



moleracing – with **K2 Consultancy & TEW Engineering**

2011 Event reports from British Sprint Championship rounds at Kirkistown & Cadwell plus NSCC Curborough Long

The forecast held true and we enjoyed a glorious weekend of sunshine in Northern Ireland that was worth the 900mile round trip. A leisurely crossing on the High Speed Seacat brought us to Belfast, and then a quick trip down the side of Strangford Lock gets you to the circuit.

A good turn out of cars from the mainland UK completed a strong Saturday entry, although Sunday was a bit thinner on the ground. The warm welcome and knowledge of the locals always surprises me and it is one of the reasons why I like this 'overseas' event!

Mike Musson had repaired his driveshafts and now the complete gearbox in the last few months and was hoping for a good weekend following 3 scores and 7 DNF's -that is a very annoying "Did Not Finish" ratio. Anyway, 400m into his first practice run the chain snapped and the thrashing item smashed the gearbox casing and it was another DNF and an expensive round trip. The next casualty was Angus Buchan's clutch, followed by Pete & Brian's (*below*) gearbox selector fork. A locally welded repair still left them struggling the following day in their V8 and they went home pointless. Colin Birkbeck (*right*) was pumping out methanol all day over the engine, car and track and very lucky not to catch fire, especially since the exhaust manifold cracked later in the day. Colin Calder discovered progressively cracking brake discs, and risked the final run of the weekend knowing that the front disc had a crack running right though!



The Saturday course ran the upper half the track for 1 3/4 laps. I allocated the first practice to a gentle run to scrub in and gently heat cycle a new set of tyres – thank you K2 and TEW!, and the second practice to get my eye in. Timed run 1 was a few hundredths outside my PB at 95.17; T2 was slower as I only pushed in a few areas with an experimental line in the chicane complex.



So 6th fastest into the run offs behind Stewart Robb, Colin Calder, both in their monster V8s, Simon Bainbridge in the all carbon fibre V8 Audi and Jim Belt in the Le Mans style Juno and Colin B were all faster than me to qualify. However, new tyres refitted and ready to be abused! This dropped my time 1/2 sec inside my PB to 94.51 to leave me lying 4th. I let rip with a do or die 2nd run which was most enjoyable/buttock clenching whichever way you look at it and I sliced over 3 seconds off by attacking one particular corner like I hadn't all weekend and posted 91.21 to beat Colin B for the first time this season by just 7 hundredths!

Simon didn't have such a good ending however. Whilst braking - recording over 2G longitudinally with a 998kg, 800bhp car, the front right hand suspension broke, pitching the car into a big crash. Simon was taken to hospital for a check up but was OK and joined us all later for a big meal.

The following day was similar on the full circuit, but with even less runners, I just took one timed run to qualify.

Stewart and Colin C continued the good form and Stewart cemented his position at the head of the championship with 2 wins and a course record on every run. I couldn't pip Colin Birkbeck this day but we were only tenths apart. But 2 bonus points were added to the total by being inside the old 2 litre class record on each run!



A mad dash to the catch the 7pm ferry saw most of us on it, musing over the weekend over a glass or two of wine - well it was 3 hours on the water before we had to drive again!



A day at Silverstone watching the F1 cars practice in the wet - see this snap of Rosberg I took going past the new pit complex - got me in the mood for the following days round at the local Curborough venue. International Racing to Club Sprinting!

Nottingham Sports Car Club's event and see how I fared with the new car on a track I had driven many times. A PB of 55.10 had never been bettered since I set it in 2000, but the weather was perfect and I was spurred on by excellent competition. I opened the gearbox and optimised the gear ratios from Kirkistown, the previous weekend, as the top speed at Curborough was only 109mph, compared to 140 in Ireland.

A first practice run of 54.69 bode well and this was followed up with a 53.11, but Lee Griffiths, who competes in the British Hillclimb championship was out in his brand new OMS 25 and laid his mark down with a 54.42 followed by a 53 dead, and Gary Thomas in his Force PT ended his practice on a 54.82 and David Owen in another OMS was also in the 53's.

A long lunch, a change to the best set of tyres and removal of the starter battery lightened the car by 7kgs and we were set for the first of only 2 timed runs.

