



moleracing

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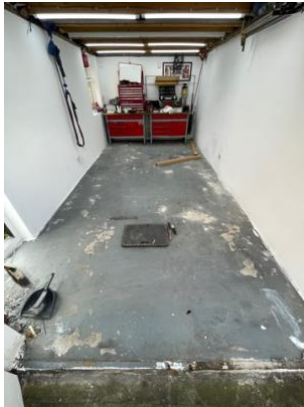
TELSONIC
ULTRASONICS



SBDMotorsport

moleracing 2023 season Spring Update

I'd taken the 6 week gap in events to work on the garage and many man hours transformed it to an epoxy floored brightly LED lit pleasure of a place to work in!



Blyton Park

No major work was needed prior to Blyton other than an oil change and a precautionary change of the water pump. It's a local circuit where we test and everyone knows it well, but the Eastern layout is not often run so that is always a challenging mix of bends. I was helped by a friend Tom, excellent timing considering I damaged my lower back pushing the car too far at the wrong angle the previous day!

Steve Brown had a new intake and much dyno time and set a stunning qualifying performance before having to withdraw after an unknown engine related issue and he reluctantly packed up. Simon Bainbridge blew up a CV joint – shown right, but luckily he had a spare, unluckily it was on the bench back in Middlesborough! The Championship coordinator lent him his car and someone drove from his farm to meet half way!



The first run off was very tight with the power cars of Graham and Pete just 0.08 apart with Graham on top. I managed 3rd.



The big Audi powered Crono of now with new CV joint made qualifying for run off 2 but come the run off, a fixing failed on the rear engine cover which affected the aero and downforce and Simon went off at high speed into the infield causing a lot of damage and has had to withdraw for the next few months to get rebuilt.

A bumpy fast final entry to the finish line at the maximum braking causes a good spark display necessitating ride height adjustments!

Picture by Anthony Mitchell

I was joined for the afternoon by Matt and Luke from sponsors Roundworks IT, taking a break from running other companies IT systems, they enjoyed getting involved in the day and the details of the work we were doing.



Not quite a 3 second pit stop!

An incredible tight run off again, with the top 4 covered by 0.88 seconds, Pete taking top spot this time, me 2nd and Graham 3rd. Matt was getting the Firehawk to respond and was 4th.



Roger Kilty '97 & '98, John Graham '19, Steve Miles '21 & Matt Hillam '22

During the meeting we realised that in the entry that day there were 4 previous British Sprint Champions, so we lined up for a pic!

The Sunday morning run off does not go down as one of my finest moments. Now running the outer course, I was leading practice and qualifying and had the potential to take a win. I cannot blame anyone else as I was on my own running the car. I decided to put the best tyres on for the run off, so slacked all the wheel nuts off. Got the better rubber out and lined up the rears alongside the ones fitted. I made a judgement that due to the cold conditions that warm, older rubber was better than cold newer rubber and put them back in the trailer and did the rear wheel nuts up – note to self, remember to do the complete car set of nuts up if you have removed them!



All the usual detailed prep and I launched pushing hard for the win. At the first corner I noticed a vibration and should have backed off immediately. But I pressed on and entered the next corner, a 60mph chicane from 137mph entry straight and then realised what had happened as the now loose front left wheel couldn't take the input request and spat me off into the outfield. No real damage, I got back on track and then rather than wait for a recovery I drove at 20mph round the course – still not realising a wheel was loose, I just thought I'd attacked the chicane too hard. Luckily the point where the wheel nuts dropped off and the wheel departed the car was at slow speed and damage was minimal. Great banter with the marshals as they sorted me out with a wheel wrench and we borrowed nuts from the other wheels to get home! I was just annoyed at the lost opportunity of some good points. Matt to the new SBD Firehawk to the win just over a tenth ahead of Pete.



I made amends on the second run off to come 2nd in a pack of me, Graham and Matt, all covered by 0.48 seconds. But nothing seems to be able to stop the runaway Pete Goulding as he posted 25 points for another win.

I inspected the 60 trees we planted earlier in the season to offset my emissions for 3 years, only 1 not taken so 59 going well!

Just 5 days before it all kicks off again in Kent!

Lydden

Its always a long slog down the M1 and M25 to Lydden, but so worth the effort due to the rewarding nature of the circuit. I think it's the undulations and length of run that make it worthwhile.

