

SBD MOTORSPORT

THE FUTURE IS IN SAFE HANDS

SBD Motorsport

Many of you will be familiar with the name SBD Motorsport. Originally founded and run by Steve Broughton, SBD have been supplying tuning products for over 30 years. These include performance products for the Vauxhall XE, Suzuki Hayabusa, Ford Duratec and Ford EcoBoost engines along with being the UK supplier for MBE engine management systems.



Late last year, Steve sold the business to former employee Craig Sampson and relocated it to Somerset. But don't panic, this ensures that the same quality service and products will continue for many years to come. Even the telephone number remains the same for new and existing customers. A noticeable new benefit that has been immediately noticed by many, is the introduction of a WhatsApp service which has improved communications immensely.

Craig first started at SBD in 2003, having impressed Steve Broughton whilst on work experience during his college studies. From as far back as he can remember, Craig explains that he has always been interested in how and why things work, often sketching out his own designs to see how he could modify or build something new. This progressed through all stages of his education, and he even worked in the evenings after school at a rolling road, which carried on whilst he was studying for a HND in Motorsport Engineering at Brooklands College which is where he first met Steve. This work environment enabled him to get a great appreciation for club motorsport, and the efforts that customers go to not only in building their cars, but also funding them. As a rolling road they

were often the last job on the list before race day, and often the first ones to load the engine and drivetrain up to its maximum. Unfortunately, it wasn't uncommon to find a few items that had been scrimped on and subsequently failed, costing the owner far more in the long run.

He continued with his education via Kingston University to achieve a BEng in Motorsport Engineering, and again throughout this period he maintained a part time paid role to gain valuable first-hand experience in the industry. He then progressed to a full-time role in 2005 by being nurtured under the wing of other fellow former employee, Dickie Hulbert, with varying hands-on work with development engines, CAD modelling, prototype machining and technical support until he eventually left in January 2020 in order to relocate his family to the Somerset area - but kept in regular contact with Steve and the team.

Over the years, Craig has competed and driven various forms of high powered competition cars and can therefore really talk about the products that he represents with first-hand experience, which is very important and not always available via other suppliers.



Matt Hillam

Some of you may remember the yellow 2.0L XE Powered Westfield of Peter Hayter, this is where it started for Craig. Sharing the car with Peter, and to this day telling us it was one of his favourite cars to drive, the low weight coupled with a broad power band 290bhp SBD Vauxhall engine was a great combination. After this came the red 2.0L Duratec Westfield car, shared with Matt Hillam. A more technically advanced machine, it utilised SBD/MBE's engine and gearbox control systems and provided a very fast car. Craig admits it did take some time however to surpass the performance of the yellow car, but it did come and subsequently took various class records along the way.

Then came a switch to single seaters for Craig, sharing the Reynard F3/F3000 derived car which SBD had converted into Duratec power, coupled to a Hewland FTR gearbox, working with the owner Mark Smith, a previous Westfield owner and winner of the Speed Series. This became an SBD works car, with Mark and Craig competing in the British Sprint Championship. It was a very successful car, securing fastest 2.0L honours at most outings.

Having acquired the SBD business from his former employer in November 2023, Craig has some exciting plans for the business which not only includes the continuation of the well renowned existing products, but also adding to them. His new facilities near Bristol include a pristine engine build and development room, a dedicated design office, along with a prototyping machine room for one offs.

SBD Motorsport started its affiliation with MBE Systems from the early years of both companies by working on GM rally projects together, and producing end user level engine management systems. This led to SBD being the main UK Distributor for MBE, being the face of their motorsport division with tailored software. This working partnership continues today, with new ECUs and features in development at

all times – Steve now provides support along with his wealth of experience for the high level MBE related projects and software development.

SBD has a well deserved reputation for never standing still, always looking for the next improvement, the next gain in performance and, as Craig tells us, will not stop. A number of products have been updated since his return in November 2023. Sometimes small detail changes to reduce weight, add versatility, improve aesthetics or even expand a range, for example some additional piston sizes.

Plans are also afoot to add a range of new products and introduce components for engines such as the Honda K20 engine. This particular decision was sparked by Craig's time away from SBD when he engineered various bespoke components for a K20 circuit racing engine application due to there either not being a product available, or not one that could deliver the performance and durability that matches his high standards as ingrained into him from the years at SBD.

So far the product line up includes a fully optimised, bespoke taper throttle body system, oil cooler take off housing, electric water pump mount, competition alternator, piston and rod packages, CNC machined head porting work and seat cutting, and of course MBE ECU solutions. Craig explains that he was impressed with the Honda engine as soon as he stripped the donor engine down. The design detail and the fit and finish impressed him so he was excited to get started on producing his own kit of components and supplying these to end users. There are lots of components

available for these engines but, as he tells me, often customers mix and match from different suppliers which results in at best poor performance, but in actual fact it can end in an expensive failure due to incorrect clearances or parts designed for a different purpose (such as using drag race components for circuit racing). The proven SBD philosophy of providing full kits will continue with the K20 line to safeguard customers, as over time a complete engine build kit will be available and, where appropriate, fully machined ready for assembly. This is only possible as all SBD components are machined to exacting standards, to ensure that every kit supplied, if built correctly, will provide the same performance as the last, a feature which Craig is very proud of.

After talking through a number of the SBD product ranges with Craig, it is evident how enthusiastic he is about each and every one and that he is happy to discuss at length with customers about their project to ensure the right items are selected. This is made possible by the very hands on approach taken by SBD and therefore having knowledge of the products top to bottom, often due to the fact that the idea or concept started life on a desk at SBD, and isn't just a brought in product.

Craig explains that his products are exported all over the world, for various motorsport disciplines where numerous national titles have been won, and he's extremely grateful for his customer's loyalty and repeat business.

SBD customers are in safe hands for some time to come.

John Loudon

