



# TEAM PUGWASH



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## NORTHERN SPORTS & SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP CROFT CIRCUIT ROUND 7 12<sup>th</sup> JULY 2009

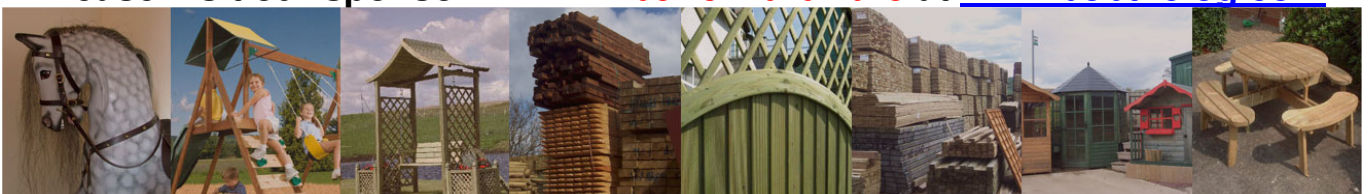
We actually qualified on Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. I had a bit of a poor qualifying really. The car straight away didn't feel quite right. I put this down to the fact I had been driving the Westfield the week before which made the car feel worse, so I persevered. I never actually got any clear laps in qualifying, I got one relatively clear lap only to catch a car in the complex. I qualified 3<sup>rd</sup> in class which ordinarily I would be happy with, however I was a long way back in terms of pace from Paul Moss and Gavin Lee. I was almost 2 seconds off Gavin Lee's pace. This gap also allowed a few cars in the bigger class's to slip in-between. There were 4 cars in between me and 2<sup>nd</sup> place Paul Moss. I pretty much decided there and then I wasn't going to playing with the top two in tomorrow's race so would just enjoy myself with the other class's and Mick Starkey who started directly behind me.

Sunday came round, the weather was reasonably good and I looked forward to the start. The lights went out and I got off the line reasonably well. The only problem with my car currently is that the Vtec mechanism doesn't work in 1<sup>st</sup> gear. SO even though I got off the line rather well I had to short shift to 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mick Starkey who in my short experience always gets a good start pounced and passed me heading up to the 1<sup>st</sup> corner. We both went down the inside of John Hewitsons Westfield and Brian Murphy's Ginetta to gain a couple of places. I hung back slightly going up to the chicane and got good drive onto the straight. My car is slightly quicker than Micks fiesta once up to speed so I managed to get alongside him into tower and re-take my position.

I was now right behind Rob Barne's Corsa and Mike Williamson's BMW with the two Class D leaders only just in front. I chased the Corsa and thought I would be able to get passed but overtime, the group gradually disappeared. I also gradually dropped Starkey who had been hot on my heels up to that point. I was then pretty much all alone just plodding round on my own.

On the penultimate lap I caught up Gavin Lee who was going slowly into the pits. At first I thought he had finished and was heading back into the pit lane. I hadn't seen the chequered flag so thought it best to carry on another lap.

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It later transpired that his engine had suffered a problem and he had coasted back into the pit lane handing me an ill-deserved 2<sup>nd</sup> place trophy.

So all in all, a fairly disappointing race. Looking at my tyre's, I could see they hadn't been working very well, we think we hadn't put enough pressure in them. More worryingly, we found when we had the car home that the front off-side strut rod was loose allowing the front wheel to move around as it pleased. This combined with the tyre's hopefully explains the stodgy handling and unstable feel under brakes. I'm hoping I can get nearer the two front runners at the next races at croft on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July.

Overall class D result:

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Paul Moss          | Citroen Saxo          |
| 2. <b>Peter Dixon</b> | <b>Honda Civic</b>    |
| 3. Mick Starkey       | Ford Fiesta XR2       |
| 4. Daniel Mckay       | Ford Fiesta XR2       |
| 5. Fran E Marshall    | Ford Fiesta XR2i      |
| 6. Helen Allen        | Ford Fiesta XR2i      |
| 7. Gavin Lee          | Ford Fiesta XR2 (DNF) |



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