I've been noticing water leaking from the car after it has been put away but couldn't find any sources. I suspect some trapped air as despite topping up I ran hot in practice and switched the engine off as I coasted over the line. The clutch seemed to be problematic also and despite bleeding and adjusting we couldn't get it to stop 'creeping' this made starts problematic without triggering the optical start beam.

The Triple C team, Chris & Christine Bennet, Chris Price and driven by Chris Jones had their Force out for the first time this season after 4 years of development and quite a few issues. This is a 998cc bike engined carbon fibre Force with around 200 bhp but weighing less than 300 kgs and has shown significant promise but been unreliable. Chris peddled it perfectly on the first run off to be 3rd, exactly 1 second behind Graham Blackwell (1600 turbo, 380ish bhp and 440kgs), but I was pleased to drop into 2nd place with my 307bhp, 425kgs 2000cc race just 0.5 secs behind over a 66 second run.

Still recovering from a lower back injury from Blyton, I was grateful for the practical help all day of Ian Winmill and 'mind coach' John Setra, not forgetting the touch of glamour added to paddock by wife Katie!

Again, the usual checking of fuel, tighten wheel nuts, data overlays, past videos and notes and then it was all into the final run off of the day. Ignore the water and clutch concerns, ignore the tyre walls, ignore the gravel traps and the barriers and commit!!

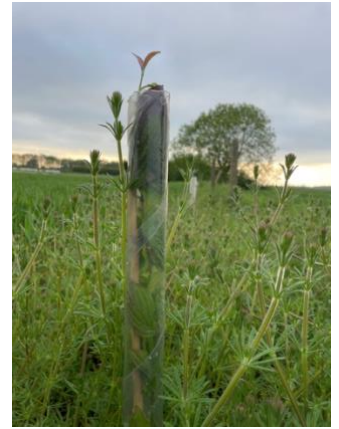
This time around Graham and I reversed positions and I took a new PB and maximum points by 0.15 secs and Matt in the Firehawk a further 0.2 behind and then Chris. *After 66 seconds of track action the top 4 cars were covered by 0.42 seconds!*



Photo by Kim Broughton taken at Lydden

Clutch and Strip down

I had 2 weeks before we were out again and the clutch was still not good and couldn't be 'adjusted out' on the pedal any more. A new master cylinder was purchased and this was hopefully the cure, but despite a high-quality AP one replacing an old Girling, there was no difference and it could not be made to operate, so after guidance from SBD a



full strip down of the car was needed to evaluate and look at options. This was done over the bank holiday weekend and come Wednesday (2 days before heading to Pembrey) the car looked like this.

A fantastic service by SBD and *TTV Performance components* in Essex meant that after a Nottingham to Ipswich round trip I had new clutch springs and a bearing – it turns out I had over stroked the clutch fingers during the install over the winter and was getting worse the more I used it. Then to complete a mammoth day (9 hours driving and 470 miles), I then took the bell housing to Telford where Nick of *Indominata* machined a custom bush to hold the release bearing square and at the right depth.



The following day I rebuilt the car, then the Thursday, checked the geometry and loaded up!

Pembrey Saturday

Considering the frantic few days, the journey to South Wales was a relaxing respite. The usual 6 hours on a Friday, and rather than sit out the motorway queues I took a nice back route along the A40 in wonderful scenic countryside. Car offloaded, scrutineered, food and in bed for 9.30!



Up at 6am for a track walk and stunning weather for the weekend as forecast. Current British champion Matt Hillam – not driving last years car but in the new SBD Firehawk shared with Steve Broughton - was not in attendance this weekend as he was going to Japan on business on Sunday.



I was fastest in practice and in the mix in qualifying but come the points in the first run off, the 1600cc turbo 380bhp of Pete Goulding took the win and a bonus point for the class record. Very impressive however was the 998cc bike engine power of Chris Jones's Force in second place. Steve Broughton had a great 3rd, considering each time he touched the brakes, he didn't know if he had any due to intermittent pad knockoff! John Loudon in the methanol powered 1100cc force had a great run in 4th However, despite a tidy run I was surprised to be 5th – but only 1.2 secs off the winning time such was the pace of the field. Mmmmmmm, need to reset brain and level of commitment required and scare myself properly.

Best tyres off, quality tyres on, best tyres back on again. Having looked at data and videos, I had made a plan and now attempted to deliver it.

I had a scary, on the limit of adhesion run, a few decent corners but I came in just 0.43 secs behind Chris Jones who had upped his game and found 1.5 seconds to take his first ever run off win. I was happy with second place though What a great but tough season this is turning out to be.

A strip of the car, bleed of the clutch, all round check over and heat gun cleaning of 4 tyres. Food, a couple beers and bed!

