflaged cars driving around and also a very cold motorcyclist lapping the banked oval all day in the 8 degC temps and strong winds.

A gentle launch for the two practice runs gave the driveshafts an easy time, and ironically one of these was faster than when I used launch control in the timed runs! The times came down every run, but I was always second overall behind a lightweight bike engine single seater who also was on the training day earlier in the season. I closed the gap to ½ second on the first timed run and although I went quicker on the last run, so did Derek and he finished 0.15secs up on me. Still good practice and experience and no issues.

The car has not left the trailer since and it is off to Llandow in South Wales this Saturday. Locals most welcome to drop in!

Cheers
Steve



British Sprint Championship 2019 – After round 3		
Matt Hillam	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	36
Pete Goulding	1.6T Mygale FF200	33
Steve Broughton	2.0 SBD Dallara F3 RB01	31
Graham Blackwell	1.6T Mygale VVTi	31
John Graham	3.5 Gould55B Nicholson McLaren	24
Nick Algar,	1.3T DJ Firehawk	20
Steve Brown	1.6 KS JR1	18
Stewart Robb	5.0 V10 MP88-GV5 Pilbeam	10
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm17	9
Jeff Wiltshire	1.5T Zeus Evo II Sportscar	8
John Loudon	1.0 Force HC	8
Dave Cutcliffe	1.3T Van Diemen DC93M	7
Chris Jones	1.0 Force TA/2.0 Westfield	6
Mark Anson	1.0 Jedi Mk1	5
Graham Porrett	3.5 Lola TeGra T 90 Judd	5
Carole Torkington	1.6 SBD OMS CFo8	3
Heather Calder	3.5 Gould55 Nicholson McLaren	
Colin Calder	3.5 Gould55 Nicholson McLaren	
Terry Holmes	3.5 Lola TeGra T 90 Judd	
Piers Thynne	2.7 Radical SR8	
Alan Mugglestone	2.0 Raw Fulcrum	
Simon Bainbridge	4.2 Chrono V8 TT	
Chris Bennett	1.0 Force TA	

2 Litre Class 2019 after round 3		
Steve Broughton,	SBD Dallara F3 RB01	147
Matt Hillam,	SBD Dallara F3 RB01	146
Steve Miles,	Van Diemen RF96mm17	135
Nick Algar,	DJ Firehawk	94
Dave Cutcliff	1.3T Van Diemen DC93M	42

Remaining Events 2019		
11 May	Llandow	South Wales
18 May	Blyton	Gainsborough
19 May	Blyton	Gainsborough
26 May	Crystal Palace	South London
27 May	Crystal Palace	South London
1 June	Pembrey	South Wales
2 June	Pembrey	South Wales
8 June	Abingdon	Oxfordshire
29 June	Aintree	Liverpool
13 July	Lydden Hill	Kent
3 August	Kirkistown	N Ireland
4 August	Kirkistown	N Ireland
7 Sept	Knockhill	Scotland
8 Sept	Knockhill	Scotland
14 Sept	MIRA	Leicestershire
5 October	Anglesey	N Wales
6 October	Anglesey	N Wales

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