Gary was first of the quick cars to run and had a stunning 1.92 second 0-64ft time which means he was pulling more than 1G of longitudinal acceleration away from the line and he stopped the clocks at 52.76 to break the 10 year old class record. No chance I thought of FTD today then! Lee had a smooth and rapid run in the mid 53's. I was always conscious of not crashing the car bearing in mind the following weekend I was out at Cadwell Park in the 'British', but..... as you spin the tyres to clean and warm prior to launch, that all goes out the window!! Steady, committed and with not much margin for error I put up a 52.61 to snick ahead of Gary by a tenth!



During the long wait for the final timed run, I hoped it would rain so that I didn't have to go and defend the time, but it stayed hot and warm, despite rain dropping a few miles away. Gary tried perhaps too hard to improve and went a few tenths slower, which left Lee out on track as I queued for the line. I needed feedback on how he did and Emma Williams, who was helping run her Dad, winced as the clock stopped and she saw how close it was, but Lee was still 0.06 seconds slower so FTD was in the bag. So I didn't need to push too hard, but I had an empty track in front of me, fully marshalled and with ambulance cover, a commentator and a large crowd on the main straight waiting in anticipation - pootling round or giving up wasn't an option.

Revs held at 6500, drop clutch and progressively feed in more throttle, rev to 9000, 2nd gear at 3 seconds and 70mph, rev to 90mph past the sweeping paddock gate, hit the brakes over the brow, turn in, left, right, hard on the power to the Molehill, brake, smoke, 1st, back out, control oversteer on throttle, 2nd, hard brake, 1st, deep entry at hairpin feeding back onto main straight, 2nd, 3rd, 100mph, extreme brake, blue smoke, 1st, turn in right over kerbs, back out, catch oversteer, feed throttle smoothly to release all 272bhp, 2nd, Molehill, smoke, 1st, 2nd, hairpin, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th 110mph over the line and rewarded with 52.28. Beer time! (Video on YouTube, via website [or clicking here](#))

With another gear ratio change, a week later we were in the Cadwell Park paddock sharing the meeting with the Super Kart British Grand Prix. We were also sharing the rain with them though! I was ably assisted by Chris and Jonny who had driven down from the North East to help.

The two practice runs were in wet conditions, but not enough for full wets. As the conditions were so changeable, the first timed qualification run could have been the driest, even though it was damp, so best tyres were put on. A slithery but 'must stay on the track' type of run put me 9th fastest, but not comfortable. Conditions for the 2nd timed run were much better and the time dropped by almost 7 seconds and 8th fastest! Bad move! Why I hear you ask????

Well as we all queued on the track for the top 12 run off, the rain started again. The slowest runners and shared cars were away first on the driest track and so most of these early runners got good times in the bag, while those running last (the fastest qualifiers) had a soaked track and lost out. I was 7th away and that's where I ended up, Heather Calder had a great run making the 1000mile round trip from Thurso to take 11 points well worth it and Stewart Robb Jnr took the win, but more importantly, Stewart Robb Snr took the 2011 British Sprint Championship after coming so close last year.



2 rounds to go and we currently lie in 6th overall, a position I intend to defend vigorously at Kames in Scotland next weekend!

British Sprint Championship 2011 Top 12 after round 13 of 15		
Stewart Robb	4.0 Pilbeam-Judd MP88	116
Colin Calder	4.0 Gould GR37	101
Mark Smith	2.0 SBD Reynard	86
Terry Holmes	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	79
Colin Birkbeck	2.0 Dallara 301	72
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm11	64
Steve Broughton	2.0 SBD Reynard	55
Heather Calder	4.0 Gould GR37	52
Ross Napier	4.0 Gould GR37S	47
Graham Porrett	3.5 Lola-Judd ERH	42
Phil Lynch	2.0 Dallara 301	34
Martin Webb	2.0 Reynard FVL	22

2 Litre Class 2011 after round 13 of 15		
Mark Smith	SBD Reynard	437
Steve Broughton	SBD Reynard	420
Colin Birkbeck	2.0 Dallara 301	415
Steve Miles	Van Diemen RF96mm09	395
Phil Lynch	Dallara 301	379
Tony Jarvis	Reynard FVL	252
Martin Webb	Reynard FVL	351
John Payne	Dallara 301	348
Mike Musson	Force	236
Simon Keen	Dallara F302	163
George Harris	Dallara F3	115
Kev Lealan	Pilbeam MP62	110
Stuart Ridge	March M792 F2	32

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Remaining Events 2011		
30 July	Kames	Ayrshire
31 July	Kames	Ayrshire
3 September	Chinook Sprint	RAF Odiham
10 September	Madeira Drive	Brighton