Pembrey Sunday

After some very close finishes yesterday, I was determined to get on the top step today when we ran the shorter, high G force main circuit on the Sunday. The weather was just as hot and tyres were taking a pounding, but at least I had cleaned my best set the previous evening.

SBD altered my traction control settings based on latest driver feedback from both works cars and top runner in the British Hillclimb Championship and these worked great.

In practice I was a little over optimistic as to the braking capacity/grip levels and nearly over shot the new tight infield section with its 125mph approach. Qualifying was a 95% level of commitment - although I was still having water being ejected issues despite changing the water pump so we kept a careful eye on levels and temperature. Best tyres on and 'Attack Mode' engaged.



After practice, John Loudon had to retire due to some nasty noises in the engine, so we hope he gets that sorted and is out again soon.

My run off was some 2 seconds faster than qualifying, but a storming run by Chris Jones again took his second win. He has found the balance of weight, power and handling to virtually take all the corners flat and this makes up for the slower speed on the straights. I was just 0.9 secs slower, but that was only good enough for 4th place, quite amazingly close over a 106 seconds of track time!! Graham Blackwell and Steve Broughton took the intervening places – Steve's best outing so far this season. As it turned out Matts Japanese trip was postponed and he could have competed after all! Pete Goulding had an accidentally switched off the ignition half way round which certainly helped my season chance a little!

Best tyres off, qualifying tyres on, 4 secs slower – just preserving the car and getting my eye in, then best tyres back on for the next points scoring opportunity.

"Dare to fail" is the motto, and I committed. If I came off, so be it, but as I crossed the line I thought I was happy with the run, a few scary moments and no mistakes and plenty of commitment. As it turned out, over a 105 second run the top 4 places were covered by 0.94 seconds and I'm pleased to report I was the head of that group by just 0.13 from Pete!

What a great weekend, the new clutch and all that effort was worth it and was working fine. A few water expulsion issues, so I need to keep on top of that. A head gasket leakage kit has been ordered to test for any problems before Lydden mid July. If this is the case, it's engine out again for a new head gasket! Good job I'm retired is all I can say!

I'm now just finishing this report on the plane after a wonderful 3 weeks exploring Japan and raring to go again!

Cheers
Steve/Smiles



British Sprint Championship 2023 after round 6		
Pete Goulding	1.6T Mygale FF200 Ecoboost	286
Graham Blackwell	1.6T Mygale Ecoboost	279
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm2020	265
John Loudon	1.1 Force TA	234
Matt HILLAM	1.4 DJ Firehawk CT004	227
Simon Wallis	1.1 OMS 3000M	210
Steve Broughton	1.4 DJ Firehawk CT004	205
Grahame Harden	1.3 Radical PR6	178
Carole Torkington	1.5 OMS CF08	163
Simon Bainbridge	4.2 Chrono V8 TT	130
Nicholas Scott	1.6 Force TA	115
Robert Tonge	1.4 Force TA	81
Steve Brown	1.3S Empire Evo2	61
John Munro	1.4 OMS CF07	54
Chris Jones	1.0 Force TA	46
Zoe Kingham	1.6T Ecoboost Westfield	28
Graham Porrett	1.1 OMS 2000	
Nick Houston	1.0 OMS Hornet	
Mark Anson	1.1 Jedi Mk6	

In 2023 there are 42 rounds with the best 20 scores to count

Schedule & Results 23	Overall	Run Offs	
26 March	Cadwell	2 nd / 100	2 nd & 2 nd ☺
2 April	Anglesey Nat	1 st / 120	12 th & 1 st ☺
30 April	Anglesey Int	4 th / 120	3 rd & 4 th ☺
14 May	Blyton Eastern	2 nd / 110	3 rd & 2 nd ☺
15 May	Blyton Outer	3 rd / 110	13 th & 2 nd ☺
20 May	Lydden	4 th / 120	2 nd & 1 st ☺
3 June	Pembrey	5 th / 80	6 th & 2 nd ☺
4 June	Pembrey	4 th / 80	4 th & 1 st ☺
15 July	Lydden		
5 August	Kirkistown		
6 August	Kirkistown		
25-27 Aug	Car Fest	-	-
9 Sept	Pembrey		
10 Sept	Pembrey		
23 Sept	Blyton Park		
24 Sept	Blyton Park		
30 Sept	Anglesey		
1 Oct	Anglesey		
8 Sept	Knockhill		
14 Oct	Castle Combe		