



TEAM PUGWASH



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NORTHERN SPORTS & SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP CROFT CIRCUIT ROUND 14 27th SEPTEMBER 2009

We turned up to track bright and early at about 9.30am to find my car had been moved. Gavin Lee and his mechanic had moved it towards their van. We caught up with them just as they were about to start tackling the damage. The wheel was toeing out at a horrendous angle. The suspension didn't actually look at all bent but the reason for the bad angle was the inside rear quarter had been squashed. Gavin had been speaking to Dave Botteril in the class A Porsche 944 turbo who had his Porta Power kit with him. This was all new to me but an ideal tool for mending old bent and sheddy civics.

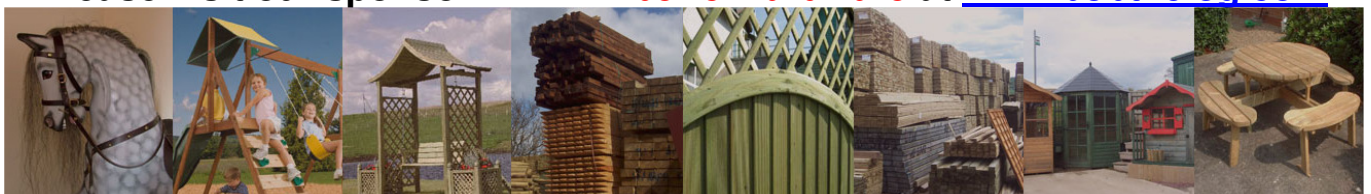
By this time a number of the NSSCC boys had all gathered round and several pairs of hands were grafting away trying to get the civics offside wheel back to where it should be. In the end we got it pretty much there, we measured it using the Mckays tracking gauges and it measured up near perfect! I was confident that it would be fine for the race so I decided to take my position.

I was extremely impressed with everyone pitching in to help out, it has been the story of this season in all fairness and shows how great this championship is. I cannot stop recommending this championship enough to other people.

So, on with the racing part of the day I guess. I took my normal grid position and waited for the lights. I was interested to see if I could make another good start and see if yesterdays wasn't just a fluke. It wasn't. The civic once again blasted off the line and I got ahead of Gavin and passed Rob Barnes Corsa. David Swales followed me through and was on my tail down the back straight.

Now after yesterdays bump, I wasn't entirely sure what was going to happen when I braked. I'd also moved the bias to the front to take some braking off the back wheels. I kept right and braked very early and gingerly. This let Swales by with Gavin able to get around the outside of me with good drive into the esses. I expected this to happen as I needed to test the braking before trying anything.

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Heading out of sunny out, I got a bit boxed in by Ian Humpish's VW Beetle, this slowed me slightly and allowed Mark Armstrong to get alongside me, we went side by side around the complex but he managed to out drag me down the back straight into clervaux.

I actually managed to hold station for a while. The car was probably not 100% but was handling reasonably well. Over the next few laps I managed to wind some of the bias back and it seemed fine. Eventually Rob Barnes powered passed me down the front straight. I was all over him in the corners but he had much better straight line speed. I stayed behind for a couple of laps as I couldn't get near enough to make a move.

However, on lap 5 I got much better drive out of the chicane and with the slipstream, I managed to stay with him down the straight. He stayed left at 1st so I went down the right hand side, we both braked at about the same time, me slightly later, I got slightly down the inside but not enough to make a proper move, I kept my foot hard on the brakes but it was too late. He turned in and I just caught him. I'm pretty sure I just caught his tow hook pretty much, but this was enough to spin him round.

I was a bit devastated in all honesty, having been taken out in a previous race, I know how frustrating it can be. The damage to both cars was negligible. At the same time, Mick Starkey had got passed us both. I gave chase. As I did, I noticed the car was starting to handle strangely. The back end was starting to steer itself, however I pressed on and eventually managed to pass Mick as he went wide on the hairpin. You could tell he was having handling issues of his own. As we went round hawthorne, Mick made me aware he was there by giving me a couple of taps up the bumper. At first I thought something had broken only to see Mick waving at me in the mirror. At this point I was crying with laughter as I waved back but when we went through the chicane, the car felt terrible, I kinda went through the chicane pointing down the straight, it was a weird sensation that didn't feel good. I decided to pull over and Let Mick back passed as well as Barnes who had caught back up. There was no point in taking anybody else out! I cruised to the finish behind Mick who was having his own handling nightmare by the looks of things. I think he was looking for tickets to get back into the circuit at some points as he under steered wide.

So not a great race but at least I finished this time.

Overall class D result:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Andy Robinson | Ford Fiesta XR2 |
| 2. Paul Moss | Citroen Saxo |
| 3. Gavin Lee | Ford Fiesta XR2 |
| 4. Mick Starkey | Ford Fiesta XR2 |
| 5. Peter Dixon | Honda Civic |
| 6. Terry Wright | Rover 100 |
| 7. Daniel Mckay | Ford Fiesta XR2 |
| 8. Scott Robson | Ford Fiesta XR2 |
| 9. David Swales | Ford Fiesta XR2 (DNF) |
| 10. Ian Blacklain | Ford Fiesta Si (DNF) |

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